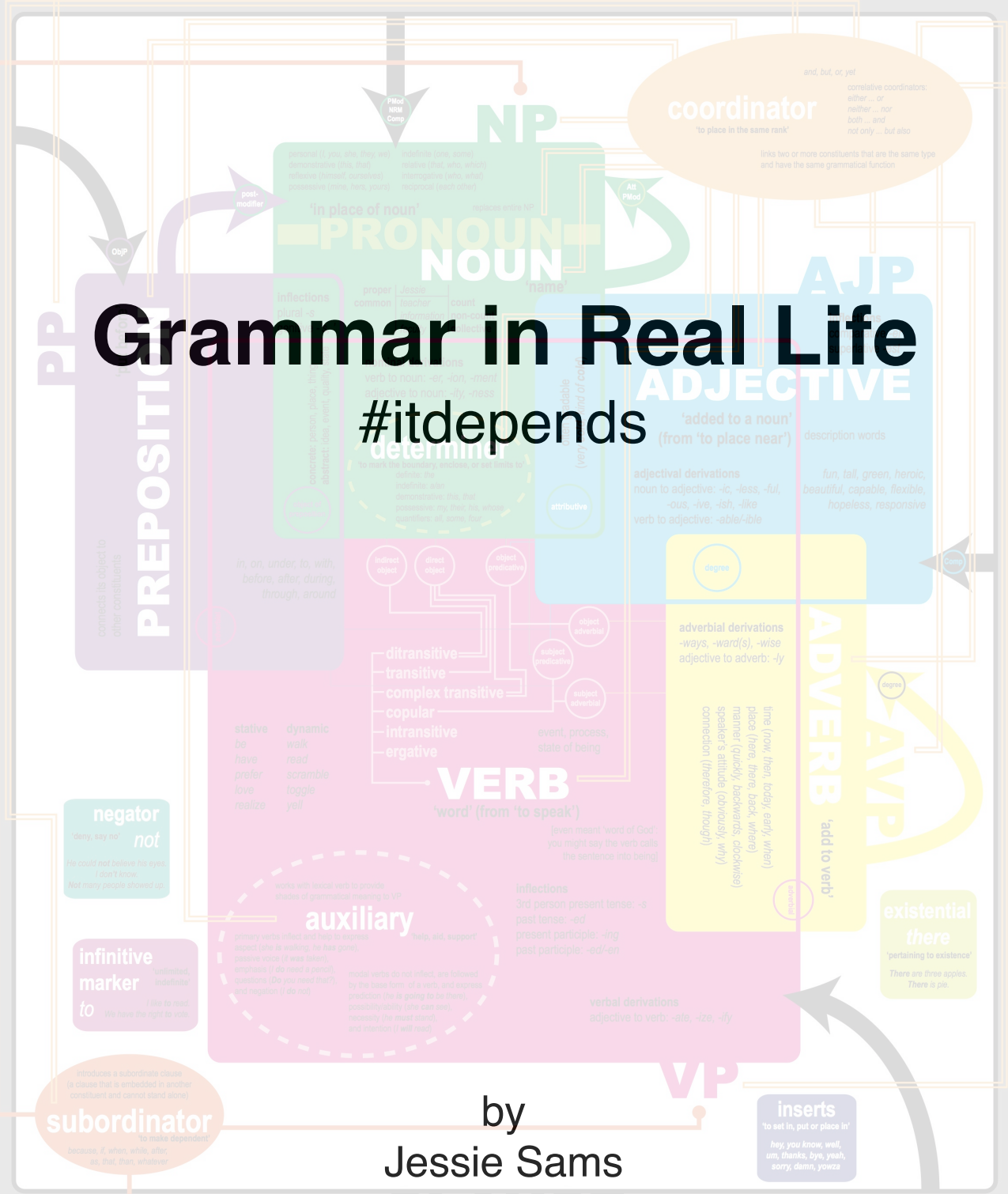


Grammar in Real Life

#itdepends



by
Jessie Sams

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

constituent
'to make up or compose'
grammatical unit, whether word, phrase, or clause

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All etymologies taken from Etymonline.com.

This book is dedicated to

my mom, who gave me my first dictionary

my dad, who gave me my first language textbooks

my sister, who talked me into making every decision that led me to linguistics

my son, who inherited my love of grammar

my husband, who secretly admires English

Special thanks

I began the process of writing this book in Fall 2016 by testing out potential material and concepts on my ENG 439 Advanced Grammar students. Working with them inspired me to find new ways to help students make meaningful connections with grammar, and I thank them for their feedback, support, and willingness to try. During that semester, we adopted the mantra introduced to us by Joe Opio, a *Daily Show* writer, in an interview about Eric the Eel, his favorite Olympian: “It’s not the winning that matters... it’s the not drowning that matters.” Thank you, Caetlin, Cassie, Rachel, Micah, Megan, Sarah, Susan, Alandria, Victoria, Elizabeth, Jessie, Ashley, Mahailey, Christina, John, Meaghan, and Hannah. Your not drowning continues to inspire me. #maybe #itdepends #highonlanguage

In 2017, a special group of students, my Grammar Savvy group, willingly gave up a summer to test drive the first draft of the book. Throughout our weekly two-hour meetings, they provided valuable feedback and remained positive—even when grammar gave them the middle finger. They shook their fists right back and responded, “Not today, grammar. Not today.” From the bottom of my grammar-loving heart, thank you, Alex Sides, Katy Pleake, Susan Groce, and Hannah Tumlinson.

Finally, many of my Fall 2017 grammar students provided yet another round of feedback, helping me to return to the book and revise it yet again. Thank you, McKenzie, Danielle, Diana, Amanda, Abbey, Cassidy, Kara, and Jamie.

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Preface: Visual representation of grammar

Grammar, n. A system of pitfalls thoughtfully prepared for the feet of the self-made man, along the path by which he advances to distinction. —Ambrose Bierce, *The Unabridged Devil's Dictionary*

When talking about grammar, it is difficult to keep discussions in the abstract without visually representing or modeling structures. For instance, I can abstractly say that a noun is a part of a noun phrase and that noun phrases are often included in clauses, but those abstract connections are easier to discuss if you concretely model the structures. There are several options when it comes to mapping out grammatical structures, including tree diagrams, bracketing notations, and annotation schemes, and this preface focuses on how I selected the method used throughout this text. Though the options are diverse, they have a major goal in common: to demonstrate how individual grammatical constituents are connected and what their roles are in the larger clause.

P.1 Reed-Kellogg

Prior to taking college-level linguistics courses, students are often most familiar with the Reed-Kellogg method of diagramming, an example of which is below and comes from Pop Chart Lab's poster of famous opening lines in novels.

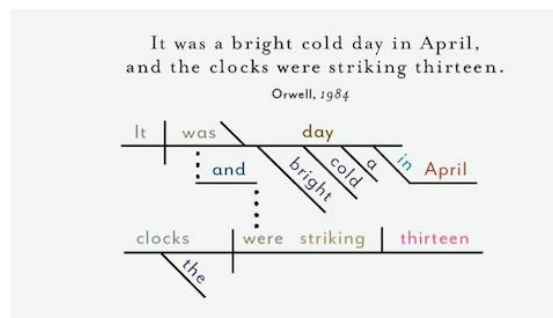


Image P.1 Pop Chart Lab's Reed-Kellogg diagram of *1984*'s opening line

In the Reed-Kellogg system, both the direction and orientation of lines provide information about what role the element is playing in the larger clause. While function is represented, form is not overtly marked; for instance, the difference between a noun, pronoun, and verb are not clearly marked on the diagram.

In general, linguists do not use the Reed-Kellogg method for reasons including the following: (1) it lacks the ability to show finer distinctions in grammatical forms and functions; (2) all distinctions are made through lines in particular orientations, which makes it difficult to easily identify grammatical features; and (3) it takes the sentence out of its original word order. That last point is perhaps the most important one because taking a sentence out of its original word order means taking words out of their original contexts. The sentence in Image 1 above is pretty close to the original word order, if you ignore the fact that *a bright cold* becomes *bright cold a* below *day*; however, for other sentences, like the one portrayed in the image below, the original word order completely shifts to match the required layout of Reed-Kellogg diagrams.

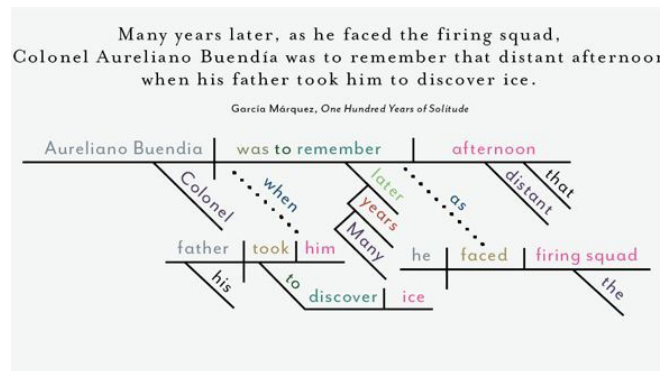


Image P.2 Pop Chart Lab's Reed-Kellogg diagram of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*'s opening line

The original word order of the first line of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* becomes garbled in the Reed-Kellogg diagram; in fact, the first word, *many*, is buried in the center of the diagram. A good visual representation of grammar should be sensitive to the fact that the original word order carries important pragmatic information, including how the sentence is connected to the larger discourse.

The benefit of understanding the Reed-Kellogg system is that many grammatical texts for younger students rely on it, so being able to use it can be beneficial for understanding those texts. It is not, however, beneficial for understanding the grammatical structure of English, especially when considering more complex sentences. The drawbacks of the method include the following:

- grammatical forms are not distinguished,
- the diagrams are not easily typed or shared in documents,
- finer grammatical distinctions are not clearly made, and
- the distinction of functions relies on direction and orientation of lines rather than explicit labels.

I will not use Reed-Kellogg diagrams because of those reasons. The good news is that if you are able to identify grammatical form and function in other methods, you will be able to learn and understand Reed-Kellogg, should you need to use a text that relies on its approach.

P.2 Syntactic trees

Syntactic tree structures vary depending on the theoretical approach taken; the image below includes one example of a syntactic tree:

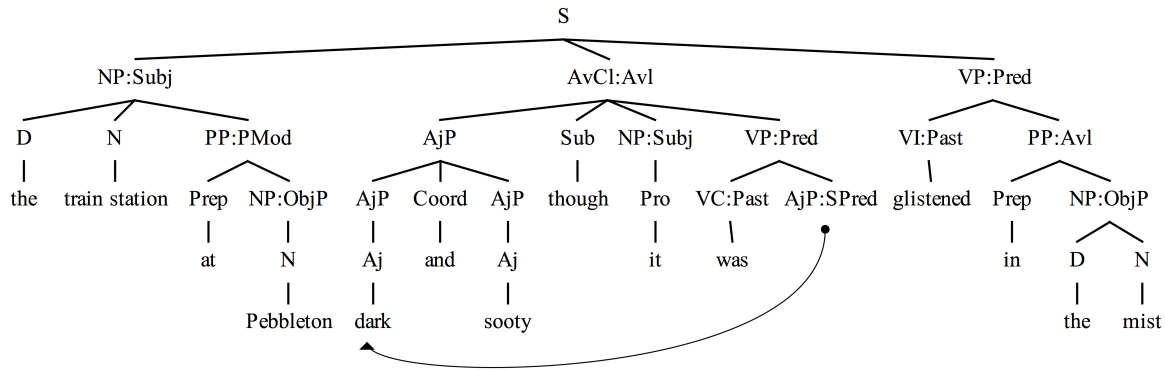


Image P.3 Tree representation of Trenton Lee Stewart's (2012) *The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict*'s opening line

The benefits of using trees to represent English structures include (1) the ability to visually represent embedding, making it easy to see, for example, that the preposition phrase *at Pebbleton* is working inside the noun phrase that is functioning as the subject of the clause, and (2) the focus on the original word order of the sentence, allowing you to read the sentence from left to right based on what you see in the tree. In other courses, I rely on trees like this one to teach students the basic structures of English because they provide a clear representation of grammatical hierarchy.

The drawbacks of trees like the one above include the space required for longer sentences, especially when drawing the trees by hand, and the inability to easily type and incorporate trees into documents. Typing trees requires the use of software or online applications, and even typed trees are sometimes too large to nicely fit on a single page. Even if you drew all the trees by hand, trees can be difficult to work with; if you do not properly plan out their space management, which is a skill that is difficult for many beginning students, the branches and labels get so cramped that it becomes impossible to see the distinctions between embedded units, and the relationship among branches and nodes can be lost if the tree gets messy. Furthermore, while both form and function are indicated in the labels of the tree, they are marked in the same way, making them less distinguishable from one another, which could be problematic for identifying finer grammatical distinctions. While trees offer a solid introduction to grammatical structures in English, they are not the best method for more complex structures and longer sentences.

P.3 Bracketing notations

Another method for representing grammar is bracketing notations, which offer varying degrees of detailed examination, depending on how they're being used and applied. For instance, taking the same sentence from the tree diagram above, I can use brackets to represent any degree of grammatical detail. Starting with (P.1) below, I use brackets to represent which words are working together to form the major grammatical units; from there, each example gets more detailed until (P.5), where all words, forms, and functions are represented.

- (P.1) [[The train station at Pebbleton], [dark and sooty though it was], [glistened in the mist]]
- (P.2) [[The train station [at Pebbleton]], [[dark and sooty] though [it] [[was]]], [glistened [in the mist]]]
- (P.3) [[The train station [at [Pebbleton]]], [[[dark] and [sooty]] though [[it]] [was]], [glistened [in [the mist]]]]]
- (P.4) [[[The] [train station] [[at] [Pebbleton]]]], [[[[dark]] [and] [[sooty]]] [though] [it] [was]], [[glistened] [[in] [[the] [mist]]]]]]]
- (P.5) [s[NP:Subj[DThe] [Ntrain station] [PP:PMod[Prepat] [NP:Obj/P[NPebbleton]]]], [AvCl:Avl [AjP:SP[AjP[Ajdark]] [Coordand] [AjP[Ajsooty]]] [Subthough] [NP:Subj[Proit]] [VP:Pred[vwas]]], [VP:Pred[vglistened] [PP:Avl [Prepin] [NP:Obj/P[Dthe] [Nmist]]]]]]]

The brackets in (P.1) demonstrate that *glistened in the mist* is a major grammatical unit, working within the larger sentence. That same unit is broken down further to show that *in the mist* is working as its own smaller element within that unit. From there, example (P.3) breaks down *in the mist* to show that *the mist* is its own smaller unit, and example (P.4) demonstrates that each individual word is its own grammatical unit. Finally, the example in (P.5) provides labels to show the grammatical forms and functions of each unit.

The major benefit to bracketing notation is that it's easy to type, so no special tools and software are needed to take a sentence and type it with brackets. Another benefit is that it takes up much less space than tree diagramming, which is especially important when dealing with long sentences. However, the drawbacks to bracketing notations include difficulties of seeing embedding and hierarchies; the lack of visual distinction between grammatical form and function and between word, phrase, and clause levels; and difficulties with reading and distinguishing necessary information due to the sheer number of brackets (e.g., at the end of the sentence, five closing brackets are required, one after the other, to show that five distinct units are being closed out).

An easier way to read bracket notations is to use tabs and line breaks to better show the relationships among grammatical units, as in (P.6) below:

(P.6) [S
 [NP:Subj [D The]
 [N train station]
 [PP:PMod [Prep at]
 [NP:Obj/P [N Pebbleton]]
]
],
 [AvCl:Avl
 [AjP:SP [AjP [Aj dark]]
 [Coord and]
 [AjP [Aj sooty]]
]
 [Sub though]
 [NP:Subj [Pro it]]
 [VP:Pred [V was]]
],
 [VP:Pred [V glistened]
 [PP:Avl [Prep in]
 [NP:Obj/P [D the]
 [N mist]
]
]
]
]

The format makes it easier to see how the elements work together, but it is still difficult to quickly identify forms and functions with this method. Furthermore, the floating brackets at the ends of units can be difficult to match up with their opening brackets, allowing beginning students to lose track of where a unit begins and ends.

P.4 Annotation scheme

Because bracketing notations are much easier to type and fit onto single pages, I decided to select a method based on that type of system; however, I modified the bracketing notation to provide more visual cues for quicker identification and recognition of individual forms and functions. The annotation scheme used in this text has gone through many variations, some of which included color-coding and boxed-in elements, until it arrived at its current stage. Its current rendition is based on three major pieces of inspiration: (1) a method used by one of my peers at the University of Colorado at Boulder when teaching LING 1500 Understanding

Grammar in 2005;¹ (2) methods used by computational linguists, many of which are based on bracket notations; and (3) feedback from past students.

The same sentence from above is represented in (P.7) below, using the annotation scheme presented in this text:

(P.7) SCX (Subj the^{Det}
 : **train station**^{CN}
 : [PostM at^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **Pebbleton**^{PropN})
 :]
)

//Avl <i < dark^{Aj}>
 : : and^{CoConj}
 : : < sooty^{Aj}>
 : >
 :
 : though^{SubConj}
 : (Subj **it**^{Pro})
 : ||Pred |Past was^{CopV}|
 : : <i SPred GAP>
 : ||
 //

||Pred |Past glistened^{ItV}|
 : [Avl in^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : **mist**^{NN}
 : :)
 :]
 ||

In this method, grammatical forms are represented in two ways: a superscripted label provides specific identifying information, such as the superscript *PropN* indicating that *Pebbleton* is a proper noun, and typographic conventions represent broader levels of identification, such as the

¹ I owe thanks especially to Tamara Grivicic for her approach to marking the type of phrase/clause being represented through the use of different typographical symbols.

parentheses around *Pebbleton* indicating that it is a noun phrase. Bolding and underlining draw attention to the nouns/pronouns and verbs, making it easier to find these core elements within any sentence. Grammatical functions are labeled as subscripts, such as the adverbial *Adv* subscript for *in the mist*. The overall spacing conventions allow for quick identification of which elements are embedded inside other elements; for example, the location of *at Pebbleton* demonstrates that it is working inside the larger noun phrase *the train station at Pebbleton*. The “trickle-down” marks, or the colons connecting an opening symbol to its closing symbol, help students keep track of the beginnings and endings of longer units.

In the years I’ve used this annotation scheme for more advanced grammar courses, I’ve identified the following major benefits of this method:

- it provides visual separation like trees but takes up much less space;
- students can type the annotation scheme without special software or tools and can easily incorporate those typed sentences into documents;
- it is easier to read than bracket notations because it visually separates grammatical types by different typographical conventions, and the spatial breaks and tabs, which were inspired by computational methods, make it easier to see levels of embedding;
- because original word order is preserved, students can tackle sentences by simply beginning with the first words instead of needing to figure out where to begin whereas both Reed-Kellogg and tree structures require you to know the best place to begin to start drawing branches/lines in a way that allows everything to fit;
- the use of specific labels allows students to search a document with annotated sentences to find all examples of specific forms or functions, which is especially helpful for larger projects.

Overall, I’ve found the annotation scheme used in this text has worked best for students in a course focused on making finer distinctions in English grammar.

The use of distinct symbols to represent each phrase and clause type allows for quicker identification of grammatical form. For instance, the same sentence above could be represented with square brackets working alongside form and function labels:

(P.8) SCX

[NP:Subj the^{Det}
: train station^{CN}
: [PP:PostM at^{Prep}
: : [NP:ObjPrep Pebbleton^{PropN}]
:]
]

[AvCl:Avl [i [AjP dark^{Aj}
: : and^{CoConj}
: : [AjP sooty^{Aj}
:]
: though^{SubConj}
: [NP:Subj it^{Pro}]
: [LVP:Pred [SVP:Past was^{CopV}]
: : [i AjP:SPred GAP]
: :]
]

[VP:Pred [SVP:Past glistened^{ItV}
: [PP:Avl in^{Prep}
: : [NP:ObjPrep the^{Det}
: : : mist^{NN}
: : :]
: :]
]

One issue I have found with that method is that students lose the connection to grammatical form as they close out phrases or clauses. For instance, at the end of the sentence in this example, three square brackets appear, one after the other, which gives no indication to the constituents' forms; however, in (P.7), the parenthesis, square bracket, and doubled lines indicate the constituents' forms are noun phrase, preposition phrase, and long verb phrase, respectively. Having phrasal and clausal forms being represented by specified symbols allows students to more quickly identify the beginning and ending of particular constituent types. Of course, the annotation scheme is not a perfect system, but there will likely never be a perfect way to visualize grammar in all its complexities.

The annotation scheme is a consistent application of specific orthographic symbols and super- and subscripted labels to reflect the structure of naturally occurring English sentences. Because it is complex, the annotation scheme is introduced in smaller pieces throughout Chapters 2-17, providing students the opportunity to practice different elements and build on more solid foundations before being required to use the entire scheme. In other words, students will work through the material in the majority of this text before needing to understand or use all the conventions found in example (P.7).

I use the term *annotation scheme* to reflect the fact that each unit receives a symbol or label to indicate its form and function; in other words, each grammatical unit is annotated (i.e., explained or described through the use of labels), and those annotations are pre-defined in a scheme (i.e., a pre-defined system or plan). The labels used throughout the annotation scheme often require an added layer of depth beyond identifying the larger lexical category; for instance, students are asked to categorize each verb form as intransitive, copular, monotransitive, ditransitive, or complex-transitive. This level of attention to detail throughout the text means that students are constantly practicing the skills they learned in earlier chapters.

One problem I have encountered while teaching grammar in the past is that students would develop strong skills in identifying grammatical information for a single unit but then forget those basic foundational skills as we moved on to other units because they were no longer required to label or analyze those basic constituents. In an attempt to stop the decline in skill and knowledge across the semester, I incorporate practice sets and exercises within each chapter that require students to apply not only the new concepts from that chapter but the old concepts from previous chapters. By asking them to continuously practice the analytic skills they learn in each chapter, their awareness of the interaction among constituent types grew.

Chapter 1: Linguists, linguistics, and grammar

Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language. —Ludwig Wittgenstein

1.1 Introduction to linguistics

Linguistics as a field is best and most concisely defined as the scientific study of language. However, for many students new to linguistics, that definition doesn't provide enough information to understand what the field covers, so this section begins with a closer look at the three main words in the definition: *language*, *scientific*, and *study*. First, the word *language* does not refer to a specific language or set of languages; instead, it is used in its more abstract definition that refers to any structured system, whether it is spoken, signed, or written, that allows humans to effectively communicate their thoughts to other humans. While linguistics as a discipline does not restrict the definition of *language* to a single language, many linguists choose to specialize in a specific language or language family, such as focusing on English grammar or patterns of sound changes in Germanic languages.

The types of thoughts that can be communicated via language are not restricted. You can use language to talk about concrete objects like computers, pencils, and desks, but you can also use language to talk about abstract ideas like theories, gravity, and grammar. You can use language to communicate about people, events, or situations in the past, present, or future because you are not restricted to the here and now when you use language. Not only that, you can use language to talk about both real and imagined worlds. Because of language's far-reaching capabilities to express thoughts, you and I can hold a debate about whether Harry Potter or Viktor Krum is the better Quidditch player.

The three major modes of language communication are spoken, signed, and written. Spoken language refers to language produced vocally and received aurally and covers a wide variety of language situations, such as face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, video chats, classroom lectures, speeches, recorded interviews, and podcasts. Signed language refers to language produced manually and received visually or through a tactile method (e.g., communication with people who are both deaf and blind requires signing into their hands), such as American Sign Language. Both spoken and signed languages are natural forms of language, which means communities of speakers or signers spontaneously create and share these forms of language, and humans are born with an innate ability to acquire them. Unless a child has a specific language impairment or disorder, hearing babies naturally acquire the spoken and/or signed languages they are exposed to, and deaf babies naturally acquire the signed languages they are exposed to. Spoken and signed languages are as old as human societies themselves.

Written language, on the other hand, is neither naturally produced nor naturally acquired. Ancient artifacts provide evidence that humans created the earliest writing systems over 5,000 years ago to represent spoken languages in written form. Although written language is based on a spoken or signed form, the written form differs in its linguistic features, uses, and expectations, so the way you write does not match the way you speak. As someone who lives in a literate society, it can be difficult to imagine living in a society without written language, yet as many as nearly half of the world's languages do not have a written form. Some linguists argue that

scholars should only study spoken and signed languages since those are the forms natural to humans, but this text focuses on written English to investigate linguistic features specifically associated with its various forms for several reasons, including these three: (1) when learning grammatical features, it is easier to begin with written forms, which tend to be more edited and polished than spoken language; (2) the majority of students who learn grammar need to apply those concepts to features of written language; and (3) once you learn to identify and analyze features of written language, you can apply those same concepts to spoken language.

The second word I will focus on from the definition is *scientific*. Linguistics is a scientific discipline, and as such, linguists approach data as scientists, relying on the scientific method. While biologists might use the reactions of protons, neutrons, and electrons in specific environments as their data, the types of data studied by linguists are examples of language use, such as pronunciation, word usage, grammatical structure, or discourse style. To make sense of those instances of language use, linguists must first observe how speakers, writers, or signers naturally use language. Based on those observations, linguists question, for example, why a particular sound changes in some environments but not others or why a particular type of word is placed at the front of some sentences but not others. Those questions lead to hypotheses, or testable ideas that attempt to answer those questions. Linguists then study more data or conduct experiments to find out if their hypotheses are solid, analyze the results of their study or experiment, and draw conclusions based on their analyses.

Throughout this book, you will be asked to follow that same approach as you look at examples of written language data:

- **observe** how language is used
- **question** why language is used in those ways or what significance those features have
- **research** what experts in the field are saying, which may lead to reframing your original question because the stronger the question, the stronger the finished product
- **hypothesize** a potential answer to your question, acknowledging your assumptions and biases and justifying your hypothesis by supporting it with research
- **conduct** a study or experiment to test your hypothesis, collecting the data you need
- **analyze** the results, looking for patterns within the data
- **conclude** whether your data support your hypothesis and, if so, how strongly, and, if necessary, provide alternative interpretations for your data

These seven steps appear to be linear, leaving some students with the impression that you can treat it like a check-off list, moving from one task to the next. However, the process usually not a linear one; for instance, you may be analyzing the results from your study only to find that you need to return to your original question to reframe your goals. While *conclude* may sound like a final stage, it is a segue into more investigations, which brings a line from the Semisonic song “Closing Time” to mind: “Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” Linguists appreciate that you often learn more from being wrong than being right, and conclusions often specify how the study could be improved or expanded for future applications by pointing out some of the study’s limitations and/or shortcomings.

The last word I will focus on from the definition of *linguistics* is *study*. Linguists often take one of three major approaches when studying language: theoretical, typological, or applied. **Theoretical studies** aim to describe how language works at its core; linguistic theories can be further divided into three major categories: phonological theories, which focus on the sounds of language; morpho-syntactic theories, which focus on grammar; and semantic theories, which focus on meaning. At their best, theories should be language neutral, meaning they should be applicable to any language and not just to a single language or language family, whether the theories are formal or functional. Formal theories focus on the forms or structures rather than meaning or usage and typically assume an underlying structure that is common to all languages (i.e., a universal grammar). Functional theories focus on the usage or practice and consider meaning and often cognition as integral while not assuming a unifying underlying structure for language. **Typological studies** aim to describe features shared by languages, as well as isolating those features that only occur in a single language or language family. The larger goal of typological studies is to categorize languages and better understand what is possible in human language, as well as trying to understand *why* certain features or structures do not occur naturally in languages. Finally, **applied studies** are interdisciplinary in nature and aim to discover how studies of language intersect with at least one other academic field of study.

Every study begins with observations and questions, and the type of questions being asked depend on the approach taken by the linguist. I will walk you through an example observation and demonstrate ways you can ask questions that are tailored to these three different approaches. The beginning observation for this discussion is that writers often use quotatives, or dialogue tags, with direct quotations to show who is speaking; in the sentence, “*Let’s go!*” *Dane yelled*, the quotative is *Dane yelled*, which appears alongside the direct quotation “*Let’s go!*” The specific example I want to focus on comes from the book *Anybody Out There?* by Marian Keyes (2006): “*Siddown,*” *she Don Corleoned*. The quotative *she Don Corleoned* serves as my observation in the paragraphs below as I demonstrate the types of questions I can ask for the three major approaches to studying linguistics.

Taking a theoretical perspective, I could focus on the grammatical relationship between the quotative and direct quotation to investigate how creative verbs like *Don Corleoned* can be used in quotatives. My investigations would focus on understanding what grammatical roles the direct quotation and quotative take in the larger sentence structure and what allowances are made for verbs that do not typically fit the expected pattern. In other words, I would want to know how a noun like *Don Corleone* could be used as a verb to indicate speech and how that affects the grammatical relationships within the larger sentence structure. To figure that out, I would need to analyze a variety of examples from different sources, focusing on demonstrating a grammatical relationship between a quotative and quotation to connect to this specific example. In theoretical approaches, data analysis is grounded in a specific theory, such as Role and Reference Grammar, Transformational Grammar, or Cognitive Grammar, so theoretical approaches require having a firm foundation in the area being studied, such as grammar, and in a particular theory that is applied to natural language data.

From a typological perspective, I want to know if other languages that utilize quotatives allow for creative verb use like *Don Corleoned*. To answer that question, I need data from a variety of languages that include examples of direct quotations; because my original observation

is in written language and features an example that would not likely be included in spoken language, a good place to start such a study is with written data, such as novels, from other languages. My goal in this type of study is to understand whether other languages allow creative verbs and, if they do, whether there are patterns with the types of verbs used. Typological approaches require access to data in a variety of languages and an ability to work with data from those languages.

Finally, from an applied perspective, the types of questions I might ask depend on the field(s) I want to integrate with my research. If I were focusing on education, my questions might target how readers and/or language learners are able to interpret creative quotative verbs like *Don Corleoned*. If I were focusing on psychology and cognition, I might want to know how the brain works as it reads such a sentence and to find out, through eye-tracking studies, if readers have to back-track to understand verbs like *Don Corleoned* in that context. Yet another area of interest is stylometry, or the study of stylistics and understanding language choices made by particular authors. From that angle, I'd be more interested in understanding whether authors show individual preferences for verbs in their quotatives. Applied approaches require a firm foundation in both linguistics and the other field(s) being integrated with the study.

While certainly not exhaustive, these sample discussions could spur different types of studies and demonstrate that the approach taken to a single observation alters how the final product takes shape. Because this text focuses on better learning patterns of grammar rather than assuming an already existing foundation in the subject, its approach will not be theoretical. This text focuses solely on English grammar, so the approach is not typological. Instead, I take an applied approach to studying grammar: I introduce features of English grammar as a foundation and ask you to apply that information to other fields, such as genre studies, literary analysis, and education.

1.2 The linguist's toolbox

Regardless of the end goal for their studies, linguists have six major units of language or tools they use for their analyses. These six units are the basic building blocks of language and are, thus, the basic features of all linguistic studies, whether they are theoretical, typological, or applied. These six units are often called the six subfields of linguistic study.

The first subfield is **phonetics**, where the units being studied are the individual sounds humans can produce. Phonetics can be further broken down into articulatory phonetics, which studies how humans produce the sounds based on physiological features; acoustic phonetics, which examines the properties of sound and how it travels from one speaker to another, including features like sound waves; and auditory phonetics, which focuses on sound perception, including how sound travels through the ear canal and how the brain processes those sounds. The second subfield, **phonology**, builds on the study of phonetics; the basic units in phonology are phonemes, which are language-specific sounds that can change meaning. An example of a phoneme in English is /t/; if you consider a word that has a /t/ in it, such as *to*, and change it to

the closely related phoneme /d/,² you get an entirely new word in English: *do*. In other languages, switching those two sounds would not produce a change in meaning but would only result in an odd pronunciation. When talking about sounds, it is important to draw the distinction between sounds and spelling because a language's spelling system, or its **orthography**, is a social convention for writing words and does not necessarily reflect pronunciation. When linguists study phonetics and phonology, they rely on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to transcribe words for analyzing sounds. IPA is consistent while spelling is not; for instance, the pronunciation [taɪm] in English can be spelled *time* or *thyme*, which are two words with distinct spellings yet a shared pronunciation. Using IPA allows linguists to focus on the sounds being produced.

English spelling often differs from pronunciation for historical reasons. When English speakers borrowed words, they often kept the original spelling or a close proximation of that spelling, which is one reason the current English spelling system is so complex. English has a system that preserves the historical journeys of words rather than a system that favors the current pronunciation. For instance, words spelled with <ph> but pronounced [f], such as *photograph* and *phonology*, are Greek in origin. Words spelled with <eau> combinations, such as *beauty* and *chateau*, are borrowed from French.

Along with borrowings, other historical factors influenced the spelling system. Even words that are native to English have a preserved historical spelling, with spellings that often reflect how words used to be pronounced rather than how they are currently pronounced; for example, *knee*, *knight*, and *enough* are all native to English but reflect pronunciations no longer in use. Prior to the fifteenth century, Middle English scribes spelled words to roughly match their pronunciation; however, because regional dialects were so different, texts written in northern England would be difficult for readers in southern England to understand. Because texts were painstakingly produced by hand and not widely distributed, those spelling differences were not as problematic as they would be for today's readers. After William Caxton introduced the printing press to England in 1476, texts were able to be mass produced and distributed, which caused English's spelling system to become standardized over the next century, creating a rift for many speakers between spelling and pronunciation. In other words, readers across England could read the same text, but not all of them pronounced the words in ways that matched their spelling.

Because English's spelling system became standardized, modern English readers can read a manuscript of *Hamlet*, written by Shakespeare, which was published in 1623:

- (1.1) *Mar.* Peace, breake thee of: *Enter the Ghost.*
 Looke where it comes againe.
Barn. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.
Mar. Thou art a Scholler; speake to it *Horatio*.
Barn. Lookes it not like the King? Marke it *Horatio*.
Hora. Most like: It harrowes me with fear & wonder.

² Pronounce [t] and [d] back-to-back to feel just how similarly those two sounds are pronounced. The only difference in them is voicing, a feature you can feel by lightly placing your hand on the front of your throat as you say the sounds.

The spelling of some words differ slightly with an added <e> at the end of the word, including *breake* and *speake*, and the word *scholar* was spelled *Scholler*. Even with those differences, the manuscript, which was published nearly 400 years ago, is accessible to modern readers. While some students bemoan English's spelling system, its standardization allows modern readers to read documents hundreds of years old and communicate with English speakers world-wide, regardless of their native regional dialect.

The units for study within the subfield of morphology are **morphemes**, or the smallest units in language that carry meaning. While sounds can affect meaning, individual sounds do not carry their own meaning. Morphemes, on the other hand, can be as small as a single sound (e.g., *a*, *I*) but can also be much more complex (e.g., *car*, *carrot*, *-ology*). Free morphemes can stand alone as their own word (e.g., *a*, *I*, *car*, *carrot*, *walk*) while bound morphemes must be attached to another morpheme (e.g., *-s*, *-er*, *un-*, *pre-*, *-ology*). Prefixes and suffixes are types of bound morphemes in English and play an important role in helping to determine syntactic information, including a word's lexical category. **Inflectional morphemes** add grammatical information to a word, such as making a noun plural with the inflectional *-s* or making a verb past tense with the inflectional *-ed*. For example, the noun *cats* includes the free morpheme *cat* and the bound inflectional morpheme *-s*. When looking words up in the dictionary, you need to use its **unmarked**, or citation, form, which means the base form that does not carry any inflections (e.g., *cat* has a dictionary entry while *cats* does not).

Derivational morphemes add semantic content, change the meaning of the word as a whole, and can even change a word's part of speech. The derivational morpheme *mis-* can be added to the verb *inform* to change its meaning to a verb that means to provide bad or false information; the derivational *-ation* can then be added to the newly derived *misinform* to turn it into a noun meaning the result or product of providing bad or false information.

The majority of English's derivational affixes have been borrowed from other languages, especially French and Latin, both of which are Romance languages. Although English is a Germanic language with sister languages that include German and Dutch, historical events changed the face of the language. One historical event in particular that changed English was the Norman Conquest. In 1066, the Normans, who spoke a variety of French, conquered England, creating a social situation where the peasants spoke English in their daily lives but the ruling class spoke French. Over time, many French words were adopted into English, especially words dealing with trade, the legal system, and high society, and through those borrowings, English's derivational system grew. During the Scientific Revolution, English borrowed words from both Latin and Greek, which also provided the language with more derivational affixes.

In morphology, you can study not only the individual parts of words but also how new words can be created in languages through word-formation processes, such as compounding (e.g., *doghouse*, *eggplant*, *jet lag*) and blending (e.g., *smog*, *spork*, *Brangelina*). Morphology focuses on the different shapes words can take in language and how changing the shapes affects the uses of words.

Morphology frequently overlaps with the next subfield, **syntax**, in which the smallest units are words; in syntax, linguists study how those individual words come together in language to create larger units like phrases and clauses (e.g., sentences) and how speakers are able to get meaning out of those units. Syntax most often coincides with what people associate with the

study of grammar, as syntax is primarily concerned with grammatical patterns and word order in language. For many people, studying grammar means studying where punctuation should be placed, where capital letters should be used, how to use a particular word, or what a style guide says about language use. These approaches are part of **prescriptive** grammar, which is not what most linguists study. For linguists, studying syntax is about studying how native speakers actually use their language.

Linguists use a **descriptive** approach, which involves describing how native speakers and writers naturally build clauses and sentences in English rather than laying down rules for how they *should* use their language. For example, a prescriptive grammarian would say that using *ain't* is ungrammatical; on the other hand, a descriptive grammarian would say that *ain't* is a productive and, thus, grammatical word for many English speakers, though its use is often limited to informal contexts. Native speakers intuitively follow a system of rules or patterns when speaking and writing, and sentences that do not follow these native structures are deemed ungrammatical. For instance, the sentence *Cat ran out door* is ungrammatical and sounds awkward or non-native to English speakers. While English speakers can judge that sentence as ungrammatical, many could not describe *why* it sounds ungrammatical, other than saying that *a* or *the* should be inserted before *cat* and *door*. After studying syntax, you can build on that, saying that, in English, singular common count nouns like *cat* and *door* need to be supported by a determiner, such as *a* or *the*, to sound grammatical to native speakers. These descriptive requirements are features of syntax.

Building from there, **semantics** deals with lexical meaning (i.e., the meaning of words) and how that meaning can be shaped or shifted by context. For example, in semantics, you can study a word like *fox* and find out that, in English, it refers to a type of animal, more specifically a mammal within the dog family. Furthermore, the prototypical fox for many American English speakers is a red fox, which is the same kind of fox as Tod in *Fox and the Hound*, but the fox family also includes other foxes, such as the Arctic, Fennec, Bengal, and Kit foxes, all of which look different than the red-furred animal Americans typically think of when they hear *fox*. You can go further and focus on how the word has been used by speakers and writers in English to find out that the meaning of *fox* has been extended to character traits often associated with foxes, such as cleverness, trickiness, and slyness. In Modern English, you can call a cunning or sly person a fox or even say that someone has *outfoxed* you. Specifically in American English, *fox* took on yet another meaning, and beautiful women might be referred to as foxes. These types of analyses are a part of semantics.

Sometimes the words, phrases, or sentences that you say or write mean more than the sum of their parts. In other words, sometimes your intended meaning requires the recipient to read or hear “between the lines,” so to speak. Broader contextual meanings and cultural expectations are a part of the sixth subfield of linguistics, **pragmatics**. In pragmatics, linguists try to understand issues like how linguistic and situational contexts around the spoken or written words can bring meaning to those utterances and how past experiences shape understanding of language. As a simple example, while I am teaching at the front of a classroom, the hallway might fill up with noisy students, making it difficult for my students to hear me. There are many options for what I might say or do in such a situation; for instance, I might go to the door and tell the noisy students, “We are trying to have class in here.” The message from the words

themselves are like a Captain Obvious statement: after all, what else would a classroom full of students with a teacher at the front of the room be doing? The intended meaning, though, is different than what was actually said; the intended meaning was closer to “Be quiet” or “How rude! Quiet down!” If I don’t feel like going to the door and giving an evil eye to the noisy students in the hallway, I might also make eye contact with someone in the back row of the classroom and say, “Could you get the door for me?” If you think about those individual words and what they mean in that question literally, the question stops making sense. In its literal meaning, the question asks the student about the possibility of whether (s)he is able to reach/grab/touch/hold the door—the meaning of *get* is difficult to nail down. Given the broader context for the statement and cultural expectations for making polite requests, though, the student should be able to understand that what I’m really saying is “Close the door.” In another context, “Could you get the door for me?” might mean “Open the door” (e.g., if I’m struggling to carry a big box and a coffee while approaching a closed door). Pragmatic investigations can delve into how and why intended meaning differs from literal meaning.

While all six subfields will be mentioned through the text, the three that play the largest roles in this book are syntax, morphology, and semantics. The focus is on understanding English syntax through an examination of naturally occurring written English texts, which requires some understanding of morphology and semantics.

1.3 Data collection methods

The ways in which linguists collect data are diverse and determined by both the end goal for the work (i.e., theoretical, typological, or applied) and the subfield of linguistics selected as the focus of the study. This section introduces six basic methods for collecting linguistic data, but regardless of the collection method, the first stage for any project or analysis is to conduct research so the linguist can better understand what other scholars have already concluded and place their own work within a larger context or linguistic framework. Stages of linguistic study beyond the observe, question, and research stages are also often punctuated by research: the importance of research when collecting and analyzing data cannot be overstated.

The least preferred method for collecting data is relying on intuition. For instance, if I want to study the grammatical placement of adverbs in English, I could rely on my intuitions as a native English speaker and come up with a list of example sentences to use as data:

- (1.2) a. Happily, we have visited Missouri every summer.
 b. We happily have visited Missouri every summer.
 c. We have happily visited Missouri every summer.
 d. *We have visited happily Missouri every summer.³
 e. We have visited Missouri happily every summer.
 f. * We have visited Missouri every happily summer.
 g. We have visited Missouri every summer happily.

³ Asterisks (*) mark ungrammatical or non-native sentences.

I can use these examples as data and make the hypothesis that adverbs can be placed in many locations within a sentence but do not typically occur between a verb and its object, as in (d), or between a determiner and its noun, as in (f). Some theoretical and applied studies can rely on intuition to begin the process of identifying key features of language use, but relying on intuition alone throughout an entire study leads to misidentified patterns or problematic assumptions about language use.

Surveys and interviews are data collection methods that tend to be useful for sociolinguists, who study the social application of language. Through surveys, linguists can identify key differences in dialects, such as word use or pronunciations, and speaker judgments on the grammaticality of sentences. For instance, the Harvard Dialect Survey⁴ was sent out electronically to English speakers all over the United States to map particular pronunciations, vocabulary items, and grammatical constructions that are associated with regional variations of American English. One of the questions from the survey is provided below:

- (1.3) What do you call the insect that flies around in the summer and has a rear section that glows in the dark?
- a. lightning bug
 - b. firefly
 - c. I use lightning bug and firefly interchangeably
 - d. peenie wallie
 - e. I have no word for this
 - f. other

Out of the 10,733 people who answered this question, nearly 40% use *lightning bug* and *firefly* interchangeably; both *lightning bug* and *firefly* are popular answers, with 30% of respondents voting for each of those options. Those three options together comprise just over 99% of the responses. Fewer than one percent of the participants have no word or use another word for the insect, and only 0.02% of speakers use *peenie wallie*; the speakers who use *peenie wallie* are restricted to eastern Wisconsin and central Texas.

Surveys like this one are helpful to gather a lot of results quickly and to get reactions of language users to particular examples, but interviews are more helpful when researchers need qualitative data to understand the reasons behind the respondents' answers. For instance, the survey results here indicate that people frequently use *lightning bug* and *firefly* interchangeably, but a series of interviews with people who selected that option could allow researchers to understand if one term holds a different connotation than the other term, allowing the researcher to learn, for instance, if there are certain times a speaker would prefer one term over the other and why.

Linguists who study cognitive aspects of language often rely on experiments to collect their data. For instance, Peter Walker (2016) conducted an experiment to explore the connection among lexical meanings, their sounds, and visual cues. To test some of these connections, he set up an experiment where participants ranked typefaces (i.e., fonts) according to the types of

⁴ More information about this survey can be found at <http://www4.uwm.edu/FLL/linguistics/dialect/index.html>.

sounds they associated with those typefaces. Walker found that participants associated thinner and lighter fonts with higher, faster sounds while they associated thicker and darker fonts with lower, slower sounds. Based on those associations, he found that participants could more quickly identify the types of sounds made by instruments when presented in an appropriately matched typeface; for instance, consider the pairs below:

- (1.4) a. *piccolo*
b. **piccolo**

- (1.5) a. *tuba*
b. **tuba**

Participants were able to more quickly identify *piccolo* as associated with a high-pitched sound when presented in Palatino Italic (1.4a) than when it was presented in Cooper Black (1.3b); on the other hand, participants were able to more quickly identify *tuba* as associated with a low-pitch sound when presented in Cooper Black (1.5b).

In another experiment, Bo Yao, Pascal Belin, and Christoph Scheepers (2011) presented participants with short stories; participants read those stories while sitting in a scanner that identified the active areas of the brain and wearing goggles that tracked eye movement. In pairing those results, Yao, Belin, and Scheepers found that readers are more likely to experience what they called an “inner voice” when reading direct speech (e.g., *She said, “I want to study grammar”*) than when reading indirect speech (e.g., *She said that she wanted to study grammar*). Their findings indicate that readers more actively process and imagine the sounds of a character’s voice when the writer incorporates direct speech.

If linguists want to study how native speakers use language in more natural settings, they can record interactions for analysis. For example, in spoken American English, speakers can set up a direct quotation by beginning with *She was like* or *He’s like*, as in *She’s like, “I don’t wanna do that.”* Jessie Sams (2010) and Barbara A. Fox and Jessica Robles (2010) recorded conversations and analyzed speakers’ uses of *it’s like*, finding that American English speakers can use *it’s like* to demonstrate or re-enact a feeling or emotion rather than summarizing or quoting a previous interaction. Consider the example below:

- (1.6) it’s like a continuous 8 hours—it’s not like “oh, check my email here, you know, check the internet there.” (Sams 2010)

In this conversation, the speaker, Ivy, who is an accountant, is talking to a friend about her work schedule and how it changes during tax season. She is trying to convey that she is busier than normal and has little to no spare time during her eight-hour work day. She uses *it’s like* twice to set up an enactment of her work day. The second time, she frames what follows *it’s like* as a direct quotation, yet she is not quoting a previous statement or thought. Instead, she’s acting out the flow of a hypothetical day. Later in the conversation, she uses *it’s like* again to try to better capture how busy her days can be:

(1.7) but it's just like "oh, it's crazy"

In her utterance, *it's like* sets up an enactment of how she feels during the day. When linguists record conversations in studies like these, they are able to draw conclusions about natural speech in everyday situations.

Linguists can also work with native speakers of a target language and elicit data to document, record, and analyze structures of that language. For example, Ilana Mushin (2005) collected data from Garrwa, an indigenous Australian language, and used that data to demonstrate how speakers of Garrwa use clause connectors (i.e., conjunctions) in narratives, or stories, to indicate time and/or discourse participants. For instance, Garrwa speakers can use conjunctions to indicate who is speaking or who is involved in the story. Fieldwork is the foundation of typological studies, as languages need to be described before features from languages can be compared.

When linguists base their work on written language, they can utilize corpora to study language features. **Corpora**, which is the plural form of the word *corpus*, are most commonly defined as collections of written texts. Some corpora are specific to an author; for instance, I could rely on a corpus of Shakespeare's works to identify uses of specific phrases or words within his writing. To qualify as a linguistics corpus, the collection of written texts needs to be machine-readable; that is, the corpus needs to be searchable, allowing a linguist to perform a search to find all matching examples. While corpora can also include spoken language, any instances of spoken language must first be transcribed (i.e., put into written form) so linguists can perform searches using a computer. Corpora can be used for many different purposes and can be used for any of the three approaches to studying linguistics. As an example of corpus-based research, Douglas Biber (2009) used a corpus to find that one of the most frequent and productive four-word phrases in academic writing is *the * of the*, where a content word like *end* or *beginning* fills the slot indicated by the asterisk (*). Corpora allow linguists not only to identify patterns in natural language use but also to understand the frequency of those patterns.

While some intuition-based information will be provided in this book, the primary data-collection method utilized is corpora; the most frequently cited corpus in this book is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which is available online. The COCA was created and is maintained by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University, and, as of March 2016, the corpus includes 520 million words taken from over 190,000 texts from 1990-2015, representing spoken, fiction, news writing, and academic sources. Exploring corpora allows you to see how English is used in different types of writing and provides examples of how writers naturally use English rather than relying on how you *think* they use the language. In other words, this text relies on an applied approach to written English grammar, focusing on syntax, morphology, and semantics, through the use of corpora.

1.4 Introduction to grammar

There are people who believe words are the driving force of a language and a language is the sum of its vocabulary. While words can be beautiful, transport you to a memory, and carry hints of their own history with them, they cannot function on their own. Without grammar, words lose their communicative value. Grammar tells you how to take a pile of words and turn them

into meaningful structures that can be used for communication. Grammar gives you the ability and power to transform strings of words into expositions, persuasions, humorous tales, and poetry. Grammar gives you ways to use language as a tool to represent ideas, messages, concepts, and feelings you want to convey to others. Grammar allows you to communicate and socialize—it allows you to do what makes you human. As the heart of language, you might say that grammar is also the heart of humanity.

Because grammar is driven by human societies, it is not a static set of rules or information; instead, grammar offers a dynamic system of encoding social and cultural information in communication with others. John E. Joseph (2013) argues that the word *language* should be treated as a verb rather than a noun because the word *language* denotes a process rather than an entity; Diane Larsen-Freeman (2003) agrees with that sentiment and argues for treating *grammar* as a verb, too, and she creates the term *grammaring* to reflect that verbal status. Olga Liamkina and Marianna Ryshina-Pankova (2012) build on the idea of grammar being dynamic and active, writing that grammar reflects “the speakers’ need to make sense of reality, external and internal, and to share their understanding of it with others” (272). As society changes, grammar can shift to reflect those changes, which provides grammar with a unique sort of diachronic shiftiness: society determines what is acceptable in language use, and as society shifts, so do sensibilities on what should be allowed in the language.

Unfortunately, how people use the word *grammar* in everyday contexts is different than the positive image described in the previous two paragraphs. The majority of American college students are familiar with the word *grammar*, having encountered the word primarily in school settings; however, when asked to define *grammar*, some students struggle to put into words what they associate with grammar while other students recite long-held beliefs about grammar that should, perhaps, be questioned. The way grammar is treated in American education is often problematic.

Problems with defining grammar and grammatical concepts often begin in primary schools. Many teachers self-report that they do not have a strong foundation in grammar, which feeds into a host of problems for the students: poor explanations leave students feeling frustrated that their questions can’t be answered, prescriptive approaches make students feel like their dialect or home language is inferior, and detached presentations of grammar don’t provide students with any understanding of why they should learn the concepts in the first place. Another problem is that if teachers don’t have a solid foundation in grammar themselves, they are more likely to choose a poor text as a source for teaching the subject; you can imagine how much this problem is compounded when a state representative or school administrator who has no background in grammar selects the text. The grammar textbooks chosen for schools sometimes present misleading or outright wrong information. Finally, if teachers dread grammar, that dread will show through in the classroom. Standing in front of students and trying to teach something you yourself don’t fully understand is uncomfortable; furthermore, preparation is difficult and time-consuming, and taking student questions can lead to anxiety. Many middle and high school teachers avoid teaching grammar altogether or only provide students with publisher-created worksheets that accompany the state-selected textbooks.

If teachers dread grammar, it usually rubs off on their students, who learn to dread the subject and end up not wanting to study or understand it themselves. The majority of students

never learn the joy of analyzing language or learn to appreciate it for all its complexity and hidden treasures. Even more problematic is that students are convinced they can't learn to utilize different registers,⁵ such as formal academic language, because they believe they can't speak or write well and never will. Even sadder is that people leave school thinking they need to apologize for their language use. Your dialect and your language use are connected to your identities; apologizing for how you speak is essentially apologizing for who you are and where you come from. Putting all those problems together, it isn't difficult to see how grammar has garnered a bad reputation and is treated like a four-letter word. People joke that if you just met someone at a party and want to end the conversation quickly, you should tell them you're a grammarian. Chances are, they'll stop talking to you and run the other direction.

Along with its problematic reputation, the word *grammar* is not consistently defined. The 3rd edition of *The New Oxford American Dictionary* provides the following definition:

the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics.

- [usually with a modifier] a particular analysis of the system and structure of language or of a specific language.
- a book on grammar: *my old Latin grammar*.
- a set of actual or presumed prescriptive notions about correct use of a language: *it was not bad grammar, just dialect*.
- the basic elements of an area of knowledge or skill: *the grammar of wine*.
- *Computing* a set of rules governing what strings are valid or allowable in a language or text.

While all the bulleted definitions are inherently related, the specific applications for the word *grammar* listed above are different enough that they can cause problems when one speaker is referring to one use of *grammar* while another speaker is thinking of a different one. This difference is especially problematic in academic settings, when scholars or teachers start with the assumption that *grammar* refers to one of these specific definitions without explicitly sharing their assumption with their readers or students.

The larger definition of *grammar* states that some people view grammar as including syntax and morphology while others also group phonology and semantics into the study of grammar. Recall from the last section that syntax is the study of how language users put words together into larger, meaningful structures and morphology is the study of how words shift shapes to change their meaning and/or use. While some view syntax as the study of grammar, grammar involves more than just syntax. In fact, you can find the phrases *grammar and syntax* or *syntax and grammar*, which indicates that the two words are slightly different. The examples from COCA demonstrate the co-occurrence of *grammar* and *syntax*:

⁵ The term *register* is a broader term than *genre* and indicates that the language used differs based on medium (i.e., written or spoken), communicative purpose, and audience. Therefore, two texts can be considered the same genre but different registers; for example, an informative email written to a good friend will likely exhibit different linguistic features than an informative email written to a boss.

- (1.8)
- a. proper vocabulary, grammar and syntax in Japanese.
 - b. We utilize borrowed languages and technologies but retain vernacular grammar and syntax.
 - c. it seems clear to me, from the grammar and syntax, that Hawthorne is suggesting that the Jewishness in Miriam stems from her mother.
 - d. do take the time to educate yourself in the basics of grammar and syntax.
 - e. weaknesses in expressive syntax and grammar.
 - f. Syntax and grammar were affected more than other areas.
 - g. We use phonics along with meaning, syntax and grammar.

If *grammar* and *syntax* were synonymous, these example sentences would not make much sense. Instead, they demonstrate that the study of grammar requires more than the study of syntax, which is why this text also provides information about morphology and semantics. While a full grammar of English would likely contain information about phonology, the focus of this book is on written English rather than spoken English, so phonology will not play a large role in these examinations of language use.

I searched *grammar* on COCA, which provided 3,110 results; COCA provides a function to request a random sampling, and I requested a random sample of 100 instances from those results. Out of those 100 examples, 56 relate to the third bulleted definition: a prescriptive use of the word, assuming that grammar consists of a set of rules about how to use grammar correctly. Examples of these prescriptive uses of *grammar* include the following:

- (1.9)
- a. They learned about commas. They learned about **grammar**. Some of them learned how to diagram sentences
 - b. I had a **grammar** test that afternoon
 - c. Letters may be edited for length, **grammar** and accuracy.
 - d. your **grammar**'s a little rough, but you have a lot to say.
 - e. apart from my bad **grammar**, how close do you think President Obama and Speaker Boehner are to a deal

Viewing grammar as a set of rules for “correctness” means viewing grammar as static and unchanging. Phrases like “bad grammar” or “perfect grammar” indicate that society often views grammar as something to be judged and fixed according to a set of pre-set rules, and, indeed, many students associate grammar with judgments or advice about how they should be speaking or writing. Some academic areas require this kind of prescriptive approach to grammar; for instance, teachers of English composition courses need to be able to explain prescriptive grammatical standards for academic language or other formal genres to their students. However, they should also teach students that prescriptive rules for academic and formal language do not always apply to daily interactions with language. If you are a native speaker of English, the way you use your own language should not be judged as “bad” or “wrong.” Instead, you should be taught to recognize that the way you use English when texting friends differs from the way you use it to write an academic paper.

The website *Word and Phrase*, which is a sister website of COCA, provides common collocates for words; collocates are words that frequently occur near or directly beside the word you're interested in. The *Word and Phrase* results state that the most common adjectives found with *grammar* are *English*, *correct*, and *proper*. The high frequency of *correct* and *proper* alongside *grammar* indicates that society often equates grammar with judgments about language use, which is a prescriptive approach to studying grammar, and focus on the need to fix or correct a person's grammar. I will not describe grammar as *good*, *bad*, *correct*, or *wrong*; instead, I will describe grammar as *dialectal*, *atypical*, *non-native*, or *changing*. For instance, the sentence "I believe that grammar fun is" is not "bad" grammar; instead, it is not native English grammar. Again, prescriptive approaches do have their place in education, but prescriptive rules must be explicitly taught. Native English speakers naturally acquire the descriptive rules for speaking in English, but they must be taught the prescriptive rules. If teachers tell students their home dialect is "wrong" or "bad English," those negative judgments set up students for failure.

Furthermore, many prescriptive approaches tend to ignore the diversity of the English language: English is spoken as a native language around the globe, including countries as geographically dispersed as the U.S., England, India, Australia, and South Africa, and each of those locations has diverse speakers, providing a rich range of dialects, which differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Within a specific dialect, genre and register variations provide a wide range of acceptability. In other words, prescriptive approaches often ignore the fact that how I write in a text message to my best friend differs from how a British scholar writes in an academic journal because our situations, contexts, and goals differ. Grammar choices, being dynamic, necessarily reflect situation, context, audience, and purpose.

I will not attempt to fix anyone's grammar in this book; instead, the goal is to better understand why an author constructed the message with that particular set of grammatical rules. No matter how informal, no matter how dialectal, language follows a set of grammatical rules. Without such rules in place, readers would not be able to approach a text or understand the content of a text. What you will find is that a text's genre or register has a large influence on the expectations for certain grammatical features.

In this book, you will study how writers shift words and use them to create English sentences and how readers are able to get meaning out of those sentences, which reflects the previously stated goal that the text will focus on morphology (word formation), syntax (sentence/ clause formation), and semantics (meaning). Because this approach to studying grammar is a descriptive one, I will seek to describe how native speakers and writers naturally build sentences and clauses in English and not lay down rules for how they *should* use English.

Grammar is a practice of identifying patterns and understanding how those patterns can shift in particular contexts. At its core, my goal in this book is to define different types of grammatical categories and prototypical expectations for those categories; my goal for you as readers is that you will be able to use that information to analyze any English sentence you encounter. As an example of how you can categorize and apply general expectations to categories, consider the following list of items, all of which are part of a larger "tool" category:

- hammer
- screwdriver
- wrench
- shovel
- rake
- hoe
- measuring cup
- mixer
- paring knife

While all these items are useful in their own way, they are useful in different contexts: I'd most likely want the hammer, screwdriver, and wrench with me if I'm working on projects around the house, but I'd prefer to have the measuring cup, mixer, and paring knife in the kitchen. Within that set of tools, I see three distinct categories based on my expectations for how I regularly use those tools: (1) hand tools, (2) garden tools, and (3) kitchen tools. Belonging to one category doesn't mean those tools could never be used in other capacities. For instance, while the hammer belongs to the hand tool set, I could imagine using it as a kitchen tool to crush almonds. In that particular instance, the hammer has become a kitchen tool.

Words and grammar behave in a similar way: they can be categorized based on how they are typically used, but they can also function outside category boundaries. Therefore, being able to identify the lexical category a word belongs to is an interdependent process: it requires using contextual information to figure out how a word is being used within a particular context. You have to look at the whole picture to label the individual parts. Most language use doesn't clearly fall into one category or another. Categorizing concrete objects, which are physical and able to be seen, touched, and overtly used, is difficult enough. Now consider how much harder it is to work with language, which is abstract and changes to fit the needs of the societies using it. Think about how much more difficult it would be to categorize the concrete objects listed above if they started changing shapes while you work. Unlike concrete objects, language is abstract and fluid; it changes shapes. Many examples of language use fall into a grey area, and the linguist's goal is to figure out which category fits *best* for that particular example in that particular context. You will work with three major levels of categorization: lexical, phrasal, and clausal. The first focus is on the lexical level of categorization, which means you will start with identifying categories of individual words. The four terms presented and defined below serve as a foundation for the start of an exploration of grammar.

1.5 Basic grammatical terms

A **constituent** is any grammatical unit, whether it is a word, phrase, or clause, and every constituent has a form to indicate its type. You will label every constituent for its form, starting with the forms of words. Each grammatical word is a grammatical constituent that requires categorization into a **lexical category**.⁶ Written English indicates orthographic words by white

⁶ The term *lexical category* is sometimes referred to as *part of speech*. This book will rely on the term *lexical category* for linguistic reasons, but *part of speech* tends to be the term used in many middle and high schools.

spaces that create word boundaries, and the number of orthographic words often matches the number of grammatical words. However, there are two major exceptions: some compounds are written with a white space, creating multiple orthographic words working together as a single grammatical word (e.g., *alarm clock*, *cell phone*); on the other hand, contractions are written as one orthographic word (e.g., *can't*, *he's*) but represent two or more grammatical constituents.

For example, identify the number of orthographic words in the following sentence and try to identify the grammatical words in the sentence:

- (1.10) A widely used anesthetic gives honeybees jet lag, but only if they're knocked out during the day.

The sentence has 17 orthographic words, but it has 16 grammatical words. The compounds *jet lag* and *knocked out* are each written as two orthographic words but operate together as a single grammatical constituent. The compound *honeybees* is easier for most people to identify as a compound because it is written as a single orthographic word. Identifying compounds like *jet lag* and *knocked out* takes practice and is a skill you will work on in the noun and verb chapters. The contraction *they're* is written as one orthographic word but represents two grammatical constituents: *they* and *are*. The distinction between orthographic and grammatical words is an important one because every grammatical word receives a single lexical category label. Therefore, *jet lag* is labeled as a single noun, and *knocked out* works together to create a single verb, but *they* is labeled as a pronoun and *are* as an auxiliary verb. Some contractions require three or more labels, as with examples like *shouldn't've*, *he'd've*, or even *y'all'd've*, which are much more frequent in spoken English than written English.

One problem with lexical categories is that the terms are borrowed from other languages; in fact, *word* is the only term that comes from English originally, and many linguistic scholars avoid using it because it is difficult to define what a word is. Up until the 16th century, English speakers who used the word *grammar* were referring to Latin or the study of Latin. The first grammar of English wasn't written until the 1580s, and scholars borrowed the terms and categories used to study Latin and applied them to English even though Latin is a Romance language while English is Germanic. Some of the labels that worked for discussions of Latin grammar didn't work as well when applied to English grammar, yet scholars chose to retain those terms and categories, forcing the study of English to fit into the mold used for studying Latin. To compound that problem, many terms used to discuss Latin grammar were borrowed from Greek philosophers and scholars, who created the terms to describe how different categories of words behaved in the Greek language. Greek, a Hellenic language, differs from Latin, a Romance language, and both differ from English, a Germanic language.

We find ourselves using a system of grammatical labels that were devised for one language and passed through another before being applied English. That passing-through of labels has left a traditional system that wasn't created specifically for English's grammar. In primary school, most students learn eight traditional parts of speech (i.e., lexical categories), many of which are rooted in the ancient Greek observations about how language creates observable patterns. Linguists tend to modify or supplement those eight traditional parts of

speech to better describe English. For example, in this text, I will define and apply 14 lexical categories to analyses of English sentences.

Another problem is that not all texts use the same labels or even the same number of labels. Depending on the theoretical approach being used, the label names may be different, or the same labels may be defined and applied differently. The goal of modern theories of grammar is to replicate speaker knowledge to represent or model how language might be stored and accessed in the mind, and there are many competing theories, all of which categorize language a bit differently. Examples of these theories include Transformational Grammar/Generative Grammar, Construction Grammar, Cognitive Grammar, Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar, Role & Reference Grammar, and Lexical-Functional Grammar. As much as possible, I refrain from offering a single theoretical approach and instead provide the terms and definitions that repeatedly appear in grammatical descriptions of English, regardless of theoretical underpinnings.

The goal is for students to be able to apply the information presented here to a variety of academic situations, including further linguistic study, graduate school, teaching and pedagogy, literary analysis, and discourse analysis. All lexical category labels in this book are based on a comparison of the lexical categories identified in many linguistic sources, including COCA, written descriptive grammars of the English language, and modern dictionaries. Sometimes sources do not agree on the categorization of a particular word, which means students are not expected to always agree, either. A good habit to get into is justifying the final selection for the lexical category of any word that might fall into a grey area. In grammatical analyses, justifications and consistency are often more important than necessarily finding the “right” answer.⁷

The 14 lexical categories presented in this text can be grouped into two classes of words. Lexical categories belonging to the class of **content words** are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These lexical categories are open-classed, which means they tend to easily accept new words as members of their lexical categories; if you create a new word in English, that new word will likely belong to one of the four content word categories. Furthermore, if you decide to borrow a word, you are more likely to borrow content words. Content words are also more likely to carry morphological markings, such as inflections and derivations. Content words communicate most of the semantic meaning in language and tend to be more easily defined. Also, content word categories are more universal, so it’s more likely that you will find similar categories of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in languages other than English.

Lexical categories belonging to the class of **function words** are determiners,⁸ pronouns, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, coordinators, subordinators, existential *there*, negator, infinitival *to*, and inserts. They are closed-class categories, which means they do not easily accept new members; for instance, consider the difficulties of modern English speakers who have tried to introduce a gender-neutral third-person singular pronoun. The current system provides the

⁷ For students who want an outside source to verify lexical categories or status of compounds, I highly suggest using *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

⁸ The determiner category includes the definite article *the* and indefinite article *a/an* but also includes several other types of determiners, including possessive and demonstrative determiners.

options of *he*, *she*, or *it* as third-person singular pronouns, but if the gender of a person being referred to is unknown, English does not provide an agreed-upon gender-neutral animate pronoun. Speakers have attempted to rectify that gap for years, and the only option that has persisted is the singular use of *they* (e.g., *Someone walked up to me, and **they** told me to leave*), a practice some English speakers abhor. While function word categories can admit new members, it takes a long time for that to happen; although a new noun can be invented and used without question in a matter of seconds, a new preposition could take over a century to be used and accepted.

Furthermore, the categories available for function words are often language-specific; that is, languages do not necessarily share the same lexical categories of function words. In other words, while you will likely be able to apply labels like *noun* to a typological study, it would be difficult to apply labels like *determiner* cross-linguistically. Function words provide information about grammatical relationships and serve to connect other constituents, indicating how constituents should be interpreted relative to one another in a specific context. Though they tend to be forgettable because they are frequent, unstressed, and small, function words do most of the heavy, yet subtle lifting in communication.

Jennifer Schaffer (2014) asked social media users to help her collect the 51 most beautiful sentences in literature. I removed the function words from the top five sentences to demonstrate that while content words provide the semantic content of a sentence, function words are required to make sense out of those content words. As you read each one, try to figure out the meaning the original sentence might have been communicating.

- (1.11) a. rate, happiness; dissolved complete great.
 b. village, folks say God crumbles up old moon stars.
 c. doing thing see, standing there leaning balcony railing, holding universe together.
 d. took deep breath listened old brag heart; am, am, am.
 e. Is pretty think so?

Some sentences rely more heavily on content words, such as (b) and (d), allowing some readers to make sense of the string of content words. However, others, such as (a), are very difficult to find any meaning.

The full versions of those sentences, along with their original sources, are provided below:

- (1.12) a. At any rate, that is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great. (Willa Cather, *My Antonia*)
 b. In our village, folks say God crumbles up the old moon into stars. (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*)
 c. She wasn't doing a thing that I could see, except standing there leaning on the balcony railing, holding the universe together. (J.D. Salinger, "A Girl I Knew")

- d. I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart; I am, I am, I am. (Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*)
- e. Isn't it pretty to think so? (Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*)

As these sentences demonstrate, to effectively communicate, you need to use both content and function words; likewise, to study grammar, you need to understand how English writers use both content and function words.

Beyond syntactic differences between content and function words, there are pragmatic and neurological reasons for categorizing those two major types of words differently. For instance, Chapter 2 focuses on two lexical categories, nouns and determiners; while nouns are content words, determiners are function words. As function words, determiners provide pragmatic cues while nouns provide the semantic content. One example of a determiner is the word *that* in English; when used alongside a noun, *that* is a demonstrative determiner, and demonstrative determiners help to point out which noun is in focus (e.g., *that hat*, *this car*). Eric K. Acton and Christopher Potts (2014) study Sarah Palin's use of *that* as a demonstrative to show how *that* can be used to signal a shared connection between the speaker and addressee. For instance, if I tell you, "I haven't read that book yet," I'm signaling to you that I believe you should be able to momentarily adopt my perspective to know which book I'm talking about. Acton and Potts argue that demonstratives can be "vehicles for establishing and maintaining social bonds" (25) because their use "both presumes and, when welcome, reinforces a sense of shared perspective between" speakers (26). However, they also show that when the assumed shared perspectives are unwelcome, they can be detrimental to conversations, which is, perhaps, one reason some people react so negatively to Sarah Palin.

Sidney J. Segalowitz and Korri C. Lane (2000) show that speakers not only react socially to function words but also react neurologically to them. They performed a study to demonstrate how the brain reacts differently when seeing a content versus a function word and attribute that difference to the frequency of function words and speakers' familiarity with them. Their study demonstrates that the brain can process function words more quickly than even the most frequent content words, which indicates that you don't need to take extra time to produce or decode them.

Grammar is a practice of categorizing the language used around you and applying labels to the patterns you find, which reflects the fact that language is a practice of categorizing the world and applying words and structures from language to those patterns. Words themselves are labels: the word *desk* is a label applied to a large category of objects that share features of appearance and function. In the same way, grammatical terms are labels applied to a large category of grammatical constituents that share features and potential functions. In both cases, context is key: a kitchen table can become a desk when someone puts a computer on it and begins using it for work, and a grammatical constituent that usually fits into one category can be used in a way that requires its category label to shift. That's why Marian Keyes could take the proper noun *Don Corleone*, which refers to a specific person, and use it as a verb in *she Don Corleoned* to refer to a specific way of speaking associated with the person. The lexical category selected for *Don Corleone* needs to match its use in context.

Grammar is active, and so any analysis of grammar is an active process of critically examining the use and interpretation of each constituent in context. When new terms are

presented throughout this text, I begin with more prototypical expectations and examples before expanding the category to include peripheral examples that, depending on interpretation, could move from one grey area to another. These grey areas of grammar should be celebrated: they offer an opportunity to consider how any given analysis might reflect a host of potential interpretations and how those different interpretations might change the perception of the message and, potentially, of the writer/speaker. The ultimate goal of this book is for students to explore grammar in a way that offers them a better understanding of how linguistic choices—even very small ones like the choice to use *that* instead of *the*—affect the message and readers/listeners.

1.6 Organization of this book

The rest of the book is organized into four major sections. The first section is comprised of five chapters and focuses on noun phrases, identifying grammatical constituents typically associated with noun phrases, as well as introducing some associated functions. Chapter 2 begins the exploration by defining nouns and determiners, two of the most frequent constituents of noun phrases. Chapter 3 expands that discussion in its focus on pronouns and coordinators. Chapter 4 turns to adjectives and the attributive function, and Chapter 5 examines preposition phrases and the post-modifier function. Finally, Chapter 6 examines the role of the subject function and its relationship to the verb.

The six chapters of the second section focus on verbs and verb phrases. Chapter 7 defines the short verb phrase and key features of the short verb phrase, including tense, aspect, and mood. Chapter 8 introduces adverbs and negation, which often appear within verb phrases. Chapter 9 explores long verb phrases and finite clause structure while Chapter 10 turns the focus to passive constructions and the use of existential *there*. Chapters 11 and 12 examine the five major verb types, which are important for understanding functions within the long verb phrase.

In the third section, the focus shifts to clause structure and examines a variety of types of subordinate clauses throughout its five chapters. Chapter 13 introduces different illocutionary forces (i.e., speakers' intentions), and Chapter 14 focuses on relative clauses and distinguishes among three closely related functions of clauses: post-modifier, non-restrictive modifier, and complement. Chapter 15 explores non-finite clauses that include verbs while Chapter 16 turns the investigation to verbless and tag clauses.

The fourth section consists of two chapters that examine approaches for integrating grammatical analysis with textual features. Chapter 17 applies the study of grammar to reading strategies, stylistics, genre studies, and readability while Chapter 18 discusses features of prescriptive grammar and their connections to descriptive analyses.

Throughout each chapter, after definitions and descriptions of key concepts are provided, you will be asked to apply those concepts to language data. The majority of the examples provided for you are naturally occurring examples (i.e., I took them out of books or from COCA rather than creating them myself based on my intuition of how writers use English); even though I do my best to selectively choose examples to demonstrate a particular point, some of them may be ambiguous or up for interpretation—they may be in a grey area. For some example sentences, I modified the original sentence by taking out specific words, phrases, or clauses to focus on the concepts being demonstrated in that section or that chapter. Any example sentence beginning

with a lowercase letter or ending without final punctuation has been excerpted from a larger sentence. For any example sentence that has otherwise been modified from the original, a footnote accompanies the example with the original wording. Within the original wording, any portions that have been changed are underlined. Any time an ungrammatical example is provided, an asterisk is placed before the sentence.

This text is meant to be interactive: when the text asks you to stop and complete a task or think about an example, the goal is for you to do so before reading on to the discussion of the task or example. Skipping over those interactive bits may save time, but it will also chip away at the potential effectiveness of the text. The best way to learn grammatical patterns is to practice, practice, and then practice some more. After individual examples or small sets of two or three examples, the answers are provided for you in the text; the best way to get the most out of this book is to first complete the examples on your own and then read on to see if your answers match mine. You may need to physically cover the rest of the page to keep your eyes from drifting down to the answers. When your answer doesn't match mine, be sure to critically examine your work to see if you have identified a grey area or if you need to revisit the definition and description of the concept being discussed. Every chapter has practice sets throughout the chapter to target specific concepts, and every chapter ends with two exercises. The first exercise targets language analysis, asking you to apply concepts from that chapter and all the previous chapters to English sentences, and the second exercise targets application, asking you to consider how you might connect grammatical analyses to a larger issue or other academic field.

Finally, this text introduces an annotation scheme⁹ to represent grammatical concepts presented throughout the chapters. This annotation scheme relies on using typographical features such as bolding, parentheses, and tabbing to mark grammatical information and relationships, and it is a form of diagramming. While diagramming takes diverse forms, this particular scheme represents the format of tabbed-in constituents from computational linguistic approaches while changing brackets to visually represent the type of constituent being marked. The annotation scheme introduced in this book is, by no means, representative of what is used by other linguists but is a useful method for marking up sentences using only a word processor on a computer. It also saves space by fitting even long sentences on a single sheet of paper. No diagramming method is perfect, and the annotation scheme presented here also has its faults. However, even with its faults, it is useful for beginning students to be able to visualize and analyze language while drawing conclusions about language use. The full annotation scheme is presented in Appendix I but is introduced step-by-step in Chapters 2-17.

⁹ The reason for using this annotation scheme is discussed in more detail in the preface.

Terms introduced in Chapter 1

Major concepts

grammar
linguistics

Approaches to studying linguistics

applied
theoretical
typological

Sub-fields of linguistics

morphology
phonetics
phonology
pragmatics
semantics
syntax

Terms for grammar

constituent
content words
corpus (corpora)
descriptive grammar
function words
lexical category
morpheme
 derivational morpheme
 inflectional morpheme
prescriptive grammar

Chapter 1 Exercises

Exercise 1.1

You will analyze the following quotation from Albert Einstein in three stages, identifying any grammatical information that you already know.

Our limited minds cannot grasp the mysterious force that sways the constellations.

As you work, use two different colors to mark up information: use one color to mark the information you are confident you know, and use the second color to mark the information you are less confident about but think you might know. For anything you don't know, leave it blank.

Stage 1: Identify the lexical category (or 'part of speech') of each word in the sentence.

Stage 2: Identify the phrases and clauses in the sentence, providing their form only (i.e., identify what kind of phrase or clause it is).

Stage 3: Identify the functions of the phrases and clauses you marked up in the second analysis (i.e., identify the grammatical role of each phrase and clause in the larger sentence structure).

Write down at least two questions you have based on this exercise.

Exercise 1.2

When you have questions about grammar or sentence structure, what resources do you turn to, and why? Provide a list of at least three grammatical resources that you use or know of, and, for each one, provide a reason you use or would use it.

Chapter 2: Nouns & determiners

Hello, I'm April Ludgate. I'm 20 years old. I like people, places, and things! —April Ludgate in Parks and Recreation “Beauty Pageant” (S2:E3)

2.1 Nouns

The most common definition of a **noun** is a person, place, or thing, which defines a noun based on semantic information. Relying on semantic definitions of lexical categories requires a distinction between the message world and the real world. Words exist in the message world, or the world of communication and language, and the goal of the message world is to signify or represent information from the real world, which is the world you can see around you or a world you can imagine. Words become associated with referents in the real world through use: societies agree that a particular string of sounds in the message world signifies a particular referent in the real world.

For example, consider the string of sounds [doʊnət]; the sounds are written in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which linguists use when talking about sounds, but that same string of sounds can be represented in English orthography, or English spelling, as *doughnut*. In the message world, the five sounds [d oʊ n ə t] come together to create a word. English-speaking communities have agreed that the word signifies, or represents, a particular type of referent in the real world. A **referent** is the object, person, place, idea, or concept that exists in the real world and that is referred to by a word, and [doʊnət] can refer to the referent pictured below:



Image 2.1 Doughnut with chocolate drizzle

That doughnut exists in the real world and is tangible and edible, and the spoken string of sounds [doʊnət] or the written word *doughnut* exists in the message world, allowing you to communicate with other English speakers about the referent pictured above.

While *doughnut* can refer to the referent above, it can also refer to any other referent fitting into the doughnut category, so you can use the same string of sounds and the same written word to refer to the referent pictured below:



Image 2.2 Christmas doughnut

A single word in the message world can have more than one referent in the real world. If I say to you, “I see a doughnut on this page,” you won’t know which image I’m referring to because that

single word refers to both doughnuts pictured on this page. Like *doughnut*, many English nouns refer to a range of similar referents.

The semantic definition of nouns relies on categorizing the type of referent being represented. Nouns can—and often do—signify referents in the real world that are people, places, or things. For instance, in the following sentences, identify the nouns, basing your decisions only on this question: “Does the word refer to a person, place, or thing?”

- (2.1) In far-off France, there lived a man named Louis Pasteur. Now and then this man would put on his tall black hat and his bright orange coat and walk in the park.¹⁰ (Johnson 1976: 8)

The answer below introduces the first feature of the annotation scheme: nouns are bolded. To indicate a compound noun consisting of two or more orthographic words in-line, I will use an underscore to connect the words, as in *jet_lag*. The semi-annotated version is below:

- (2.2) In far-off **France**, there lived a **man** named **Louis_Pasteur**. Now and then this **man** would put on his tall black **hat** and his bright orange **coat** and walk in the **park**. (Johnson 1976: 8)

The nouns *France* and *park* are places; *man*, which is used twice, and *Louis Pasteur* are people; *hat* and *coat* are things. In this case, relying on a simplified semantic definition of nouns allows you to identify the nouns used in those two sentences.

Defining nouns as a person, place, or thing can cause two problems, though: over- and under-identifying words as nouns. The first problem, over-identifying words as nouns, refers to instances when a word that is not a noun signifies a person, place, or thing. For example, focusing on defining nouns as words that represent people, places, or things, what words might you identify as nouns in the following sentence?

- (2.3) “I believe I can,” he would say to himself as he went along. (Johnson 1976: 9)

You may have identified words like *I*, *he*, and *himself* as nouns because they refer to people; however, they are pronouns rather than nouns. Just like nouns, pronouns can refer to people, places, and things, but they differ from nouns in their grammatical features and uses, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

While the first problem leads to identifying too many words as nouns, the second problem leads to identifying too few words as nouns. The prototypical noun is a **concrete** noun; that is, when most people hear the word *noun*, the first or “best” image that comes to mind is a noun that signifies a referent that is visible and/or tangible in the real world, such as *dog*, *cat*, or *woman*. Defining a noun as a person, place, or thing limits the definition of a noun to concrete nouns, but English has a large category of **abstract** nouns, which can refer to ideas or concepts

¹⁰ Original: Once upon a time, in far-off France, there lived a man named Louis Pasteur. Now and then this man, who was a doctor of science, would put on his tall black hat and his bright orange coat and walk in the park.

that are neither visible nor tangible in the real world. For example, try identifying the nouns in this sentence:

- (2.4) As language teachers we have all faced difficulties with teaching grammar in a traditional way as a set of rules to be learned and applied in language use. (Liamkina and Ryshina-Pankova 2012: 270)

Relying on identifying nouns as people, places, and things would help us identify *teachers*, who are people, and potentially *rules*, which might be considered “things” by some readers. However, there are other nouns in that sentence, including *difficulties*, *grammar*, *way*, and *use*, none of which fit into the people, places, or things categories. Some people expand the definition of nouns to include “ideas” at the end of the list, but the word *ideas* is rather loosely defined in that case and groups together all intangible abstract nouns as ideas even though abstract nouns be diverse, referring to ideas, concepts, categories, events, qualities, measurements, states of being, or even actions (e.g., *destruction*).

In an attempt to move away from a definition that favors concrete nouns, Thomas E. Payne (1997) defines nouns as “words that express the most time-stable concepts” (33); they are the words that express concepts that are the least likely to change from moment to moment. For example, in the sentence “The man walked in the park,” the two nouns *man* and *park* represent the most time-stable referents. Both the man and the park will likely exist, in their current forms, far longer than the man’s state of walking. Payne’s definition can also be applied to abstract nouns: in the sentence “we have all faced difficulties with teaching grammar,” *difficulties* and *grammar* are the most time-stable concepts because they are not likely to change from moment to moment.

A semantic-based definition of nouns, or a definition based on what a noun means, refers to, or signifies, is a good place to start, as it can help to quickly identify basic nouns, but identifying non-prototypical nouns, such as abstract nouns, requires more than a semantic definition. Furthermore, relying on a semantic definition can be problematic if you encounter a word you don’t know or that is ambiguous with multiple meanings because if you don’t know the meaning of a word, you can’t categorize its lexical category based on its referent. For example, try to identify all the nouns in the sentence below, relying solely on the semantic definition of a noun:

- (2.5) The companion to media demonization of the ‘bad guys’ is the hagiolatry of Western leaders and apologetics for their crimes. (PAW)¹¹

Depending on your level of familiarity with the words in that sentence, you may have struggled with identifying several nouns, including *demonization*, *hagiolatry*, and *apologetics*. Other nouns were likely easier to identify, such as *companion*, *leaders*, and *crimes*. If you base your understanding of nouns on referents, you would not be able to categorize unknown words.

¹¹ All examples cited with *PAW* were taken from the website PompousAssWords.com, which offers a collection of sentences with complex vocabulary. Most of the example sentences on this website are taken from news sources.

Regardless of your familiarity with the word, you always need to consider context when identifying its lexical category within a particular sentence. For instance, what is the lexical category of the word *pepper*? For most people, the immediate answer to that question is that *pepper* is a noun, referring to an edible vegetable with seeds (e.g., red bell pepper, jalapeño) or peppercorns used for spice (e.g., ground black pepper). Now consider the sentence below:

(2.6) The adjective ‘terrible’ peppered every sentence. (Beaton 1954: 153)

In most cases, *pepper* is indeed categorized as a noun, but, in the example above, the word *pepper* is used as a verb. *Pepper* is an example of a word that can be used as more than one lexical category. English allows speakers to coerce a word into a different lexical category without changing its outward shape but by simply placing it in a different syntactic environment. Coercion allows us to utter and understand statements like the following:

- (2.7) a. Yo, Gatorade me, bitch! (Jesse Pinkman, *Breaking Bad*)
 b. Someone Tom Sellecked my bench! (Phil Dunfey, *Modern Family*)

Both *Gatorade* and *Tom Selleck* are examples of nouns that have been turned into verbs by their use in a particular syntactic context. Bill Watterson, the genius behind *Calvin and Hobbes*, wrote a comic strip devoted to this practice of using nouns as verbs:



Image 2.3 Bill Watterson’s *Calvin and Hobbes*, “Verbing weirds language.”

Calvin plays with the fact that we can take an English noun, like the word *verb*, and use it as a verb in a sentence, such as *I like to verb words*. The comic strip *xkcd* takes that observation one step further:

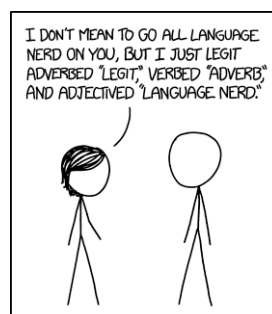


Image 2.4 *xkcd*’s comic, “I don’t mean to go all language nerd on you”

The speaker in this comic utilizes coercion, or conversion, in many ways, one of which is taking the noun *adverb* and using it as a verb in *I just legit adverb*ed ‘*legit*.’ English regularly allows word play like the examples in these comics, which means identifying a word’s lexical category requires understanding how the word fits into its surrounding context.

The best way to ensure accuracy when identifying the lexical category of content words is through a combination of three factors: (1) semantic properties, (2) morphological features, and (3) syntactic environment. These three factors are the foundation for defining all four content lexical categories, which are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Thus far, the discussion has focused on the semantic definition of nouns, including both semantically concrete or abstract nouns. Concrete nouns signify referents that are visible and tangible in the real world, including people, places, and things while abstract nouns signify referents that are neither visible nor tangible, including—but not limited to—emotions, concepts, ideas, and qualities.

The **morphological features** of content words are defined by bound morphemes, or morphemes that must be attached to a base and cannot stand alone as their own grammatical constituents within sentences. For identifying lexical categories in English, the most significant bound morphemes are affixes; an English **affix** is either a prefix or suffix, the difference being where the affix connects to its base.¹² A prefix attaches to the beginning of its base, and a suffix attaches to the end.

Along with the distinction of where the affix attaches, affixes can be categorized into two major types: inflectional and derivational. In English, all inflectional affixes are suffixes, and English has a small inventory of inflectional suffixes, with only eight productively used in Modern English. Derivational affixes, on the other hand, can be either prefixes or suffixes, and English has a large inventory of derivational affixes. As stated in Chapter 1, inflections provide grammatical information while not affecting the semantic meaning of the base; on the other hand, derivations change the semantic meaning of the base they’re attached to and may also change the base’s lexical category.

Nouns can take two inflectional suffixes: (1) the regular plural suffix, which is *-s* or *-es*, and (2) the possessive marker, which is also called the genitive. These inflections are important because only nouns can productively take them, so if you find a word in a plural or possessive form, it is most likely a noun. The discussions below provide both regular and irregular forms to help you better identify these plural and possessive forms of nouns even when they take a less common form.

For most nouns, the singular form is the citation, or unmarked,¹³ form, and the plural form is created through the addition of a suffix. When a noun has both singular and plural forms, the singular form refers to one—and only one—referent while the plural form indicates more

¹² The terms *root*, *stem*, and *base* are often confused and used interchangeably. The definitions I’ve seen most widely accepted are the following: (1) a **root** is the smallest meaning-bearing unit within a word and cannot be further analyzed; (2) a **stem** is a unit that can take an inflectional suffix; and (3) a **base** is a unit that can take any affix, whether it is inflectional or derivational. The larger term is *base*, and roots and stems can be described as distinct types of bases.

¹³ The citation form of a word is the unmarked, or uninflected, form you look up in a dictionary. For instance, if you try to look up *cats* in the dictionary, you won’t find an entry; instead, you need to remove the plural *-s* and look up the citation form *cat*.

than one (e.g., *three apples*) or the absence of the referent (e.g., *zero apples*). The regular plural suffix generally appears as *-s*, as in *frogs*, *cups*, *pen-pals*, *Americans*, and *friendships*. Nouns ending in <s>, <z>, <ch>, <sh>, and <x> require an *-es* suffix, as in *buses*, *adzes*, *torches*, *ashes*, and *foxes*. If a noun ends in a consonant followed by <y>, the <y> changes to an <i> before adding *-es*, as in *fairies* and *tallies*, but nouns ending in a vowel followed by <y> take the regular *-s* form: *monkeys* and *bays*. Finally, some nouns ending in <o> require the *-es* form (e.g., *potatoes*, *heroes*) while others do not (e.g., *bros*, *autos*), and some can take both forms (e.g., both *mangos* and *mangoes* are used).

English also has categories of irregular nouns that do not take the inflectional plural suffix. Some nouns reflect older forms of pluralization available in Old English, including the following categories:

- nouns that take *-en* as a plural suffix (e.g., *children*, *oxen*);
- nouns that have an ablaut plural form, where a vowel sound within the base shifts (e.g., *tooth/teeth*, *mouse/mice*);
- nouns that have a zero-plural form, so the singular and plural forms match (e.g., *one sheep/two sheep*, *one moose/two moose*, *one aircraft/two aircraft*, *one series/two series*); and
- nouns that have plural-only forms and cannot appear in the singular (e.g., *clothes*, *jeans*, *goggles*, *glasses*).

Along with those irregular plural forms are irregular forms found on borrowed nouns. When English borrowed nouns from Latin or Greek, sometimes the plural forms used in those languages were preserved, which is especially noticeable in words borrowed during the Scientific Revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the following patterns:

Sg/Pl	Examples
-us/-i	<i>thesaurus/thesauri</i> , <i>syllabus/syllabi</i> , <i>alumnus/alumni</i>
-um/-a	<i>medium/media</i> , <i>datum/data</i> , <i>addendum/addenda</i>
-a/-ae	<i>alga/algae</i> , <i>alumna/alumnae</i>
-is/-es	<i>analysis/analyses</i> , <i>hypothesis/hypotheses</i>
-ex, -ix/-ices	<i>index/indices</i> , <i>appendix/appendices</i>
-us/-ora	<i>corpus/corpora</i>
-on/-a	<i>phenomenon/phenomena</i>

Table 2.1 Irregular plural forms in English due to borrowing

Some of these nouns are shifting to the regular pattern, so there are competing plural forms in everyday use, such as *formulae/formulas*, *curricula/curriculums*, *indices/indexes*, and *cacti/cactuses*. In those four sets, the first is the irregular plural form and the second is the regularized

plural form that is emerging. For other nouns, the plural form is treated as singular, such as *data* and *media*; though technically plural forms, those words are often treated as singular (e.g., *the data is complex, the media is biased*).

One common singular/plural pairing is irregular for a different reason. During the Middle English period, English speakers borrowed two words: (1) from Old French, they borrowed *person*, which originally meant ‘character’ or ‘mask’ but later came to mean ‘human being;’ (2) from Anglo-Norman French, they borrowed *people*, which originally meant ‘populace.’ Those two distinct words became conflated into one, with *person* as the singular form and *people* as the plural form. However, Modern English speakers have the option of treating *person* as a regular noun, as in examples like “Police have identified two persons of interest.”

For many nouns, possession is shown with an apostrophe and an <s>, as in *Jessie’s Girl*, and nouns that are plural and already end in <s> just take an apostrophe, as in *the ladies’ luncheon*. Plural nouns that end in anything but <s> are treated like singular nouns when adding the possessive inflection: *children’s toys*. Style manuals debate what should happen when a singular noun happens to end in an <s>, and writers have the option of using *the bus’ doors* or *the bus’s doors*.¹⁴ As with the plural inflectional suffix, the inflectional possessive suffix prefers a noun as its base; therefore, if you identify a possessive suffix, whether it appears as an apostrophe with <s> or only as an apostrophe, you have most likely identified a noun.

While English has a limited set of inflectional suffixes, it has a much larger inventory of derivational affixes. Some derivational suffixes, in particular, are commonly associated with a specific lexical category, which means some derivational suffixes can help you identify the word’s lexical category. The table on the next page provides a small set of derivational suffixes associated with nouns and is, by no means, exhaustive.

The bases of many of the words in Table 2.2 are not nouns; for example, the base *bake* in *bakery* is a verb. With the addition of the derivational suffix *-ery*, the verb *bake* becomes the noun *bakery*. By learning to identify these common nominal derivations, you will be able to identify nouns even if you don’t know what the noun means or refers to.

For example, using both semantic and morphological information, identify the nouns in the following sentence:

- (2.8) Do you hurry past with a blend of guilt and irritation, aware of your cupidity but annoyed by the unbidden demand on your time and wallet? (PAW)

The words *irritation* and *cupidity* have derivational suffixes listed in Table 2.2, and they are both nouns. Of those two words, you are probably more familiar with *irritation* than *cupidity*. Even if you were previously unaware of what *cupidity* means or are unsure of its meaning, you can identify it as a noun based on its derivational *-ity* suffix. Along with *cupidity* and *irritation*, the sentence also has the nouns *blend*, *guilt*, *demand*, *time*, and *wallet*, which do not have derivational suffixes.

¹⁴ Based on GoogleBooks results, American writers tend to prefer adding *’s* for possessive singular nouns that end in <s>, as in *Chris’s office*, *bus’s doors*, and *class’s teacher*. However, if a multisyllabic proper noun ends in an <s>, the preference is less clear, as in *Charles’s book* versus *Charles’ book*.

Derivation	Examples	Derivation	Examples
-ade	<i>lemonade, parade</i>	-ion/ation	<i>vacation, production, stipulation</i>
-age	<i>luggage, marriage, voyage</i>	-ism	<i>baptism, heroism</i>
-ance/ence	<i>annoyance, absence, evidence</i>	-ist	<i>biologist, linguist</i>
-ancy/ency	<i>vacancy, frequency</i>	-ity	<i>stupidity, humanity</i>
-ant/ent	<i>servant, assistant, agent</i>	-le	<i>thimble, beetle, castle, thistle</i>
-ard	<i>wizard, drunkard, blizzard</i>	-ment	<i>development, testament, fragment</i>
-ary	<i>library, sanctuary</i>	-ness	<i>happiness, kindness</i>
-cy	<i>accuracy, piracy</i>	-ory	<i>laboratory, conservatory</i>
-dom	<i>wisdom, freedom</i>	-ship	<i>penmanship, friendship</i>
-er/or	<i>writer, teacher, stapler, advisor, editor</i>	-ster	<i>monster, gangster, youngster</i>
-ery	<i>bakery, stationery, bravery</i>	-th	<i>strength, warmth</i>
-hood	<i>statehood, brotherhood, childhood</i>	-tude	<i>attitude, solitude</i>
-(i)an	<i>humanitarian, Parisian, American</i>	-ty	<i>loyalty, honesty</i>
-ics	<i>hysterics, physics</i>	-ure	<i>failure, structure</i>

Table 2.2 Common nominal derivations

Relying on derivational and inflectional suffixes is not a perfect method. Some derivations can be used for multiple lexical categories; for instance, the word *American* when used in *the American flag* is an adjective but is a noun in *an American*. Other words end in a combination of sounds that coincidentally match one of those derivational suffixes; for example, the adjective *guilty* has the base *guilt* and suffix *-y*, which is not the same as the noun-forming suffix *-ty*, and the word *made* does not have any suffixes and is not an example of a noun formed by the derivational *-ade*. Also, some words lack derivational or inflectional suffixes, as with *nullipara*, which is used in the sentence below:

- (2.9) As a nullipara, I have no personal stake in questions of whether breast really is best, how long one should breast-feed, whether it's appropriate to do so in public, etc. (PAW)

The word *nullipara* doesn't have morphological clues to help you identify its lexical category, which leaves you in a predicament if that's the only method you're using. Furthermore, many English readers are not familiar with the word, which means identifying its lexical category based on semantic definition is also not helpful. Examples like this one highlight why morphological clues and semantic definitions need to be considered alongside syntactic

environments, which means you need to consider what other words appear directly before and/or after the word in question within the context of a particular sentence.

Practice Set 2.1 Semantics, derivations, and inflections

The following sentences were taken from Laura Michaelis's (2006: 73) academic article "Construction grammar." For each sentence, identify the nouns. Mark any morphological clues that helped you, and mark any words that you believe are problematic (e.g., it has a derivational suffix that is included Table 2.2 but is not a noun). After completing the sentences, identify whether Michaelis uses more concrete or abstract nouns in this text, and provide a reason that explains why she may have used one type more than the other.

1. Theories of sentence meaning describe the relationship between the meaning of a sentence and the meaning of the words of that sentence.
 2. In compositional theories of sentence meaning, the semantic and syntactic requirements of the word (its argument structure) can be used to predict the semantic and syntactic type of a phrase in which that word is the syntactic head.
 3. According to this view, known as the principle of lexical projection, words constrain potential sisterhood relations by specifying the types of complements, adjuncts, and determiners that they either require or welcome.
 4. In projection-based models of sentence meaning, concepts—like entities, events, and properties, are expressed exclusively by words.
 5. Rules of syntactic combination assemble words and their dependent elements into phrases, and the phrases denote complex concepts like predicates and propositions.
 6. The rules of combination do not add conceptual content to that contributed by the words and therefore do not alter the combinatory potential of words.
 7. Thus, on the projection-based view, sentences have meaning but sentence patterns do not.
 8. It is almost impossible to talk about how people use language—or to teach a language—without talking about grammatical constructions.
 9. Thus, it might seem absurd that syntacticians could debate the existence of these patterns.
 10. Grammatical constructions have been a fundamental tool of linguistic description since ancient times, and for most of that history they have been treated no differently than words—forms with specific meanings and functions.
-

2.2 Determiners

A word's **syntactic environment** includes the grammatical constituents that occur next to or nearby that word in the context of a sentence. **Determiners** (Det), which are one category of function words, occur alongside nouns and, thus, can help you identify nouns. The most basic function of a determiner is to specify the noun that it supports, so determiners play an important pragmatic function for discourse, signaling information, such as whether the noun has been

previously mentioned in the conversation or whether the noun is a specific or specified entity or a more general one.

For example, depending on determiner used, the interpretation of the noun *man* shifts in the following sentences:

- (2.10) a. A^{Det} **man** with a^{Det} **bullhorn** translated into **Luo**. (COCA)
 b. The man with a bullhorn translated into Luo.
 c. That man with a bullhorn translated into Luo.
 d. This man with a bullhorn translated into Luo.

Using the determiner *a* in (a) indicates that *man* has not been previously mentioned in the discourse, so this sentence introduces a new participant, and the only piece of information provided about the man so far is that he has a bullhorn and is translating a message into Luo. The determiner *the* in (b) indicates that the man has been previously mentioned, and the author assumes the reader knows which man is being referred to. Using *that*, as in (c), indicates the recipient knows which man is being referred to but also further indicates a higher degree of relevance to the conversation or message at hand. Finally, using *this*, as in (d), often signals that the noun following it, which in this case is *man*, will play an integral role in the upcoming utterances.

Going back to example (2.9), the sentence begins with “As a nullipara,” which includes the unknown word *nullipara*. While semantic definitions and morphological features were likely little help in determining its lexical category, you can use its syntactic environment because the word *nullipara* works alongside the determiner *a*. Determiners require a noun, and you can assume that *nullipara* is the noun being supported because the phrase *as a nullipara* is separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma, leaving *nullipara* the only word likely to be supported by the determiner. Determiners and nouns create common pairs of grammatical constituents, so identifying the lexical category of one can help you identify the lexical category of the other.

English has seven categories of determiners, which are listed in Table 2.3. Each type of determiner has a different semantic and pragmatic function in discourse. As mentioned in the example above, the definite article *the* signals old information while the indefinite article *a* signals new information. *The* can be used with any noun, whether it is singular or plural, but *a/an* must be used with a singular noun, where *a* precedes a singular noun beginning with a consonant sound, and *an* precedes a singular noun beginning with a vowel sound. Because spelling doesn’t always match pronunciation, some nouns begin with a vowel sound but are spelled with an initial consonant (e.g., *an honor*, *an hour*, *an RN*), and some nouns begin with a consonant sound but are spelled with an initial vowel (e.g., *a union*). If a word comes between the determiner and its noun, such as an adjective, its initial sound determines the shape of the indefinite article: *an onion* but *a delicious onion*, and *a decision* but *an important decision*. Although *the* does not change spelling, for some speakers, it changes pronunciation depending on the sound immediately following it, so some English speakers say “thee apple” but “thuh book.”

Category	Examples
article	definite: <i>the</i> indefinite: <i>a/an</i>
demonstrative	<i>this/these, that/those</i>
possessive	<i>my, their, his, Tara's</i>
quantifier	<i>all, some, no, any, twice, double</i>
ordinal	<i>first, third, last</i>
cardinal	<i>one, eight, few, many, every</i>
wh-word	<i>which, whatever, whose</i>

Table 2.3 Categories of determiners

The demonstrative determiners, which have singular and plural forms, literally or metaphorically “point to” the noun they support; in other words, they demonstrate which noun is being referred to. For example, I can say *this mug* when referring to the mug on the table in front of me, but I would say *that mug* when referring to the one on a table across the room. A metaphorical application of demonstrative determiners is recency in a conversation, which is why *this* can signal that its noun plays an important role in the discussion at hand—*this* is more immediate than *that*.

Possessive determiners specify their nouns by indicating ownership or strong relationship. In phrases like *my car*, the possessive determiner *my* indicates ownership, so the speaker owns the noun that follows, *car*; however, in phrases like *my sister*, the possessive determiner *my* indicates a relationship between the speaker and the following noun, *sister*. The inflectional possessive suffix creates a possessive determiner, a concept I will return to in the next chapter. For now, it is important to remember that in phrases such as *Tara's pencil*, *Tara's* behaves syntactically and semantically as a determiner and can be grammatically replaced with other determiners, such as *the pencil*, *her pencil*, and *that pencil*.

Quantifier determiners serve indicate a quantity out of a whole, such as *some notebooks*. Some quantifier determiners are always compounds, such as *none of*, *a lot of*, and *lots of*,¹⁵ and others can be turned into compounds by adding *of*, such as *all of*, *both of*, and *half of*. Competing forms exist for this latter category, so both *all the pens* and *all of the pens* are possible phrases in English, though prescriptive grammarians discourage use of the compound form when *of* is not required, calling it “ungrammatical” or “wordy,” arguing that *all the pens* expresses the same idea in fewer words. Some quantifier determiners require singular nouns (e.g., *every student*), but

¹⁵ The compound determiners *a lot of* and *lots of* have been semantically bleached; at one time, they were not compounds but were phrases, where *lot* was treated as a content noun. The noun *lot* still exists in Modern English when speaking about specific subjects, such as land; for instance, I can say that I bought two lots of land, but I cannot say I had two lots of fun. The dual purpose of *a lot of* creates ambiguity, so if I say I bought *a lot of land*, I might be using *a lot of* as a compound determiner to indicate that I bought much land, but I could also be using *lot* as a noun to indicate that I bought a single lot.

others can take either singular or plural nouns (e.g., *all students*, *all information*), though the resulting interpretation slightly differs.

Ordinal determiners indicate a placement among many, can support either singular or plural noun forms, and include all ordinal numbers (e.g., *third*, *fifth*) and non-numeric ordering words (e.g., *last*). In the phrase *the first definition*, the ordinal determiner *first* indicates the definition is one of two or more definitions and is the initial one to appear. Cardinal determiners are counting words and include all cardinal number forms, such as *one*, *eight*, and *three hundred*, as well as less specific counting words, such as *couple*, *few*, and *several*. The determiner used indicates the plurality of the noun required, so *one* requires a singular noun, but *eight* requires a plural noun.

Semantically, quantifier determiners treat their nouns as a large mass or group while cardinal determiners treat their nouns as individuals. For example, *half* is a quantifier determiner, and *eight* is a cardinal determiner. The phrase *half the people* indicates the people are part of a larger group, but *eight people* could refer to any eight individuals, so they may not be associated with each other. The figure below demonstrates the difference in interpretation, where each X represents a person.

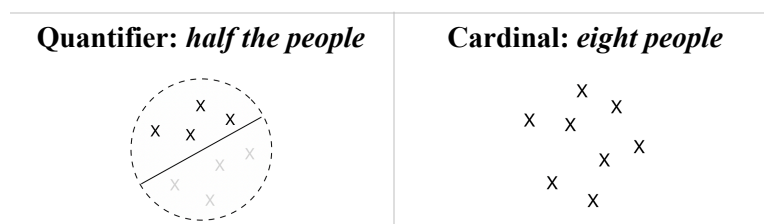


Figure 2.1 Quantifier versus cardinal determiners

To understand the phrase *half the people*, you must first envision a larger group of people, which is represented by the dashed-line circle around the eight Xs. Out of that group, only half are being considered, so four Xs have been grayed out. Cardinal determiners, though, only indicate individual instances, so the eight Xs are unbound in that image.

Wh-word determiners indicate that some information is unknown about their nouns. For instance, if I tell a student, “Sit in whatever chair you want,” that statement indicates there are multiple chairs in the room, but I am not specifying which chair the student should take, allowing the student to select any chair. The *wh*-word determiners are diverse and play important roles in particular grammatical constructions that are discussed in later chapters, so their full uses will not be explored here.

As with many function words, words that can be used as determiners can often be used in other lexical categories, too. For example, the form *that* belongs to five lexical categories, depending on its use: demonstrative determiner (*that mug*), demonstrative pronoun (*that is a mug*), relative pronoun (*the mug that is on my desk*), subordinator (*I know that I left my mug somewhere around here*), and adverb (*the mug isn't that old*). Identifying determiners requires careful examination of syntactic environment to identify their use within particular contexts.

Determiners can be syntactically categorized as pre-, central, and post-determiners, and their syntactic categories indicate what other determiners they can appear with. Although many

nouns only work with a single determiner, English allows a string of up to four determiners per noun. Regardless of its syntactic category, only one determiner from each semantic category can be used; therefore, only one demonstrative determiner can appear with any single noun, making **this that house* ungrammatical in English.

The pre-determiner category consists of quantifier determiners, and the central determiner category includes articles, demonstrative determiners, and possessive determiners. Only one central determiner can be used per noun, so **the that book* is ungrammatical because *the* is an article and *that* is a demonstrative determiner, both of which are central determiners. The post-determiner category includes the ordinal and cardinal determiners, and English allows the use of both with a single noun, as in the phrase *our last three participants*, where *last* is an ordinal determiner and *three* is a cardinal determiner. As these examples demonstrate, you can stack determiners in English to create phrases like *all^{Det} the^{Det} many^{Det} horses* or *both^{Det} the^{Det} other^{Det} two^{Det} component traits* (COCA), but some nouns do not require any determiners, as in the sentence *I like books*. The next section focuses on how the noun's type affects the types of determiners it can occur with.

Pre-determiner	Central determiner			Post-determiner		Noun
Quantifier	Article	Demonstrative	Possessive	Ordinal	Cardinal	
<i>all</i>	<i>the</i>					<i>ladies</i>
		<i>this</i>			<i>one</i>	<i>cake</i>
<i>many of</i>			<i>my</i>			<i>staplers</i>
<i>half</i>	<i>an</i>					<i>inch</i>
<i>none of</i>			<i>my</i>		<i>eight</i>	<i>classes</i>
	<i>the</i>			<i>first</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>definitions</i>

Table 2.4 Syntactic categories of English determiners

2.3 Syntactic noun type

Categorizing nouns by their semantic type indicates what they can refer to in the real world, but nouns can also be categorized by their syntactic type to understand the types of grammatical patterns they occur in. The two basic syntactic categories of nouns are proper and common. In writing, **proper nouns** (PropN) are usually capitalized even if they are not the first word of the sentence. Semantically, proper nouns refer to a specific referent rather than to any referent within a category. For example, while *doughnut* can refer to any doughnut in the real world, *New York City* refers to a specific referent, which is a single city that exists in the real world. Proper nouns include names of people (*Sam Seaborn*), places (*Bland, Missouri*), monuments and buildings (*the Empire State Building*), theories (*Role and Reference Grammar*), eras (*the Stone Age*), or periods/styles (*Art Nouveau*). Most proper nouns do not occur with determiners, but a small category of proper nouns require the definite article *the*, such as *the United States*, *the Dominican Republic*, and *the Andes*.

While proper nouns are usually singular in form since they refer to a specific referent, some are always in the plural form and treated as plural nouns, such as *the Andes* and *the Rocky Mountains*. In certain contexts, some proper nouns can be made plural, such as *three Jessicas in my class* or *keeping up with the Kardashians*. Proper nouns referring to families, days of the week, or months of the year are especially prone to becoming pluralized, so you can easily talk about how the Joneses are doing, how many Fridays are left in the semester, or the number of Decembers in your lifetime.

Proper nouns can also creatively represent an abstract quality as in the following examples:

- (2.11) a. Looks like someone's got a case of the Mondays. (*Office Space*)
 b. This was just in case you pulled a Monica. (*Friends*, S4:E3)

In (a), *Mondays* creates a noun referring to the qualities associated with the day of the week, such as grumpiness, tiredness, and a desire to be anywhere but at work. In (b), Monica's mother uses the phrase *pull a Monica* to refer to instances where something goes wrong, so *Monica* represents a quality of not being able to complete the expected work. These nouns are typically capitalized in writing, indicating that while they no longer represent a particular day or person, they maintain their proper noun status.

Common nouns refer to any referent that fits into its category and are not typically capitalized in writing unless they're the first word of the sentence. While proper nouns are often given by individuals, common nouns are usually historically shaped and accepted by societies. For example, consider the difference between the common noun *cat* and the proper noun *Ms. Snuggles*. The common noun *cat* refers to all four-legged feline mammals, so when I see a cat I've never encountered before, I can identify it as a cat because it possesses the features I've come to expect for cats, such as fur, long tail, pointed ears, whiskers, and retractable claws. While I can identify an unknown domesticated animal as a cat, I won't know its name unless that information has been explicitly shared with me because proper nouns, such as names, do not have agreed-upon features that can be applied to any matching referent. Therefore, the cat named *Ms. Snuggles* could just as easily have been *Fluffy*, *Furball*, *Captain Meowington*, *Hisseroni*, or *Joe*. Common nouns and their features are learned through exposure to language and experience in the real world, but we must be explicitly taught proper nouns to know what name or label to use.

Common nouns are further divided into three subcategories: count, non-count, and collective. **Common count nouns (CN)** are, as their name suggests, countable, so they can appear in both singular and plural forms and can be preceded by a cardinal determiner, such as *one apple*, *two syllabi*, *three geese*, and *eighty sheep*. Singular count nouns require a determiner, but their plural forms do not, as demonstrated by the COCA examples below:

- (2.12) a. He carried a^{Det} **cello**^{CN} and a^{Det} **bow**^{CN} in one^{Det} **hand**^{CN}
 b. *He carried **cello**^{CN} and **bow**^{CN} in **hand**^{CN}
 c. Don't let the **cat**^{CN} on the **table**^{CN}!
 d. *Don't let **cat**^{CN} on **table**^{CN}!

- e. the^{Det} **cellos**^{CN} resembled **violas**^{CN}.
- f. **Cats**^{CN} love to perform

The singular count nouns *cello*, *bow*, *hand*, *cat*, and *table* require determiners, which is demonstrated in examples (a)-(d). Examples (e) and (f) demonstrate that plural count nouns can take determiners but do not require them: while *cellos* appears with a determiner, *violas* and *cats* do not. Count nouns, whether singular or plural, can occur with any type of determiner with the only restriction being that singular determiners require singular count nouns (e.g., *a cat* but **a cats*) and plural determiners require plural count nouns (e.g., *these cellos* but **these cello*).

Like count nouns, **common collective nouns** (CollN) can also be singular or plural and can be counted, and their singular forms require a determiner while plural forms do not. However, a collective noun represents a group of individual animate members or entities operating as a single unit, such as *faculty* or *team*. Singular forms of collective nouns represent multiple members, so a single flock consists of multiple birds that could, at any time, break off and fly on their own but are, in that moment, flying within a larger unit. The term *collective noun* is typically reserved for nouns that represent a group of individual referents that are animate, able to operate on their own volition, and not physically bound together. For instance, when we watch a baseball team, we see individual players on a field working together while doing different jobs for the good of the unified team.

When collective nouns are pluralized, the plural form creates a “(group1)(group2)” reading: *two teams* refers to two groups, and each group has multiple individual members. The COCA examples below include the collective noun *pack*.

- (2.13) a. they think you are a^{Det} **pack**^{CollN} of **morons**^{CN}.
 b. *they think you are **pack**^{CollN} of **morons**^{CN}.
 c. Our^{Det} **wrangler**^{CN}, **Claire_Mickelsen**^{PropN}, pointed out **spots**^{CN} where **packs**^{CollN} of **coyotes**^{CN} bask.
 d. When the^{Det} **snow**^{NN} falls and the^{Det} white **winds**^{CN} blow, the^{Det} lone **wolf**^{CN} dies but the^{Det} **pack**^{CollN} survives.

As a collective noun, *pack* collects individual members into one group, so a single pack of morons is a collection of multiple morons grouped together into one pack. When singular, *pack* requires a determiner, as demonstrated in (a) and (b); the plural forms do not require a determiner, as in (c). Collective nouns can be followed by an *of*-phrase to specify the type of members or entities that make up the unit, such as *of morons* in (a) and *of coyotes* in (c), but that phrase is not required, as in (d).

Count and collective nouns are similar in their grammatical environments and syntactic requirements, but the group interpretation of collective nouns affects other aspects of the sentence. In American English, singular collective nouns generally require singular verb forms, as in *The government is deciding on an important issue*; however, in British English, collective nouns are typically treated as inherently plural, as in *The government are deciding on an important issue*. Many American readers thought J.K. Rowling had typos in her *Harry Potter*

books due to this difference in dialects, including the following example, taken from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*:

(2.14) The Slytherin team were standing waiting for them. (Rowling 2003: 405)

The example in (2.14) is not a mistake but reflects the plural interpretation of the collective noun *team* in British English.

Even in American English, some collective nouns can be treated as plural, such as *couple*, depending on whether the author wants to stress the individuals or their unity. Consider the COCA examples below:

- (2.15) a. The^{Det} **couple**^{CollN} is from **Pennsylvania**^{PropN}.
 b. The^{Det} **couple**^{CollN} are now planning a^{Det} **June**^{PropN} **wedding**^{CN}.
 c. All^{Det} the^{Det} **couples**^{CollN} are back for a^{Det} **wedding**^{CN} in **Las_Vegas**^{PropN}

While example (a) treats the singular collective noun *couple* as singular with a singular verb form *is*, example (b) treats it as plural with the plural verb form *are planning*. Of course, when the collective noun occurs in its plural form, as in (c), it requires a plural verb form, such as *are*.

In the same way that you can treat proper nouns as count nouns (e.g., *two Leslies*), proper nouns, especially those indicating countries or nationalities, can be treated as collective nouns. For instance, on an episode of *America's Got Talent*, Simon Cowell said the following to a contestant:

(2.16) I hope America get behind you.

He uses the singular collective proper noun *America* to refer to the millions of individual voters who could offer support to that particular contestant. As a British English speaker, he uses the plural verb form *get* to agree with the singular noun subject because he treats *America* as a collective noun. American English speakers can do the same with some nationality nouns, as in “The British are coming.” These collective uses of proper nouns are still identified as proper nouns to reflect their specific referents and their capitalization in written form.

Common non-count nouns (NN), also referred to as mass nouns, are not countable and cannot be pluralized; for instance, *information* cannot be made plural, as in **two informations*. Non-count nouns appear only in the singular form and do not require a determiner, as the COCA examples below demonstrate:

- (2.17) a. **Cats**^{CN} hate the **smell**^{CN} of **citrus**^{NN}.
 b. They brought him **food**^{NN} and **water**^{NN}.
 c. When you and I go out to **dinner**^{NN}, I barely notice the^{Det} **food**^{NN}.

Non-count nouns, which can only occur in the singular form, do not require determiners, as demonstrated by *citrus*, *food*, *water*, and *dinner* in (a)-(c). However, non-counting determiners can support a non-count noun, such as *the food* in (c). If you want to quantify non-count nouns,

you need the aid of a count noun and an *of*-preposition phrase, such as *two bottles of water* or *four boxes of food*. These count nouns are often referred to as package or quantifier nouns. Package nouns are those that refer to a larger unit, such as *ream* in *a ream of paper*, and quantifier nouns count individual instances, such as *sheet* in *a sheet of paper*.

While they appear similar, collective nouns semantically and grammatically differ from count nouns that operate as package or quantifier nouns.

- (2.18) a. **packs**^{CollN} of **coyotes**^{CN} bask.
 b. she tossed four^{Det} **packs**^{CN} of AA **batteries**^{CN} into the^{Det} **cart**^{CN}.

In (a), *packs* is a collective noun because there is no packaging or larger unit physically holding the coyotes together into individual packs; instead, you see many individual coyotes and mentally group them into units based on their location, inherent connection, or interaction with each other. However, in (b), *packs* is a packaged count noun because batteries are held together by plastic or other materials to physically create a single pack. While a coyote could leave the pack and operate on its own, a battery within a pack cannot leave on its own volition. Grammatically they differ because singular package or quantifier nouns require a singular verb form while singular collective nouns can take a plural verb form.

The semantic differences between those interpretations are represented in the figure below, where a collective pack of wolves is an imagined grouping, represented by the dashed-line circle around the individual wolves, and a single pack of cigarettes is packaged unit.

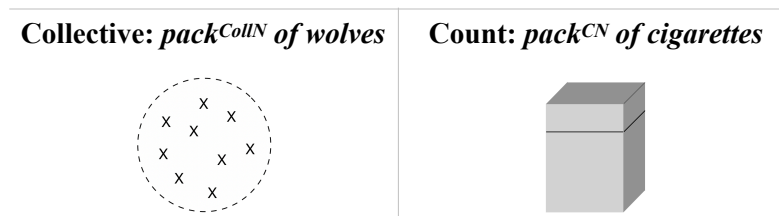


Figure 2.2 Collective versus count noun interpretation of *pack*

Each wolf in the pack decides to be a part of the collective whole, operating in a way to benefit the rest of the pack, but cigarettes do not operate out of their own volition and are held together by plastic and cardboard to create an individual pack.

English allows a process of coercion, where non-count nouns can be pluralized, coercing them into a count noun reading that has a “(variety1)(variety2)” interpretation. For instance, consider the COCA examples below:

- (2.19) a. **Pavla**^{PropN} made herself a **sandwich**^{CN} and ate **gherkins**^{CN} and **cheese**^{NN}.
 b. She saw **sidewalks**^{CN} filled with **bougainvillea**^{NN} and corner **groceries**^{CN} stocked with gourmet **coffees**^{CN} and **cheeses**^{CN}.
 c. I... came across a^{Det} **bag**^{CN} of **Twizzlers**^{PropN}, which had been on **Alison**^{PropN}’s^{Det} **list**^{CN} of the^{Det} **foods**^{CN} they didn’t have in **England**^{PropN}.

In general, *cheese* and *food* are non-count nouns, so they do not require a determiner and, as non-count nouns, appear in the singular form, as in (a). The pluralized versions, *cheeses* and *foods*, turn the nouns into count nouns that require interpretations of multiple varieties. For instance, *cheeses* indicates there are multiple varieties of cheese available in the corner groceries (e.g., Provolone, Mozzarella, cheddar) rather than individual slices or chunks of cheese. Notice the difference between the plural *gherkins* and *cheeses*: *three gherkins* results in a real-world interpretation of having three individual gherkins while *three cheeses* results in a real-world interpretation of having three types of cheese, regardless of the number of slices or pounds of each. Likewise, *foods* in (c) creates an interpretation that there are several varieties of food not available in England, one of which is Twizzlers. In both cases, notice that the pluralized *cheeses* and *foods* are categorized as count nouns because their plural forms have coerced their interpretation into a count reading.

Determiners, or the lack thereof, can coerce the reading of the noun that follows it, forcing it into a specific noun-type interpretation. For example, *cat* is a count noun, which means it should appear with a determiner when it is singular, such as *the cat*, *a cat*, or *one cat*. However, if its singular form appears without a determiner, that doesn't necessarily make it ungrammatical; instead, it coerces it into a non-count (i.e., mass) reading. The example below features a count noun that has been coerced into a non-count noun through syntactic environment:

(2.20) I have **cat**^{NN} on my^{Det} **windshield**^{CN}.¹⁶

This sentence does not mean there is a cat sitting on my windshield; rather, the lack of determiner forces the reading into something much more sinister so that essence of cat or pieces of cat are on my windshield, most likely as a result of having hit a cat.

Like nouns, determiners can have multiple grammatical interpretations, such as the determiner *some*. When *some* is used to mean 'some amount of,' it requires a non-count noun (e.g., *I want some information*), and when it means 'some number of,' it requires a plural count or collective noun (e.g., *I'm reading some books*). However, if it is used to mean 'one' or 'unspecified,' it requires a singular count or collective noun (e.g., *I saw some book on the table, but I don't know whose it was*). Consider the differences between the interpretations of *some guy* in these examples:

- (2.21) a. But if some^{Det} **guy**^{CN} starts climbing a building, we're probably going to put a camera on him. (COCA)
 b. I think I breathed in some^{Det} dead **guy**^{NN}. (Shawn Spencer in *Psych* (McMurray 2009))

In (a), the interpretation of *some guy* is 'one unspecified person,' so *guy* is categorized as a common count noun. The example in (b) is taken from an episode of *Psych* when Shawn Spencer, the lead character, is holding an urn full of ashes and uses the determiner *some* to mean

¹⁶ I owe this very memorable example to my graduate professor, Dr. Laura Michaelis. I use it because it is memorable—not because I don't like cats. I very much like cats and promise that no cats were harmed in the making of this sentence.

‘some amount of’ in front of the noun *guy*, coercing it into a non-count interpretation. Using *some* in that way provides a mass reading, or a non-count reading, of *dead guy*, which is an appropriate reading given the circumstances.

While some nouns seem to inherently belong to one noun type or another, making it easier to identify their category, other nouns are much more fluid and more difficult to analyze without considering context and semantic distinctions. For instance, consider the following sentences:

- (2.22) a. I want more cake.
 b. I want another cake.
 c. I want more cakes.

In (a), *cake* is interpreted as a non-count noun while, in the other two sentences, it is interpreted as a count noun. Semantically, *more cake* indicates that an unidentified amount, viewing *cake* as a mass or continuous substance; however, *another cake* and *more cakes* both refer to an entire cake as a countable unit.

The following figure provides visual representations of the semantic interpretations of each type of noun.

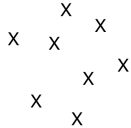
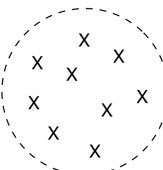
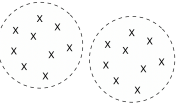
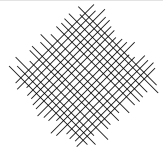
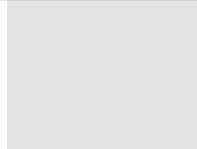
	Singular	Plural	Example nouns
Count noun (CN)	x		<i>wolf, wolves</i>
Collective noun (CollN)			<i>herd, herds</i>
Non-count noun (NN)			<i>mud, fear</i>

Figure 2.3 Visual representations of noun types

In the images, individual referents are indicated by an X, so the X in the singular column for the count noun row could represent a single wolf. Non-count nouns occur in singular forms and refer to entities that are not viewed as having discrete boundaries, such as *fear*.

One test for non-count nouns is the *how much* test: if you can grammatically and semantically place *how much* in front of a singular noun form, it is a non-count noun. Using the examples above, I can ask “How much dead guy did Shawn breathe in?” but I cannot ask “How much guy climbed the building?” The ability to use *how much* to question an amount in (b) but not (a) reinforces the fact that *guy* is being used as a non-count noun in (b) and as a count noun

in (a). Furthermore, if you say “I want more cake,” I can respond with “How much cake do you want?” Again, *how much* followed by a singular form indicates a non-count reading. Count and collective nouns require *how many* and a plural form, such as “How many guys are climbing the building?” or “How many teams are there?”¹⁷

A similar test is to replace a determiner in front of a singular noun form with *a lot of*; if the replacement grammatically works, it is a non-count noun. While **a lot of guy starts climbing* is ungrammatical, *I breathed in a lot of dead guy* is grammatical. Count and collective nouns require a plural form to follow *a lot of*, such as *a lot of guys* or *a lot of teams*. These two tests can help you distinguish non-count from the other two types of common nouns.

The table below summarizes key defining features of the four syntactic types of nouns and provides examples of each one.

Type	Features		Examples
PropN	- usually appears in singular form, though some require plural forms, and some can be pluralized in particular contexts - refers to a specific referent - is typically capitalized in writing		<i>Lucy, Golden State Bridge, Alice in Wonderland, the Rocky Mountains</i>
CN	- if singular, requires a determiner - can occur with cardinal determiners	- if singular, refers to an individual referent - if plural, refers to multiple individual referents	<i>car, potato, letter, idea, rainbow, student</i>
CollN	- uses <i>how many</i> with a plural form to quantify amount - requires a plural form after <i>a lot of</i>	- if singular, refers to a group of individual animate entities acting as a single unit - if plural, requires “(group1)(group2)” interpretation - can occur with an <i>of</i>-phrase that specifies its individual members or entities	<i>pack, group, team, faculty, government, class</i>
NN	- appears in singular form only - does not require a determiner - uses <i>how much</i> to quantify the amount - can occur in singular form after <i>a lot of</i>		<i>magic, furniture, water, corn</i>

Table 2.5 Noun types and their defining features

Syntactic noun types are distinct from the semantic concrete and abstract designations, so any of the four types can be either concrete or abstract nouns. For instance, the noun *idea* is abstract, and the noun *book* is concrete, yet both are examples of common count nouns.

Using the information you have been provided in this section, identify the syntactic type of the bolded nouns in the COCA examples below, and identify any determiners supporting those nouns:

¹⁷ Prescriptively, the determiners *much* and *less* should only support non-count nouns (e.g., *much information, less broccoli*), and the determiners *many* and *few(er)* should only support count or collective nouns (e.g., *many people, few items*). That rule is not widely followed in everyday communication, though, so it is less helpful than the *how much/how many* test.

- (2.23) a. And if you need any **help** playing the **instrument**, you call me, okay?
 b. After all, who can fail to sympathize with the **anxiety** of a **gentleman** in a white **suit** surrounded by a jostling **mob** of **urchins** with chocolate ice cream **cones** in their grubby little **hands**?
 c. “I could cut out paper **snowflakes** with those **scissors**!” **Anna** thought.
 d. A **part** of him realized he was drowning now in the **depths** of the **hallucination**.

Three of the nouns in these example sentences fall into grey areas, making them more difficult to classify into one category, and those are *anxiety*, *scissors*, and *depths*. The other nouns more clearly fit into one category or another, such as *help*, *instrument*, and *Anna*.

After my answers below, I provide justifications, focusing on the three nouns that are the most difficult to categorize.

- (2.24) a. And if you need any^{Det} **help**^{NN} playing the^{Det} **instrument**^{CN}, you call me, okay?
 b. After all, who can fail to sympathize with the^{Det} **anxiety**^{NN} of a^{Det} **gentleman**^{CN} in a^{Det} white **suit**^{CN} surrounded by a^{Det} jostling **mob**^{CollN} of **urchins**^{CN} with chocolate ice cream **cones**^{CN} in their^{Det} grubby little **hands**^{CN}?
 c. “I could cut out paper **snowflakes**^{CN} with those^{Det} **scissors**^{CN}!” **Anna**^{PropN} thought.
 d. A^{Det} **part**^{CN} of him realized he was drowning now in the^{Det} **depths**^{NN} of the^{Det} **hallucination**^{CN}.

The majority of the nouns are common count nouns, which is a pattern you will likely see in many data sets because they tend to be the most frequently used nouns.¹⁸ The common count nouns include singular nouns, such as *instrument*, *gentleman*, and *part*, and plural nouns, such as *urchins*, *snowflakes*, and *hands*. The only collective noun in the set is *mob*, which collects all the individual urchins into one group, and the only proper noun is *Anna*. The noun *help* in (a) is a non-count noun and passes the three NN “tests” presented above: you can grammatically say *if you need help*, *if you need a lot of help*, and *how much help*.

The non-count noun *anxiety* is tricky because, in some circumstances, *anxiety* can be treated as a common count noun, appearing as the pluralized form *anxieties*. However, in this context, it is awkward and, for me, ungrammatical to say **sympathize with one anxiety of a gentleman* or **sympathize with an anxiety of a gentleman*, which means it should not be considered either count or collective. In the same way, it feels more natural to question “How much anxiety did the gentleman have?” rather than “How many anxieties did the gentleman have?” in the given context. While these tests support my decision to label it as a non-count noun, the reason it is not a perfect non-count noun is that I cannot delete the determiner in front

¹⁸ The frequency of common count nouns led me to creating this mantra for my students: When in doubt, common count.

of the noun: **sympathize with anxiety of a gentleman*. Even though it is not a perfect, non-count noun, it fits best into that category for this context.

The noun *scissors* is difficult because it is a plural-only noun, and, as a plural-only noun, it cannot be counted in the typical manner; that is, you cannot say **one scissor*, and many speakers are uncomfortable with *two scissors*, instead requiring *two pairs of scissors*. Because it is a plural noun, though, you can rule out its status as a non-count noun, which is further supported by the awkwardness of phrases like *much scissors* and ungrammaticality of **a lot of scissor*. Moreover, the phrase *a lot of scissors* refers to multiple sets of scissors, creating a plural interpretation.

Finally, in the context provided, the noun *depths* is a plural form, which appears to make it a candidate for a count noun status. However, this idiomatic use of *depths* is not countable even though it appears in a plural form: **drowning now in three depths of the hallucination*, **a lot of depths of the hallucination*, **how many depths of the hallucination*. Besides the fact that it has a plural form, *depths* passes the non-count noun tests: you can question *how much depth* the hallucination has, and you could quantify it in a singular form with *a lot of depth of the hallucination*, though some readers may find that rewording awkward for the given context. This idiomatic use of *depths* is difficult to categorize and does not have a perfect fit, but the best match is a non-count noun, appearing in a plural-only form in the phrase *the depths*.

Practice Set 2.2 Noun type

The sentences in this set were taken from Reif Larsen's (2009: 148-150) novel *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet*. Bold the nouns in the following sentences, identifying their grammatical noun types with superscripts, and identify all determiners with a superscripted label.

When you identify common noun types in sentences, you need to make sure you're identifying the type that best fits the use in that particular sentence. If you think you've found an instance that falls into a grey area, you should provide a justification for your answer, connecting grammatical features of the noun type you've selected to the use of the noun in question.

1. She scanned the harbor.
2. The sea was churning, but not overly so.
3. Snowflakes fell lazily, without any indication of the night's destruction.
4. The familiar dozen or so floating boxes that gave the Great Harbor its peculiar character were gone.¹⁹
5. Instantly, a vacuum of air formed in Elizabeth's throat.
6. It was as if her lungs had vanished from this world along with those dozen homes that once floated on the sea.
7. She could feel her fingers begin searching the layers of the woolen scarf, desperately, as if she might find her house, her lungs, her breath, her husband, inside that small, coarse space.

¹⁹ Original: The familiar dozen or so floating boxes that gave the Great Harbor its peculiar character were gone, save for one, but that one was not her own.

8. Pieces of the houseboats washed up all that spring: a headboard, a drawer, false teeth.
 9. Not much was found of their own houseboat, as if it had been blown farther out than the rest.
 10. Part of her held onto the slimmest hope that he had survived; he was a strong swimmer and perhaps he had found shelter in some distant cove; he was resting now, and soon he would backstroke home, up the little canal to the beach, where she would greet him, scold him, bring him his tea, hold that thumb of his inside the quiet of her palm.
-

Terms introduced in Chapter 2

Lexical forms

determiner (Det)

noun

noun type

proper noun (PropN)

common count noun (CN)

common non-count noun (NN)

common collective noun (ColN)

Concepts

affix

prefix

suffix

morphological features

referent

semantic definition

syntactic environment

Chapter 2 Exercises

Exercise 2.1

These sentences are taken from Sarah Blakley-Cartwright's (2011: 1-4) *Red Riding Hood*. Annotate the nouns and determiners.

1. Once upon a time, there was a girl, and there was a wolf.
2. From the towering heights of the tree, the little girl could see everything.
3. The sleepy village of Daggorhorn lay low in the bowl of the valley.
4. From above, it looked like a faraway, foreign land.
5. Up here in her tree, the air was cool on her face and she felt invincible.
6. She could be an animal: a hawk, chilly with self-survival, arrogant and apart.
7. Valerie peered past her dangling bare feet and thought about why she had climbed up here.
8. She climbed up high because she couldn't breathe down there, in the town.
9. If she didn't get out, the unhappiness would settle upon her, piling up like snow until she was buried beneath it.
10. She and her older sister, Lucie, were like the two vines that grew twisted together in the old song the elders of the village sang.

Exercise 2.2

Find the following 10 patterns in natural text, using different nouns for each one (i.e., if you use *book* for the first pattern, you cannot use that noun again for other patterns), and annotate the relevant words. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the nouns and determiners you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence, so you may end up with fewer than 10 sentences.

1. singular common count noun with one determiner
2. plural common count noun with one determiner
3. plural common count noun without a determiner
4. singular common collective noun with one determiner

5. plural common collective noun with or without a determiner
6. common non-count noun with one determiner
7. common non-count noun without a determiner
8. proper noun
9. proper noun
10. any noun type with two or more determiners

Exercise 2.3

Choose a short text that has at least 25 common nouns, and annotate each noun. Using a thesaurus, replace the 25 common nouns with a suggested word, choosing any word you'd like from the list the thesaurus provides.

Analyze the results in a short paragraph, focusing on whether noun replacements work better (or worse) for any particular type of noun. When providing examples from the text, italicize words you discuss; for instance, the common count noun *cat* has the following synonyms: *feline*, *mouser*, *furball*, and *grimalkin*. Notice that every time I write about a word for discussion, I italicize it.

Your submitted work needs to include the following:

- the original text marked up with bolded nouns and labels for noun types as superscripts
- the new text with the nouns replaced by legitimate synonyms (i.e., they were retrieved from a thesaurus)—make sure the nouns are still bolded
- a paragraph that analyzes your results, using specific examples from the text
- citations for the original text and thesaurus used for this activity

Chapter 3: Noun phrases

*All function words... require a basic awareness of the speaker's location in time and space. The ability to use them, then, is a marker of basic social skills. —James W. Pennebaker, *The Secret Life of Pronouns* (34)*

3.1 Noun phrases and pronouns

The simplest grammatical constituent is a grammatical word, such as a noun or determiner, and those grammatical words serve as building blocks for the next level of grammatical constituent, which is the phrase. A **phrase** consists of one or more grammatical words working as a single unit that can take a grammatical role or function within a sentence. Every phrase requires, at minimum, a **head word**, and the head word is often accompanied by other constituents, including the following: specifiers, such as determiners; modifiers that describe the head word; and complements, which complete the meaning of the head word. Phrases are named after their head word, so a noun acts as the head word of its **noun phrase** (NP). In general, every noun heads its own noun phrase, so the number of nouns in a sentence typically correlates with the minimum number of noun phrases in that sentence.

As an example, identify the nouns and determiners in the sentence below:

(3.1) Pipsa had five brothers. (Udry 1969: 1)

The repeated example below bolds the nouns and includes superscripted labels for both nouns and determiners.

(3.2) **Pipsa**^{PropN} had five^{Det} **brothers**^{CN}.

The sentence has two nouns, *Pipsa* and *brothers*, each of which heads its own noun phrase. Every noun phrase includes its head word but also needs to include any other word working directly with the noun, such as a determiner. If no other words support or modify the head noun, the head noun works on its own to form a noun phrase, such as *Pipsa*. However, if a determiner or other supporting constituent is present, as in *five brothers*, it is included inside the noun phrase along with the head noun.

In the annotation scheme, parentheses mark the boundaries of noun phrases, as in the example below:

(3.3) (**Pipsa**^{PropN}) had (five^{Det} **brothers**^{CN}).

Pipsa is a single-word phrase with the head noun operating by itself, which is often the case when the head noun is a proper noun, and the noun phrase *five brothers* consists a determiner, *five*, and a head common count noun, *brothers*.

Grammatical constituents can be viewed as a hierarchy, where grammatical words represent the bottom level, or the foundation for higher constituents. Above words in this hierarchy are phrases, and later chapters discuss the highest level in the hierarchy, which consists of clauses. In general, words work together to create phrases, and phrases work together to create

clauses. In the annotation scheme, all superscripted labels provide the forms of grammatical words, so superscripted labels provide the word's lexical category and type. For example, a superscripted *CN* indicates the word belongs to the noun lexical category, and its specific type is a common count noun. The forms of phrases and clauses are indicated by the symbols that mark their boundaries, including the single set of parentheses that marks the beginning and end of a noun phrase. The application of the symbols is consistent, so every time you see single parentheses in the annotation scheme, you will know they mark the boundaries of a noun phrase.

The head word of a phrase determines what other constituents can appear in its phrase and what constituents it requires for grammaticality. For instance, proper nouns prefer to work alone in most cases and often operate by themselves as single-word noun phrases, such as *Pipsa* filling an entire NP in (3.3). Count nouns, on the other hand, require a determiner if they're singular and often appear with determiners even when they're plural, such as *five* appearing in the same NP as the plural count noun *brothers*. As discussed in Chapter 2, a noun's grammatical type plays an important role in determining what else can—or must—occur in the noun phrase alongside it.

Before moving on, annotate the nouns, determiners, and complete noun phrases in the following sentence:

- (3.4) Every spring, after the redbud bloomed, Pipsa helped her mother plant corn (Udry 1969: 6)

The sentence includes five nouns, three of which have supporting determiners, and five noun phrases, which are identified below:

- (3.5) (Every^{Det} **spring**^{CN}), after (the^{Det} **redbud**^{CN}) bloomed, (**Pipsa**^{PropN}) helped (her^{Det} **mother**^{CN}) plant (**corn**^{NN})

In that sentence, *spring*, *redbud*, and *mother* are common count nouns, and, being singular, they require determiners. Counting determiners like *every* require either a count or a collective noun to follow, and *spring* is best categorized as a count noun since it does not represent a group of animate members. Therefore, even though *spring* conceptually refers a season that consists of multiple days and months, it grammatically works as a count noun that represents one individual referent. The proper noun *Pipsa* occurs alone in its noun phrase, and, as a common non-count noun, *corn* does not need a determiner and heads a single-word noun phrase.

Later chapters will introduce six additional types of phrases, each of which has its own boundary markers in the annotation scheme and its own potential uses within a clause. The focus of this chapter remains on the noun phrase and its other potential head word, which is a pronoun. **Pronouns** (Pro) are function words that replace entire noun phrases, so they can also serve as the head word of a noun phrase. Pronouns and pronominal forms allow for more efficient and effective communication to refer to known, previously established, and/or understood referents. For example, consider the following sentence:

- (3.6) Shona had got so good at lying she could even persuade herself that she was happy (Farooki 2007: 37)

Removing the pronouns and replacing them with their NP referents results in this wording:

- (3.7) Shona had got so good at lying Shona could even persuade Shona's self that Shona was happy

In everyday communication, speakers naturally shift from nouns to pronouns and back again as necessary. The reworded sentence above sounds awkward because of the repetition of *Shona* and because speakers prefer to use pronouns to refer to a noun that has already been introduced or can be figured out from context. In (3.6), *Shona* is mentioned once, and then *she* and *herself* are used to refer back to Shona; that is, *Shona* is the **antecedent** that the pronouns *she* and *herself* refer to. Replacing all pronouns with their antecedents, as seen in the modified version in (3.7), does not sound like fluid, natural English.

Pronouns are less specific than nouns²⁰ because their antecedent could be anything that was previously mentioned, as long as it pragmatically makes sense (e.g., *she* most likely refers to a recently mentioned female human or animal). Because they rely on context for interpretation, pronouns are **deictic** words, which means defining a pronoun requires pragmatic context, and as the context shifts, so does the referent of the pronoun. The pronoun *she* does not always refer to Shona in English—its referent and, thus, its definition depend on the context, and the hearer or reader must be aware of that context to interpret its meaning. Like determiners, effective use of pronouns shows a shared social and pragmatic context of the speaker/writer and hearer/reader.

A pronoun's context does not always clearly point to the pronoun's intended antecedent, so some pronouns require more work on the hearer's/reader's part to interpret the correct meaning. The paragraph below involves two male characters, Bhai Hassan and his cousin Parvez. All pronoun-based forms, including possessive determiners, are bolded to draw attention to them.

- (3.8) It was Bhai Hassan's turn to shrug. **His** good-looking young cousin had a lot of charm, **he'd** give **him** that. **He'd** be a definite front-of-house asset with the moneyed ladies of Tooting, especially with **his** new plans to expand the sweet shop to a tea house. Sod the bloody family—apart from Parvez, they never wrote to **him** anyway, except to ask for money. (Farooki 2007: 41)

The first use of *his* refers back to Bhai Hassan, the only male character mentioned thus far in the paragraph. However, the second sentence mentions *his good-looking young cousin*, which refers

²⁰ Some grammars treat pronouns as a subset of nouns rather than as a distinct lexical category. To indicate their grammatical similarities to nouns, the annotation scheme bolds both nouns and pronouns. However, the superscripted label *Pro* differs from the noun labels because the two categories behave differently in many senses. For instance, as function words, pronouns belong to a closed class, are often unstressed, typically occur after an antecedent, and are cognitively treated like other function words. Nouns, on the other hand, belong to an open class, are typically stressed, do not occur with an antecedent, and are cognitively treated as content words.

to Parvez, another male character. Two male characters are now in play within the context, and the sentence concludes with *he'd give him that*. Farooki, the author, is relying on her readers to use story context to figure out that *he* refers to Bhai Hassan but *him* refers to his cousin Parvez. Still relying on the reader's ability to interpret the situational context, Farooki begins the next sentence with *He*, which refers to Parvez, but the *his* used later in that sentence refers to Bhai Hassan. The final sentence explicitly mentions Parvez, yet the pronoun *him* contextually must refer to Bhai Hassan. As this example demonstrates, pronouns may be high-frequency, small function words that appear simple on the surface, but their use and interpretation are anything but simple.

Pronouns can be broken down into several grammatical types, and many pronoun forms overlap with determiner forms introduced in Chapter 2. Throughout English's development, speakers have used words that were originally determiners to replace the entire noun phrase; for instance, *that* was a form of the definite determiner *the*, but English speakers shifted how they used it in sentences, allowing it to act as a pronoun, replacing entire noun phrases. Several determiners have made that same journey, but their grammatical context provides clues to indicate whether they are determiners or pronouns within each sentence structure.

One large category of pronouns is the **personal pronouns**, all of which inflect for one of three grammatical persons: first, second, and third.

	Singular	Plural
first person	<i>I, me</i> <i>mine</i> <i>myself</i>	<i>we, us</i> <i>ours</i> <i>ourselves</i>
second person	<i>you</i> <i>yours</i> <i>yourself</i>	<i>you</i> <i>yours</i> <i>yourselves</i>
third person	<i>he/she/it, him/her/it</i> <i>his/hers/its</i> <i>himself/herself/itself</i>	<i>they, them</i> <i>theirs</i> <i>themselves</i>

Table 3.1 Personal pronouns

In some cases, the term *personal pronoun* only refers to the forms provided in the top row of each box (e.g., *I, you, them*). With the exceptions of *you* and *it*, the basic personal pronouns have two forms, the first of which is the subject form and the second of which is the object form. In the table, the subject form is provided first, with the object form following a comma, so, for example, *we* is the subject form of the first-person plural pronoun, and *us* is the related object form. Later chapters cover the difference between subjects and objects, and, for now, the focus is on recognizing both forms as instances of pronouns. The second and third rows represent different forms that are subcategories of personal pronouns. The second row provides the possessive pronoun forms, such as *mine* and *theirs*, and the third row provides the reflexive pronoun forms, such as *ourselves* and *yourself*.

The first-person pronoun in its singular forms, *I* and *me*, refers to the speaker/writer/narrator. In its plural form, it typically refers to a group of people that includes the speaker/

writer/narrator. However, the pronoun form is ambiguous as to whether the addressee is included: the inclusive-*we* includes the addressee while the exclusive-*we* does not include the addressee. For instance, consider annotated forms of *we/us* in the following COCA examples:

- (3.9) Zelda’s voice had quavered as though she were about to cry.... “Not any more, Danny. Not today.”
 “But—”
 “Please, Danny. Please.”
 I hesitated. “All right, but (**we**^{Pro}) need to talk. I’ll come by the house later all right?”
- (3.10) Meanwhile, the KPMG Women’s PGA will begin Thursday at historic Olympia Fields. And good for the women. They’re excited to be on a course that has hosted four men’s majors. And golf fans should be intrigued.
 “Having the history of the men playing here, it’s a big deal for (**us**^{Pro}) to be here,” said Stacy Lewis, who, like Phil Mickelson, has a sponsorship agreement with KPMG, an auditing/tax advisory firm. “That was one of the stipulations I gave KPMG. (**We**^{Pro}) need to be on golf courses (**we**^{Pro}) historically have not played....”

In the first example, Danny and Zelda are speaking; when Danny says *we*, he uses the inclusive *we* to indicate that he and Zelda need to speak. However, in the second example, when Stacy Lewis uses the forms *us* and *we*, she refers to a group of female golfers, which does not include the addressee, who is conducting the interview.

English also has a ‘royal *we*’ form that offers a more polite or formal way of giving orders or pointing out something that should be done by the addressee(s). Sometimes the speaker is included in the group order, but they are not always. Compare the two examples below:

- (3.11) a. “(We^{Pro}) can cry for 24 hours,” [Kaplan] said. “Then (**we**^{Pro}) need to figure out what the hell (**we**^{Pro})’re going to do about this.”
 b. Annie walked over to where Tom was sitting and put her hand on his shoulder. “I think (**we**^{Pro}) need to listen.”

In (a), Kaplan uses *we* to refer primarily to himself when he says “we need to figure out...” In other words, he gives an order to himself using a royal-*we* form, which opens the possibility that others can be included in the crying and figuring out future plans. In (b), Annie gives an order to Tom, telling him he needs to listen, but she uses the royal-*we* to soften the blow of the command.

The second-person pronoun in English has leveled out over time so that one form represents both singular and plural forms: *you*. Some dialects have rectified this by creating a plural form, such as *y’all*, *yuns/youns*, or *you guys*. Second-person pronouns typically refer to the addressee(s), though English also offers the ‘vague *you*,’ where its use signals that the referent is not necessarily the addressee. The COCA examples below demonstrate the difference:

- (3.12) a. The minute (**you**^{Pro}) walked through our door, I could tell that (**you**^{Pro}) had had your come-to-Jesus meeting.
- b. I thought when (**you**^{Pro}) showed up at “SNL,” that meant (**you**^{Pro}) were as good as everybody at “SNL.” Like, how could Lorne be wrong?

The instances of *you* in (a) refer to the addressee, but the instances of *you* in (b) do not refer to the addressee. Example (b) is taken from an interview with Seth Myers, and the interviewer, who is the addressee, is not the referent of *you*; rather, *you* refers to anyone who fits the criteria in the context.

Finally, the third-person pronouns refer to participants who are not the speaker/writer/narrator or hearer/reader; instead, they refer to single entities or whole groups outside the immediate participants of the discourse. The third-person singular personal pronoun forms reflect the semantic gender of the intended referent (i.e., *he* and *she* reflect gender of the referent, and *it* refers to non-human referents), but that can be problematic when the gender of the referent is unknown or non-binary. English offers two primary options to refer to a singular referent that does not indicate a specified gender:

- (3.13) a. people have an opportunity to support (a^{Det} **candidate**^{CN}) whether ((**he**^{Pro}) or (**she**^{Pro})) runs on something.
- b. So any time (a^{Det} **teacher**^{CN}) says no, which (**they**^{Pro}) can say because it’s outside the contract, we’ve gotten it.

In (a), the writer uses *he or she* to refer to the singular candidate of any gender, but the writer in (b) uses *they* to refer to the singular teacher of any gender. This use of *they* to refer to a single referent is called ‘singular *they*,’ and some prescriptivists refuse to accept the singular *they* as grammatical even though it is commonly used in both formal and informal varieties of English and has been for centuries.

Singular *they* is also the preferred pronoun of some transgendered speakers because English does not offer a good non-gendered alternative to the third-person singular pronoun forms. While people have tried in the past to introduce new pronoun forms into English, including *e/em*, *xe/xem*, and *ze/zir*, these forms have failed to catch on because purposefully introducing new function words to a language is rarely successful. Therefore, many transgendered speakers opt for one of the existing forms of *he*, *she*, or *they*, selecting the pronoun forms they feel most comfortable with.

In very limited cases, forms of *it* refer to a human referent. For instance, when someone knocks at the door, the question “Who is it?” uses *it* to refer to the person knocking. As another example, someone may ask “What’d you name it?” about a newborn baby whose gender has not yet been disclosed. These instances are limited in scope, though, and not all speakers agree with these uses. Speakers differ on their preference of pronoun use when referring to animals, some preferring *it* and others believing the use of *it* objectifies the animal. When the gender of the animal is unknown, some animals tend to be associated with a gender, such as using *she* to refer to a cat but *he* to refer to a dog. Finally, while most inanimate objects are referred to as *it* in the

singular pronoun form, some speakers use *she* to refer to modes of transportation, such as ships, cars, and airplanes (e.g., *I love my car—she’s a beauty*).

Possessive pronouns are distinct from possessive determiners because a possessive determiner requires and supports a head noun while a possessive pronoun is the head of its own noun phrase. As an example, consider the song title of the 1998 Brandy and Monica hit:

(3.14) That boy is (**mine**^{Pro}).

The possessive pronoun *mine* fills the entire noun phrase and cannot grammatically support a head noun (e.g., *my boy* but **mine boy*). Possessive determiners, such as *my* and *your*, require a head noun, as demonstrated by the following lyrics from within the song:

(3.15) a. (My^{Det} **baby**^{CN}) don’t need (your^{Det} **love**^{NN}). (Brandy and Monica 1998)
 b. *My don’t need your.

In most cases, the possessive pronoun form is distinct from the possessive determiner form; however, *his* and *its* share forms, so, for instance, in *His*^{Det} *baby* and *That boy is his*^{Pro}, the two instances of *his* represent different lexical categories. Another pronoun form that overlaps with a possessive determiner form is *her*, which could be a possessive determiner (e.g., *her book*) or the object form of a personal pronoun (e.g., *I see her*).

The **reflexive pronouns** are compound forms that end in *-self* or *-selves*, typically consisting of the possessive determiner form and the singular *self* or the plural *selves*. The exceptions are *himself* and *themselves*, both of which typically begin with the object form of the personal pronoun rather than the possessive determiner form, which would yield the forms *hissself* and *theirselves*. The forms provided in the personal pronoun table above are the forms most often seen in English, but some dialects offer slight variations on those forms, including *theirselves*, *themself*, and *hissself*, as demonstrated by these COCA examples:

(3.16) a. He sure is excited that the governor **hissself**^{Pro} accepted his invitation.
 b. A lot of the clients that come to see me are concerned about how they’re presenting **themself**^{Pro} verbally.
 c. “You have student-athletes misrepresenting their team and **theirselves**^{Pro},” Kennedy said.
 d. Nobody survives out here by **theirsself**^{Pro}.
 e. I feel optimistic that we have affirmed **oursself**^{Pro} as a genre that says, “We are open to anyone, and anybody can excel in it, and anybody can tell a story.”

These nonstandard forms tend to be infrequent and restricted to particular dialects or registers. For instance, while *themselves* appears in COCA 113,904 times, *themself* only appears 113 times, *theirselves* 46 times, and *theirsself* 23 times. Furthermore, the examples of *hissself* were almost entirely restricted to instances of dialogue in fiction. While these variant forms exist, they occur

much less frequently than the standard forms, and prescriptive grammarians consider the alternate forms ungrammatical.

Other pronoun types do not inflect for grammatical person and include demonstrative, indefinite, and reciprocal pronouns:

Category	Examples
demonstrative	<i>this, that, these, those</i>
indefinite	<i>one, some, someone, anything, nobody, everywhere, whatever, whoever, it</i>
reciprocal	<i>each other, one another</i>

Table 3.2 Other types of pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns, like demonstrative determiners, typically “point” to their referent to indicate spatial proximity, whether it is literal or metaphorical. For instance, *these* tends to refer to objects placed nearby, ideas recently discussed, or topics closely related to the current discussion, and *those* tends to refer to objects placed further away, ideas more distantly discussed, or topics less related to the discussion at hand. The forms of demonstrative pronouns are identical to the demonstrative determiners, as in the COCA examples below.

- (3.17) a. So why did you tackle (this^{Det} **topic**^{CN})?
 b. I appreciate (**this**^{Pro}).

In (a), *this* is a determiner for the noun *topic* in the noun phrase *this topic*. However, in (b), *this* is a pronoun that fills the entire noun phrase on its own. In conversation, speakers often use *this* and *that* as pronouns, but in academic writing, some writers and editors frown upon that practice because a “lonely *this*” or “lonely *that*” leaves the antecedent unclear, and readers may understand it to refer to an unintended antecedent. One approach to academic or formal writing is to only use demonstrative forms as determiners so that the meaning is always clear. *That*, in particular, is a high-frequency and, according to some, overused²¹ word in English because it can be used as a determiner and demonstrative pronoun, but it can also be used as a relative pronoun, subordinator, or adverb, all of which will be discussed in future chapters.

Indefinite pronouns refer to unidentified or unknown referents, such as *something* to refer to an unknown object and *anywhere* to refer to a non-specified location. The indefinite pronouns include compounded forms beginning with *some-*, *any-*, *no-*, and *every-* and ending with *-one*, *-thing*, *-body*, and *-where*. They also include compounded forms beginning with a *wh*-word and ending with *-ever*, such as *whosoever*, *wherever*, and *whenever*.

²¹ Many teachers tell their students to go through and delete or replace instances of *that* in their writing because sentences and paragraphs sound redundant if the same word is used too many times. However, unless writers have been trained to notice those words, they are often unaware of how much they rely on function words like *that*, and, in speech, speakers don’t—and often can’t—moderate their use of function words, making it feel unnatural for student writers to pay attention to its use in writing. In other words, editing for function words is a learned skill.

The indefinite category includes the pronoun *it*, whose form is also included in the personal pronouns category. When *it* refers to a specific antecedent, it is a personal pronoun; however, when *it* does not refer to or stand in for a specific antecedent, it is an indefinite pronoun. For example, when Agnes sees a unicorn in *Despicable Me*, she shouts, “It’s so fluffy!” Her use of *it* is a personal pronoun because *it* refers to the stuffed unicorn. On the other hand, if Agnes were to look outside and say, “It’s snowing,” the *it* doesn’t have a specific referent and is an indefinite pronoun. The following COCA examples further demonstrate the use of *it* as an indefinite pronoun.

- (3.18) a. Therefore, we think (*it*^{Pro}) is important to discuss each of these justifications in turn
 b. While (*it*^{Pro}) is unlikely (*it*^{Pro}) will rain a majority of the time this afternoon and evening, any activity may be intense.

Some people refer to the indefinite *it* as the “dummy *it*” because it serves as a placeholder rather than as a referring pronoun.

Reciprocal pronouns are compound forms that indicate two or more referents share similar actions or feelings, such as *they ran toward each other* or *we need to love one another*. In the first example, all referents share in the running and are moving in a direction to bring them closer together, and, in the second example, all referents share in the act of loving.

Relative and interrogative pronouns are the final two categories of pronouns that will be discussed in this text, but their uses will be discussed in future chapters because understanding their uses requires understanding features of the clauses in which they appear. Common forms of these pronouns are provided in the table below so you can begin recognizing when they are used as pronouns within sentences.

Category	Examples
relative	<i>that, which, who</i>
interrogative	<i>who, what, which</i>

Table 3.3 Relative and interrogative pronouns

When these forms appear as pronouns, they have the same grammatical features and expectations as other types of pronouns, such as referring to an antecedent and working as the head word of its noun phrase.

Practice Set 3.1 Pronouns

The following sentences were taken from Don Calame’s (2009: 57-58) novel *Swim the Fly*. In the following sentences, annotate all the pronouns. Only focus on identifying pronouns for this

practice set. After identifying the pronouns, consider why you think Calame, the author, opted to use pronouns in those particular instances.

1. I need results a lot sooner than that, so I dump maybe a quarter of the can into my glass of water.
2. I can't afford to waste any of this, so I give up and just slug back the shake the way it is.
3. It's got the consistency of batter.
4. I sort of chew it more than drink it.
5. It's impossible to get it all down without retching.
6. I have to force myself to think about something else.
7. I settle on Kelly, and how beautiful she is, and how she thinks it's cool that I volunteered to swim the fly.
8. This works pretty well until the last, thick glob unsticks from the bottom of the glass and slides right down my throat.
9. It couldn't have been more than thirty seconds after I'd just choked down the last of my protein shake when Sean called, all excited, like he'd just discovered a good mine in his backyard or something.
10. I'd told Sean I was busy, but he said I had to meet him at his house immediately.

3.2 Coordinators

English has many conjunctions, or words that serve to hold constituents together, and the larger conjunctions category includes two distinct lexical categories, coordinators and subordinators, which join constituents in different ways, and this chapter introduces coordinators while later chapters discuss subordinators. **Coordinators, or coordinating conjunctions, (CoConj)** join two or more equal constituents together as one new, larger constituent. Coordinators can bind any type of constituent, as long as those constituents are equally ranked in form and/or function; in fact, they typically join two or more constituents that are the same grammatical form (e.g., two noun phrases, three nouns, four complete sentences).

Some teachers use the FANBOYS acronym for coordinators, which covers seven coordinators: *For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So*. Of those seven, *and, but, and or* are the three most common and the three forms most likely to be coordinating conjunctions. Because those coordinators tend to be more well known and understood, the first focus of this section is on identifying general features of *for, nor, yet, and so* when they act as coordinators.

Nor, though not frequent, tends to act as a negated *or* and can affect the order of words when it is used before a complete sentence.

- (3.19) a. it is not always offered regularly nor^{CoConj} well. (COCA)
 b. we did not know where our hotel was—nor^{CoConj} did we know its name (COCA)

In (a), *nor* could be replaced by *or* with a grammatical result; however, in (b), using *nor* between two complete sentences requires an inverted word order for the second sentence so it appears as *did we know its name* rather than *we did know its name*.

For, *yet*, and *so* work as coordinators less frequently, often working as other lexical categories, so they are the more problematic FANBOYS components. For example, *for* is more likely to be used as a preposition than a coordinator in modern English. When *for* is a coordinator, its meaning is similar to *because*, so the second constituent explains or provides a reason for the first constituent. Therefore, if *for* is a coordinator, the word *because* could replace it. Using that replacement test, decide which of these COCA examples uses *for* as a coordinator.

- (3.20) a. “I apologize for the short notice,” said Kearney.
 b. we would be going on the voyage together, for I could not imagine trying to conduct research without his assistance.
 c. You can deposit the minimum required for now, and generous family members can also contribute.

Of those three, the *for* in (b) is the only one that is a coordinator. That sentence could be reworded as *we would be going on the voyage together, because I could not imagine...* without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. However, **I apologize because the short notice* and **You can deposit the minimum required because now* are both ungrammatical. As a coordinator, *for* generally appears between two complete sentence structures, as in (b).

Another feature of coordinators is that they need to appear in a specific spot within the larger sentence structure: the coordinator and the constituent(s) after it cannot be moved to a new location without resulting in an ungrammatical sentence. For instance, example (c) above is grammatical even if *for now* moves, as in *For now, you can deposit the minimum required*, where *for now* occurs at the beginning of the sentence. If *for* were working as a coordinator in that sentence, that movement would not be possible. Rewording example (b) as **For I could not imagine trying to conduct research without his assistance, we would be going on the voyage together* results in an ungrammatical sentence structure. Other lexical categories offer more possibilities with placement and rewordings, but coordinators are inflexible in that manner because they need to appear between the constituents they join or between the final two options in series of three or more.

Along with that movement test, you can an *and*-insertion test for both *yet* and *so* to determine if they are coordinators: if you can add *and* before *yet/so* without affecting grammaticality or meaning, it is a coordinator. Of these two, *yet* is the easier one to use this replacement test with because *yet* has two options for lexical categories, and the replacement test clearly distinguishes between those two uses. Because *so* has three options, one of which partially overlaps with its use as a coordinator, an additional follow-up test comparing will help identify whether it is a coordinator. If the instance of *so* passes the *and*-insertion test but is a bit awkward, try replacing it with *so that* instead: if *so that* is a better replacement semantically than *and so*, that instance of *so* is not a coordinator.

Using that information, determine which instances of *yet* and *so* are coordinators in the COCA examples below.

- (3.21) a. Caregivers need to remain calm yet assertive.
 b. “I haven’t met him yet,” Sara said.
 c. It’s so joyful, the whole city is more courteous.
 d. I don’t want to get stuck on the word reviled, so I need to think a bit more about it.
 e. We immediately put her on paid administrative leave so we could investigate.

The *yet* in (a) is a coordinator because we can change it to *calm and yet assertive* without affecting its meaning or grammaticality. However, the *yet* in (b) is not a coordinator: **I haven’t met him and yet* is ungrammatical.

The *so* in (c) is not a coordinator, so we cannot replace it with *and so*: **It’s and so joyful* is ungrammatical. In (d), though, *so* is a coordinator, and we can reword that sentence as *I don’t want to get stuck on the word reviled, and so I need to think a bit more about it*. Example (e) is more difficult because it demonstrates the closely related *so* that is a conjunction but not a coordinator. To maintain the same meaning, *so that* is a better replacement than *and so* in the context provided for the sentence: *We immediately put her on paid administrative leave so that we could investigate*. Furthermore, we can move the constituent introduced by *so* in (e) with grammatical results: *So we could investigate, we immediately put her on paid administrative leave*. That movement test does not work for example (d), where *so* is a coordinator.

Coordinators can hold complete sentences together within a larger text by appearing at the beginning of a new sentence. For instance, consider the italicized *and* in the COCA example below:

- (3.22) People built bomb shelters, stocking them with food and water. Schoolkids practiced duck-and-cover raid drills. *And* moviegoers laughed nervously at *Dr. Strangelove*, Hollywood’s screwball version of the road to nuclear holocaust, with military madmen named Jack D. Ripper and Maj. T.J. “King” Kong.

The coordinator *and* at the beginning of a new sentence connects that sentence with the prior sentences in the discourse, showing that the moviegoers’ nervous laughter is semantically and pragmatically connected with the building of bomb shelters and duck-and-cover raid drills in schools. While some teachers frown on beginning sentences with a coordinator, it is grammatical, and we do it quite often in everyday communication.

English also has a set of **correlative coordinators**, or sets of orthographical words working together as one coordinator, including *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, *not only ... but also*, and *both ... and*. For correlative coordinators, the constituents being joined are placed in alternating positions with the two parts of the coordinator. For instance, consider the placement of the coordinators and constituents being joined in the following COCA examples. To draw attention to placement, I have italicized the correlative coordinators and underlined the constituents being joined:

- (3.23) a. grading based on any of the above criteria can occur *either consciously or subconsciously*
 b. These statements *neither deny nor affirm* what the patient is saying.
 c. We believed this was due *not only to their years of teaching experience but also to their comfort level in the classroom*
 d. We examined *both the form of the cybertalk (e.g., greetings, responses, closings) and the content (e.g., requests for help, information, recommendations)*.

Like simple coordinators, correlative coordinators serve to join constituents. For instance, in (a), *either ... or* joins *consciously* and *subconsciously* to create the larger constituent *either consciously or subconsciously*.

Coordinators can provide a number of different semantic relationships among the constituents they join, including these possible relationships: additive, temporal, continuum, contrast, alternative, and cause/reason. The coordinators *and*, *both ... and*, and *not only ... but also* often take an ‘addition’ meaning. In the examples below, the joined constituents are underlined:

- (3.24) a. my complete and^{CoConj} utter lack of grace under pressure (Weisberger 2003: 1)
 b. the mantra offering little comfort and^{CoConj} even less direction (1)

The use of *and* in these examples is an additive one—that is, the meaning of one constituent is being added to the meaning of the other one. For instance, in (a), *complete* and *utter* work together to modify *lack of grace*.

The level of attachment between the constituents being joined is typically based on convention and cultural expectations. For instance, if I say to you, “There are peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the kitchen,” you would likely go into the kitchen looking for sandwiches that have both peanut butter and jelly between slices of bread. However, if I say, “There are peanut butter and grilled cheese sandwiches in the kitchen,” you would probably look for two sets of sandwiches: the ones with peanut butter and the ones with cheese.

Furthermore, sometimes there is a preferred word order when particular constituents are joined together: *bread and butter*, *law and order*, *you and I*. Some coordinated elements have occurred together so frequently that they have become lexicalized idioms: *black and blue*, *odds and ends*, *rock and roll*, *by and large*, *wine and dine*. Examples like *wine and dine* are so idiomatic that they cannot be separated into individual units:

- (3.25) a. I wined and^{CoConj} dined the client
 b. *I wined the client. / *I dined the client.

When one constituent cannot be removed without changing the meaning or grammaticality, it is likely an idiomatic phrase.

The coordinator *and* can also be used to provide a temporal additive relationship, as in the example below.

(3.26) the lurching evened out and^{CoConj} I began to pick up speed. (Weisberger 2003: 1)

You can insert *then* after *and* without changing the meaning because the first constituent happened (*the lurching evened out*) and then the second constituent occurred (*I began to pick up speed*). Those two constituents represent events that happened in chronological order with *and* joining them together.

Finally, *and* can also be used to express a continuum reading, which is a special type of additive relationship requiring repetition, as in the example below.

(3.27) I repeated over and^{CoConj} over. (Weisberger 2003: 1)

The use of *and* in this example causes the meaning to be interpreted as a scalar reading, where the more it is repeated, the more the meaning is increased along a scale. As another example, I can be dramatic about how much I ate at dinner last night and say *I ate and ate and ate and ate and ate...* until I get tired of repeating myself or until someone cuts me off. The end result is that my audience understands that, with every *and ate* I add, I'm implying a greater amount of eating has occurred.

The coordinators *but* and *yet* often express a contrast among the constituents being joined, so the content of the second constituent contrasts the first:

(3.28) I could do nothing but^{CoConj} jam my foot on the brake pedal (Weisberger 2003: 2)

The first constituent states *I could do nothing*, and the coordinator *but* contrasts that meaning and provides something I could and did do: *jam my foot on the brake pedal*. Going back to (3.21a), the *yet* in *calm yet assertive* functions in a contrastive manner, where *assertive* contrasts *calm*.

Or and *either ... or* usually provide alternatives, often requiring you to pick one alternative or another.

(3.29) *Clutch, gas, shift* (neutral to first? Or^{CoConj} first to second?) (Weisberger 2003: 1)

The options in this example are actions of shifting: was the driver shifting from neutral to first (option 1) or first to second (option 2)? This type of alternative is referred to as an exclusive alternative, which means you can only pick one of the options presented. It's impossible to shift from neutral to first and first to second at the same time, so one option must be selected.

In other cases, though, an inclusive reading of *or* is intended, and two or more options are provided with the expectation that you will select at least one, but you can pick as many as you'd like. Great examples of inclusive alternatives are found on applications, such as the example below:

- (3.30) Achieve the required minimum score on eitherⁱ the ACT or^{i CoConj} SAT college entrance exam (Florida Department of Education 2016: 3)

An exclusive reading of *either... or* would mean a successful scholarship candidate can achieve the required minimum score on only one of the tests; however, the intended inclusive reading means the candidate must score the required minimum on at least one of the options. While similar in appearance, *nor* and *neither ... nor* are restricted to negated readings of both options (e.g., *neither this option nor that option*).

Both *so* and *for* express a relationship of cause or reason between the two joined constituents, as demonstrated in these COCA examples.

- (3.31) a. That in itself came as a welcome relief, ^{for}^{CoConj} I'd had enough of danger back in July.
 b. The process never ends, ^{so}^{CoConj} it is called eternal inflation.

The two coordinators work in opposite directions: the constituent after *for* provides the reason/cause, but the constituent before *so* provides the reason/cause. Therefore, *I'd had enough of danger back in July* indicates why *that in itself came as a welcome relief* in (a), but *The process never ends* indicates why *it is called eternal inflation* in (b).

Practice Set 3.2 Coordinators

Highlight the coordinating conjunctions you find in each excerpt below, each of which is taken from a different genre.

Genre 1: Fiction

The following passage is taken from Avi's (1990: 70) *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*.

At first I tried to ignore the feeling. But no matter how much I tried it could not be denied. Of course it was not exactly quiet down below. No place on a ship is. There were the everlasting creaks and groans. I could hear the sloshing of the bilge water in the hold, and the rustling of all I preferred not to put a name to—such as the rats Barlow had mentioned. But within moments I was absolutely certain—though how I knew I cannot tell—that it was a *person* who was watching me. As this realization took hold, I froze in terror. Then slowly I lifted my head and stared before me over the lid of the trunk. My eyes swept to the right. No one. To the left. Again, nothing. There was but one other place to look, *behind*. Just the thought brought a prickle to the back of my neck until, with sudden panic, I whirled impulsively about.

Genre 2: Conversation

The following excerpt is taken from a phone conversation between two friends; Gaia is in the middle of telling a story about a run-in she just had with a guy who keeps “losing his phone” (perhaps he was, as the kids might say now, ghosting her).

- Gaia: Um, so yeah, when he told me that I just looked at him, and I’m like, “Are you serious?” He was all, “Yeah—like give me a call”
- Ivy: You’re like, “I don’t play that game anymore with you.”
- Gaia: I know, but I’m just going, “Um— so Saturday, huh? And if I call you on Saturday, you’re actually going to do something about it?” He looks at me—he’s all, “Yeah, like—” like, he looked all hurt, like I hurt his feelings or something.
- Ivy: Oh my gosh.
- Gaia: And I’m going, “Have you not remembered what has happened the past, like, year and a half?”
- Ivy: Aw—
- Gaia: So, so, yeah, I just—I kinda give him this incredulous look like, “What the hell are you talking about?” And, um, yeah, it just—
- Ivy: I’m so proud of you.
- Gaia: I was like, “Yeah, okay.” And I walked away going, “Yeah, I don’t have your number. I’m sorry I couldn’t call.”
- Ivy: “I lost my phone!”

Compare the two genres you worked with above: Are there any differences in how coordinators are used?

3.3 Annotating noun phrases

Appendix I includes a complete “cheat sheet” for the annotation scheme, including all its labels and typographical symbols. So far, the following basic features of annotations for noun phrases have been introduced:

- the head word is bolded, whether it’s a noun or pronoun;
- the entire phrase is enclosed in parentheses; and
- words are labeled with superscripts to indicate lexical category and, in the case of nouns, type:
 - **pronoun**^{Pro},
 - **noun**^{CN/NN/CollN/PropN}, and
 - **determiner**^{Det}.

Another feature of the annotation scheme is that every grammatical word is written on its own line. If a compound noun is written as two distinct orthographical words, such as *alarm clock*,

you need to place both orthographical words on one line with a single label: **alarm clock**^{CN}. Since compounds are one grammatical constituent, they only take one grammatical label.

This discussion adds two more features: (1) a tabbed space is inserted after the opening mark of a phrase or clause, and (2) if a phrase or clause requires multiple lines, “trickle-down” marks, or a series of aligned colons, connect the opening to the closing marker, which is demonstrated in the following example NPs.

(3.32) But the foreman had scaffolds built for all the men, and even suggested that Dad send the original to the Mechanics Institute, and it won a prize.²² (Gilbreth and Carey 1949: 36)

- (the^{Det}
: **foreman**^{CN}
)
- (**scaffolds**^{CN})
- (all^{Det}
: the^{Det}
: **men**^{CN}
)
- (**Dad**^{PropN})
- (the^{Det}
: **original**^{CN}
)
- (the^{Det}
: **Mechanics Institute**^{PropN}
)
- (**it**^{Pro})
- (a^{Det}
: **prize**^{CN}
)

If the noun phrase consists of multiple words, such as *the foreman*, *all the men*, *the original*, *the Mechanics Institute*, and *a prize*, colons connect its opening mark to its closing mark to visually

22 Original: But the foreman had identical scaffolds built for all the men on the job, and even suggested that Dad send the original to the Mechanics Institute, where it won a prize.

represent a constituent that continues over several lines. I call these colons “**trickle-down**” **marks** because they represent a larger constituent that trickles down over more than one line’s worth of information. If, however, the phrase only consists of one grammatical word, the phrase closes out on the same line it begins, as in *scaffolds*, *Dad*, and *it*.

These annotations provide another layer of information about the grammatical structure of the noun phrase as a constituent. In grammar, we refer to hierarchical relationships among constituents as mothers, daughters, and sisters. **Sister** constituents serve at the same grammatical level within a larger structure; the layout of the annotations helps to identify sisters because their left margins are aligned. For instance, *the* aligns with *foreman* in (a), and they are sisters. Sisters share a **mother**, and the mother is the larger structure holding those sisters together—in this case, the noun phrase. We can also say the NP in (a) has two **daughters**, *the* and *foreman*, but the NP in (b) has one daughter, *scaffolds*.

NPs can be more complex and can take a **possessive NP**, also called a genitive NP, as a possessive determiner. The possessive NP is a full NP embedded inside another NP, acting as a determiner for the head noun. The following sentence exemplifies a possessive NP acting as a determiner and demonstrates how possessive NPs look in the annotation scheme.

- (3.33) Later, on the foreman’s recommendation, Dad was made foreman, too (Gilbreth and Carey 1949: 36)

```
(      (      theDet
:      :      foremanCN
:      :      )’sDet
:      :      recommendationCN
:      )
(      DadPropN)
(      foremanNN)
```

When the possessive -’s is added to a noun phrase, it turns the full possessive NP into a determiner, so *the foreman’s* is a possessive determiner for the head noun *recommendation*, specifying which recommendation. The definite determiner *the* specifies which foreman and needs to stay with the head noun *foreman* in its NP. As a possessive determiner, *the foreman’s* could be replaced by other determiners: *his recommendation*, *the recommendation*, and *that recommendation* are all grammatical.

The first mention of *foreman* in the example is a common count noun because it refers to a person with the title of ‘foreman,’ and you could talk about more than one foreman (i.e., you could count the number of foremen). However, in its second use, it refers to the job title in a more abstract way and refers not to a specific person but to the idea of the job. As such, it is used without a determiner even though it is singular, and it is a common non-count noun.

Another way NPs can be more complex is through coordination. When a coordinator joins two full NPs, its position aligns with the constituents it joins, and each individual constituent is annotated as a full phrase with its own set of parentheses. The general pattern is presented in (a), and an example annotated NP featuring coordination is provided in (b).

- (3.34) a. ((NP₁)
 : coordinator^{CoConj}
 : (NP₂)
)
- b. He and Mother set up a Family Council (Gilbreth and Carey 1949: 37)
- ((**he**^{Pro})
 : **and**^{CoConj}
 : (**Mother**^{PropN})
)

The coordinator lines up with the constituents it joins, so *and* is tabbed in to be even with the opening parentheses of the NPs *he* and *Mother*. The mother NP, *he and Mother*, has three daughters: the NP *he*, the coordinator *and*, and the NP *Mother*.

Coordinators are not limited to connecting two constituents, and the same annotating principles apply regardless of the number of conjoined constituents. For example, annotate the NPs in the sentence below before moving on to the answer and explanation.

- (3.35) he was promoted to superintendent, and then went into the contracting business for himself, building bridges, canals, industrial towns, and factories. (Gilbreth and Carey 1949: 36)

The *and* between *towns* and *factories* joins four individual NPs into a larger NP that begins with *bridges* and ends with *factories*, using *and* as the glue to hold that full NP together as one constituent. Each noun in that list is a head word of its own NP, and those four NPs are embedded inside one larger NP. Altogether, the sentence has nine noun phrases, which are annotated below.

- (3.36) a. (**he**^{Pro})
- b. (**superintendent**^{NN})
- c. (**the**^{Det}
 : **contracting business**^{CN}
)
- d. (**himself**^{Pro})

- e. ((**bridges**^{CN}
: (**canals**^{CN}
: (industrial
: : **towns**^{CN}
:)
: and^{CoConj}
: (**factories**^{CN}
)

I analyzed *contracting business* as a compound in (c), though an alternate analysis is to consider *business* as the head noun with *contracting* as a modifier: (contracting **business**^{CN}). Both analyses work. Because modifying words like *industrial* in (e) have not been introduced yet, they are simply included in the NP for now without a label or other annotation.

Sometimes coordinators join grammatical words, rather than joining full phrases. For instance, a coordinator can join two nouns that are working with the same determiner or two determiners supporting the same noun. Examples (a) and (c) provide the general patterns, and (b) and (d) provide examples:

- (3.37) a. (determiner
: **noun**₁ coordinator **noun**₂
)
- b. (a^{Det}
: **hat**^{CN} and^{CoConj} **umbrella**^{CN}
)
- c. (determiner₁ coordinator^{CoConj} determiner₂
: **noun**
)
- d. (this^{Det} or^{CoConj} that^{Det}
: **reason**^{CN}
)

The alignment in these examples demonstrate that the coordinators join words rather than phrases. For instance, *and* joins the individual nouns *hat* and *umbrella* in (b) rather than joining entire NPs.

Using that information, annotate the NPs in the sentence below before moving on to my annotation and discussion:

- (3.38) Slipping away from the others, she had hastily pulled off her shoes and stockings, thrown her bonnet on a nearby bush, and run down the bank to the river. (Leppard 1983: 9)

The two nouns *shoes* and *stockings* work with the same possessive determiner, *her*, and are joined by the coordinator *and*; that NP follows the pattern in (a) above, where the two nouns are presented on a single line with the coordinator.

- (3.39) a. (the^{Det}
: others^{CN}
)
- b. (she^{Pro})
- c. (her^{Det}
: shoes^{CN} and^{CoConj} stockings^{CN}
)
- d. (her^{Det}
: bonnet^{CN}
)
- e. (a^{Det}
: nearby
: bush^{CN}
)
- f. (the^{Det}
: bank^{CN}
)
- g. (the^{Det}
: river^{CN}
)

Like *industrial* from the example sentence earlier, *nearby* is a modifying word within a noun phrase that has not yet been introduced in the annotation scheme.

Correlative coordinators require an extra step in the annotation scheme to visually connect the first part of the correlative coordinator to the second. An example is annotated below:

(3.40) It was neither fish nor fowl. (COCA)

```
(      neitheri
:      (      fishNN)
:      nori CoConj
:      (      fowlNN)
)
```

The difference is the superscripted *i*, which is called an **index marker**. In this case, the index marker indicates that two orthographical constituents that must appear in different locations work together across constituents as a single grammatical word. That is, *neither* is not a coordinator on its own, and *nor* is not the coordinator by itself; rather, *neither ... nor* works as a single correlative coordinator. The superscripted *i* indicates two pieces of information: (1) you need to find the constituent marked with another superscripted *i* to locate the other half of its compound form, and (2) the two parts work together as a compound grammatical constituent. The lexical category label follows the final portion of the compound form, occurring after the index marker beside *nor*.

Another example of an annotated NP with a correlative coordinator is provided below:

(3.41) It affects not only the mind but also the body. (COCA)

```
(      not onlyi
:      (      theDet
:      :      mindCN
:      )
:      but alsoi CoConj
:      (      theDet
:      :      bodyCN
:      )
)
```

In this example, the two parts of the correlative coordinator are compounded forms: *not only* represents the first half, and *but also* represents the latter half of the correlative coordinator. As with the *neither ... nor* example, the superscripted index marker holds the two pieces together and indicates they function together as a single coordinator.

Practice Set 3.3 Annotating NPs

These sentences were taken from Annabel Johnson's (1990: 5-6) book *I Am Leaper*. For each sentence, annotate NPs, and also label any coordinator with its superscript. If the coordinator is working with or within an NP, make sure you correctly place the parentheses to show what the coordinator is joining together.

1. All around the big room the caged animals were listening, watching, because they had tried to speak to these men, and failed.
 2. The gopher had pleaded in his own tongue, *Let me go, let me go...*
 3. The chipmunk had scolded, *How dare you lock me up?*
 4. And the mouse had simply cried, *I'm scared!*
 5. The blackbird had used some very bad words, and the sad bat just hung there upside down, pretending to ignore everybody.²³
 6. The human beings hadn't understood these messages.
 7. The machine was only programmed to listen in English.²⁴
 8. And that is exactly what Leaper had spoken.
 9. The two men stood staring at the screen.
 10. "The computer must be malfunctioning."
-

²³ Original: The blackbird had used some very bad words, and the sad bat in the corner cage just hung there upside down, pretending to ignore everybody.

²⁴ Original: Neither had the machine—it was only programmed to listen in English.

Terms introduced in Chapter 3

Lexical forms

compound word
 coordinator (CoConj)
 pronoun (Pro)

Phrasal form

noun phrase (NP)

Annotation feature

index marker
 trickle-down marks

Concepts

antecedent
 head word
 phrase
 possessive NP

Chapter 3 Exercises

Exercise 3.1

Annotate all NPs in the following sentences are taken from Syd Hoff's (1958: 23-29) children's book *Danny and the Dinosaur*.

1. Some people were waiting for a bus.
2. They rode on the dinosaur's tail instead.
3. "It's very nice of you to help me with my bundles," said a lady.
4. Danny and the dinosaur went all over town and had lots of fun.
5. They even looked at the ball game.
6. "Hit the ball," said Danny.
7. "Hit a home run," said the dinosaur.
8. "I wish we had a boat," said Danny.
9. "Who needs a boat? I can swim," said the dinosaur.
10. "Toot, toot!" went the boats.

Exercise 3.2

Find the following 10 patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant words. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence, so you may end up with fewer than 10 sentences.

1. single-word noun phrase
2. noun phrase with a determiner and head noun
3. noun phrase with a head personal pronoun
4. noun phrase with a head pronoun that does not inflect for person
5. possessive determiner created by a noun phrase and 's
6. *and* as a coordinator joining two noun phrases, each headed by a pronoun

7. *or* as a coordinator joining two noun phrases, each headed by a noun
8. *yet* as a coordinator
9. *so* as a coordinator
10. correlative coordinator

Exercise 3.3

Select two different genres to work with from the following list:

- academic (e.g., academic journal articles, textbooks)
- fiction (e.g., novels, short stories)
- news writing (e.g., newspapers, online news sources)
- magazine (e.g., *Cosmopolitan*, *National Geographic*, *People Online*)
- spoken (e.g., conversation, speech, lecture)

Find two data sources, one for each genre that you selected. If you want to work with spoken language, you have two options: (1) work with scripted spoken language (e.g., from a TV sitcom), relying on a transcript for the show/movie, or (2) record and transcribe a short conversation. If you choose to record and transcribe your own data, you will likely need 30-45 seconds of conversation, depending on the speed of the speakers, number and length of pauses, and amount of time filled with non-verbal sounds, such as laughing.

Pull out an excerpt of exactly 100 words from each source you've selected. The 100th word will likely be in the middle of a sentence, so finish out the sentence, placing anything beyond the 100th word in italics to remind you that you won't be marking up that portion of the sentence. For each excerpt, annotate the pronouns that occur within the first 100 words.

Make a table to show how many pronouns each text has. Write a brief paragraph comparing the use of pronouns across the genres, identifying whether the genres use pronouns equally.

Your submitted work needs to include the two excerpts with annotated pronouns, a table reporting your results, a paragraph comparing the results, and citations for the two sources you used.

Chapter 4: Adjectives and attributives

... she had a falling out with Stilton, so substantial that it took her six distinct adjectives to describe him. When a girl uses six derogatory adjectives in her attempt to paint a picture of the loved one, it means something. One may indicate a merely temporary tiff. Six is big stuff. I felt I must spare no effort to plead Stilton's cause, to induce her to overlook whatever it was he had done to make her go about breathing like an asthma patient and scattering adjectives all over the place. —P.G. Wodehouse, *Just Enough Jeeves (Joy in the Morning)*, 145-146

4.1 Adjectives

An **adjective** (Aj) describes or modifies a head noun or full noun phrase, and the most basic semantic definition of *adjective* is that adjectives are descriptive words. In the COCA examples below, the adjectives are labeled with a superscript, and the nouns or noun phrases being modified are italicized.

- (4.1) a. We'll take a look at this hilarious^{Aj} *video*.
 b. *My face* was bright pink^{Aj}.
 c. It wasn't *something* funny^{Aj}, but the five of us made *it* funny^{Aj}.

In (a), the adjective *hilarious* modifies the head noun directly following it, *video*. Adjectives can modify full noun phrases that occur before the adjective, as in (b) and (c), where *pink* modifies *my face*, the first instance of *funny* modifies *something*, and the second instance modifies *it*.

The ways in which adjectives modify nouns and noun phrases are diverse, and the relationship between an adjective and the noun or noun phrase it modifies is not always clearly descriptive. Adjectives can be used to indicate an inherent quality or attribute directly associated with the head noun or a non-inherent quality that indirectly relates to the head noun. The COCA examples below include the adjective *old*:

- (4.2) a. There was something exhilarating^{Aj} about being scolded by an old^{Aj} person—it proved you were still young^{Aj}.
 b. He's an old^{Aj} friend of mine.

In (a), *old* indicates an inherent quality of the head noun it modifies, *person*, making it an inherent adjective. The use of *old* in (b) is ambiguous and can be interpreted as either inherent or non-inherent: as an inherent adjective, the friend is old in age, but as a non-inherent adjective, which is likely the intended interpretation, *old* indicates the length of time he has been a friend of the writer. The use of *old* in (a) is more semantically descriptive than its use in (b).

Non-inherent uses of adjectives are idiomatic and, thus, unpredictable in which nouns they can modify and what meanings they can take. For example, *dirty* can be used in a non-inherent sense to indicate illegality, as in *dirty money*, but related adjectives cannot be used in the same way: *filthy money*, *soiled money*, and *grimy money* are more likely to indicate the money's lack of cleanliness. Not all nouns work well with this particular non-inherent use of *dirty*, and phrases like *dirty books*, *dirty magazines*, and *dirty photos* are less likely to refer to illegally obtained objects and more likely to refer to a different non-inherent sense, one that involves adult-rated content. However, in the phrases *dirty feet*, *dirty dishes*, and *dirty cars*, the adjective

dirty is more likely to be interpreted in its inherent sense, indicating that the feet, dishes, and cars need to be cleaned. Identifying whether an adjective is best interpreted as inherent or non-inherent requires pragmatic context. As a native English speaker, when I hear *dirty money*, my first interpretation is ‘illegal money,’ but if I were speaking with someone about the amount of germs on dollar bills and heard the phrase *dirty money*, I would interpret *dirty* as an inherent adjective, referring to the money’s filthiness. Some non-inherent uses are so idiomatic that they can only be used in a set phrase, such as *dirty martini*, where *dirty* indicates olive brine is added to the martini.

Adjectives are often semantically **gradable**, which means you can envision the adjective on a spectrum and use the inflectional suffixes *-er* and *-est* or degree words like *more*, *most*, *kind of*, or *very* to indicate a degree of the adjective. For example, consider the following three language-related social media posts that I find funny:



Image 4.1 Three language-related social media posts

Although I chuckled when I read all three, I find the Snoop Dogg observation about *Mercedes* funnier than the food-related “are you kidding me” post, and I find the *cardbordaux* the funniest of all three. Being able to rank these in terms of how funny I find them is only possible because the adjective *funny* is semantically gradable.

The **comparative** *-er* and **superlative** *-est* are inflectional suffixes only found on adjectives, as in the comparative form *funnier* and superlative form *funniest*. However, not all gradable adjectives can take these inflections, instead requiring the degree words *more* for the comparative sense and *most* for the superlative sense:

- (4.3) a. *beautifuler / more beautiful
 b. *beautifullest / most beautiful

The general rule is that, if they are semantically gradable, one-syllable adjectives take the inflectional suffixes, and two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y* can also take the inflectional suffixes with a spelling change from *-y* to *-i* before the suffix, as in *happy/happier/happiest*. Other two-syllable adjectives that can take the inflections are those that end in *-er* (e.g., *clever/cleverer/cleverest*) and *-ow* (e.g., *mellow/mellower/mellowest*). Some two-syllable adjectives ending in *-le* can take the inflectional forms (e.g., *simple/simpler/simplest*), but others cannot (e.g., *fragile/*fragiler/*fragilest*). All other gradable adjectives are more likely to take the words *more* and *most* for comparisons, such as *beautiful*, which has three syllables. There are several

exceptions to these general rules, including the single-syllable adjective *fun*, whose inflected *funner/funnest*²⁵ forms are not accepted by all speakers.

The comparative *-er* takes the same form as the derivational *-er* found on nouns like *writer*. While the forms look the same on the surface, they are different suffixes and originate from different sources. The comparative *-er* suffix found on adjectives comes from the Old English suffix *-ra*, but the derivational *-er* suffix found on nouns comes from the Old English suffix *-ere*. Over time, the two evolved into the same form while retaining different meanings and functions. If you are unsure of which *-er* suffix appears on a word, you can test the suffix by replacing it with *-est*: if the replacement works, it is the comparative *-er* suffix because the derivational *-er* cannot be replaced with *-est*, as in these examples:

- (4.4) a. One thing is the grass isn't always greener on the other side. (COCA)
 b. ... the grass isn't always greenest on the other side.
 c. you could, for example, become a teacher and then you could become a writer, and then you could become a doctor. (COCA)
 d. *you could... become a teachest
 e. *and then you could become a writest

The *-er* in (a) is inflectional and can be switched to *greenest*; however, the two *-er* suffixes in (c) cannot be replaced in that way, creating the non-words **teachest* and **writest*, indicating they are not examples of the adjectival inflection.

English has a handful of adjectives that have irregular comparative and superlative forms, including the examples below:

- (4.5) a. good/well, better, best
 b. bad, worse, worst
 c. far, further/farther, furthest/farthest
 d. old, elder, eldest

These irregular forms overlap in many ways. The adjectives *good* and *well* (synonymous with *healthy*) share their comparative and superlative forms, *better* and *best*, and the comparative *worse* and superlative *worst* are often pronounced the same though their spellings differ. The adjective *far* has two sets of options for the comparative and superlative forms: *farther/farthest* is often used for distances while *further/furthest* is used for degrees or abstract entities. However, many speakers use those forms interchangeably. The forms *elder/eldest* are often only used for siblings (e.g., *my elder sister*), but those forms are quickly disappearing, being replaced by the regular *older/oldest*. Sometimes speakers treat all these adjectives as regular and simply add the -

²⁵ Prescriptively, using *fun* as an adjective should be reserved for informal use, and some usage guides go so far as to say the adjectival use of *fun* in general is not standard English. The word *fun* began its life a noun, which is why *funner* and *funnest* are still debatable forms even in informal language while the related adjective *funny* can easily be turned into *funnier* and *funniest*.

er/-est suffixes, which is why Jim Croce (1973) can sing about Leroy Brown, “the baddest man in the whole damn town.”

Some adjectives are not semantically gradable and cannot take the morphological inflections or the *more/most* modification, such as the adjective *lone*:

- (4.6) a. you can do it alone, you can be a lone wolf (COCA)
 b. *you can be a loner/more lone wolf
 c. *you can be a lonest/most lone wolf

In (b), adding *-er* to *lone* creates the word *loner*, which belongs to the noun lexical category rather than adjective, as in *He is a loner*.

From a prescriptive approach to studying adjectives, adjectives that indicate certain states or qualities cannot be gradable, including adjectives like *unique*, *pregnant*, and *superior*. Prescriptive grammars state that these adjectives should never appear with the morphological inflections or *more/most* because they indicate a state or quality that either exists or doesn’t exist and cannot be graded; for instance, they argue that you either are pregnant or are not and cannot be “more pregnant.” However, speakers and writers often use these kinds of adjectives with a gradable meaning, as demonstrated in the following COCA examples:

- (4.7) a. Don’t worry. I can’t get more pregnant^{Aj}.
 b. She is the eldest and the (barely) most pregnant^{Aj}.
 c. Creativity makes me a more unique^{Aj} student in my writing and in my music.
 d. Wendy Williams just might be television’s most unique^{Aj} host.
 e. A more superior^{Aj} sort of governess might have told them no.
 f. Boeing supplied the finest^{Aj} and most superior^{Aj} Navy aircraft.

Even though pregnancy as a state is supposed to be an all-or-nothing affair, speakers use *more* and *most* to talk about how far along a pregnancy is (e.g., a woman five months into her pregnancy is more pregnant than a woman two months into her pregnancy). The same goes for *unique* and *superior*, with speakers using those adjectives in gradable ways that shift the meaning of the adjective. For example, *unique* often takes a meaning of ‘creative’, ‘eccentric’, or ‘different,’ all of which are gradable qualities.

Central adjectives have all the most common, basic features while **peripheral adjectives** only have some of those features. Central adjectives, such as *pink*, are semantically descriptive and gradable and can take the inflectional *-er* and *-est* suffixes, but peripheral adjectives, such as *mere*, do not exhibit all those features. Because not all adjectives fit into the central adjective category, you need to rely on a cluster of features when identifying adjectives rather than using one defining feature. For instance, if you only use the semantic definition and search for descriptive gradable words, you might miss adjectives such as *countless*, *original*, and *off-duty*. In general, central adjectives are more easily identifiable as adjectives, and peripheral adjectives are more difficult, often falling into a grey area.

As a content lexical category, adjectives have associated derivational suffixes, and the table below provides some of those suffixes:

Derivation	Examples	Derivation	Examples
-able/ible	<i>fashionable, compatible</i>	-ine	<i>feminine, feline</i>
-acious	<i>loquacious, bodacious</i>	-ish	<i>Dursleyish, greenish</i>
-al/ial	<i>monumental, partial</i>	-less	<i>penniless, thoughtless</i>
-an/ian	<i>urban, Parisian</i>	-like	<i>childlike, lifelike</i>
-ant/ent	<i>pleasant, different</i>	-ly	<i>friendly, yearly</i>
-ary	<i>primary, literary</i>	-most	<i>utmost, northernmost</i>
-ative/ive	<i>decorative, massive</i>	-oid	<i>humanoid, paranoid</i>
-en	<i>golden, flaxen</i>	-ose	<i>verbose, bellicose</i>
-ern	<i>northern, western</i>	-ous	<i>ominous, curious, sensuous</i>
-esque	<i>Kafkaesque, carnivalesque</i>	-some	<i>bothersome, awesome</i>
-etic/ic	<i>pathetic, enthusiastic</i>	-ular	<i>tubular, popular</i>
-ful	<i>wonderful, joyful</i>	-ulent	<i>turbulent, fraudulent</i>
-ical	<i>comical, hysterical</i>	-und	<i>fecund, jocund</i>
-id	<i>horrid, morbid</i>	-ward	<i>forward, upward</i>
-ile	<i>fertile, fragile</i>	-y	<i>springy, risky</i>

Table 4.1 Common adjectival derivations

As with nouns, you can use these common derivations to your advantage as you work on trying to identify whether a word is an adjective—especially if it's a word you're unfamiliar with or one that doesn't quite fit all the basic features of adjectives.

Along with using derivations to create adjectives, you can create hyphenated compound adjective forms, as in the COCA examples below, many of which are based on non-adjective bases.

- (4.8)
- So this is store-bought^{Aj} stuffing.
 - The red-bearded^{Aj} titan guffawed.
 - While the other kids ran screaming through the hall of mummies, I stood silently before a many-armed^{Aj} figure in its display case.
 - He looks now like a fully-fledged^{Aj} vampire.
 - You view events or people in all-or-nothing^{Aj} terms.
 - He's such a happy-go-lucky^{Aj} guy

As these examples demonstrate, these hyphenated adjectives tend to appear before the noun they modify, as in *store-bought^{Aj} stuffing^{NN}*, but they can also appear in other patterns, such as *hardly anything^{Pro} in their home is store-bought^{Aj}* (COCA), where *store-bought* modifies the noun phrase *hardly anything in their home*.

Compounded adjective forms are typically hyphenated but can also be enclosed in quotation marks with or without the hyphens; the three primary means of punctuating these modifiers are demonstrated in these examples, taken from Marian Keyes's (1998) *Rachel's Holiday*:

- (4.9) a. I had my old favorite, the “There’s-someone-scary-in-my-room-and-I-can’t-wake-up”^{Aj} dream. (25)
- b. there was no point in taking anything other than her “One Size Fits None”^{Aj} garments. (67)
- c. In different circumstances I might have thought this was charming. Good-neighbors-New-York-close-of-Millennium^{Aj} style. (318)

No matter how complex they become, these modifiers are best analyzed as compound adjectives, taking only one lexical category label. In examples like (b), quotation marks rather than hyphens hold the individual components together as one lexical constituent.

Finally, through conversion, words that are not typically adjectival can be coerced into an adjectival interpretation through its use within a particular context. For instance, one of my students said the following statement during a Tuesday class:

- (4.10) Today is the Monday-est Tuesday ever.

Not only did she use the word *Monday*, which is typically a proper noun, as an adjective, but she also used the superlative suffix to indicate that the quality she associates with Mondays is gradable. Grammar allows speakers to use predictable patterns to create new words, uses, and nuances in our language.

Practice Set 4.1 Adjective identification

The following sentences were taken from *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles (2011: 1). Place the superscript *Aj* after each adjective you identify.

1. It was what the social columnists liked to refer to as “a superlative affair.”
2. The men were in black tie, echoing the palette of the photographs, and the women wore brightly colored dresses hemmed at every length from the Achilles tendon to the top of the thigh.
3. Champagne was being served off little round trays by young unemployed actors with flawless features and the grace of acrobats.

4. A drunken young socialite in pursuit of a waiter stumbled and nearly knocked me to the floor.
5. She wasn't alone in her condition.
6. At formal gatherings, somehow it had become acceptable, even stylish, to be drunk before eight.
7. But perhaps that wasn't so hard to understand.
8. In the 1950s, America had picked up the globe by the heels and shaken the change from its pockets.
9. Europe had become a poor cousin—all crests and no table settings.
10. And the indistinguishable countries of Africa, Asia, and South America had just begun skittering across our schoolroom walls like salamanders in the sun.

4.2 Syntactic environments of adjectives

Every content lexical category serves as the head of a phrase, and an adjective serves as the head word of an **adjective phrase** (AjP), which is marked with single angled brackets in the annotation scheme: <pink^{Aj}>. Although many adjective phrases have only one daughter—their head adjective—adjective phrases can be more complex with the addition of modifiers or complements, which will be discussed in later chapters. Below, the adjective phrases are annotated in the sentences taken from Elizabeth Weise's (2010) news article "Do egg eaters share blame?" in *USA Today*:

- (4.11) a. What the researchers found is that when people use eggs in cooking, <raw^{Aj}> egg ends up all over the place, on hands, dish towels, utensils, the stove, everywhere.
- b. Which isn't to say the message is <new^{Aj}> that <raw^{Aj}> eggs are potentially <hazardous^{Aj}>.
- c. Restaurant chains have been <aware^{Aj} of the danger> for years.
- d. Not that they've stopped serving what now should be called <undercooked^{Aj}> eggs.
- e. Nor have all the <enticing^{Aj}> photos of <sunny-side-up^{Aj}> eggs disappeared from their menus.

Of the eight adjective phrases in these sentences, seven consist only of the head adjective, one of which is the compound *sunny-side-up*. The adjective phrase *aware of the danger* in (c) is more complex with the complement *of the danger* following the head adjective to complete the meaning of *aware*. In this chapter, the focus remains on annotating basic adjective phrases like those in (a-b) and (d-e), saving the more complex phrases for future chapters.

Adjective phrases appear in one of two syntactic patterns: attributive and predicative. An **attributive (Att)** adjective phrase occurs within a noun phrase, positioned between any determiners and the head noun being modified, as in the annotated examples below:

- (4.12) a. (<Att raw^{Aj}>
: **eggs**^{CN}
)
- b. (the^{Det}
: <Att enticing^{Aj}>
: **photos**^{CN}
)
- c. (all^{Det}
: the^{Det}
: <Att enticing^{Aj}>
: **photos**^{CN}
)

In (a), the AjP *raw* is the first word of the NP and appears before the head noun it modifies, *eggs*; in (b), the determiner *the* is the first word of the NP, with *enticing* appearing between the determiner and its head noun. Attributive adjective phrases are daughters of NPs, demonstrated by their alignment with all other daughters of the NP, so the opening angled brackets of the AjP lines up with the head noun *eggs* in (a).

In all these examples, the attributive label is a subscript because it is a function rather than a form. When you identify the lexical categories and phrase types, you are identifying **grammatical forms**. Grammatical forms indicate what a constituent is and exist at all three levels of the grammatical hierarchy, such as an adjective (a word-level form), a noun phrase (a phrase-level form), or a sentence (a clause-level form). In the annotation scheme, all word-level forms are marked by superscripted labels to indicate type (e.g., *CN*, *Aj*), and phrase- and clause-level forms are represented by the type of bounding markers (e.g., parentheses, angled brackets). **Grammatical functions**, on the other hand, indicate what job the phrasal and clausal constituents perform within a larger structure. In this case, the form of the phrase is an adjective phrase, which is indicated by the angled brackets, and the function of the adjective phrase is attributive, which is indicated by the subscript *Att*. Functions appear as subscripted labels beside the opening bounding marker for the phrase or clause. While forms are assigned to all three levels of grammatical hierarchy, functions are only assigned to phrases and clauses (i.e., individual words do not take functions).

A **predicative** adjective phrase is not included inside a noun phrase and appears in a location after the full noun phrase it modifies, often with a verb between the two:

- (4.13) a. (the^{Det}
: **message**^{CN}
)
is
< new^{Aj}>

- b. (eggs^{CN})
 are
 potentially
 < hazardous^{Aj}>

The predicative AjP *new* modifies the NP *the message* in (a), and the AjP *hazardous* modifies the NP *eggs* in (b); in both cases, a *be*-verb intervenes between the NP and its modifying AjP. Predicative adjective phrases like these often follow verbs like *be*, *seem*, *appear*, and *look*.

Predicate adjective phrases can also work in a slightly different way, describing a noun phrase that appears directly before it, as in the following example:

- (4.14) (they^{Pro})
 called
 (the^{Det}
 : eggs^{CN}
)
 < undercooked^{Aj}>

In this example, the AjP *undercooked* modifies the NP *the eggs*, which appears directly before it. In later chapters, you will learn to identify the two types of predicative functions associated with these environments; for now, you will annotate the AjP but leave the function blank, as in the three examples above.

Attributive adjective phrases can be coordinated with multiple adjective phrases bound together to modify one head noun, as in these COCA examples:

- (4.15) a. I can highly recommend this rich and flavorful cake.
- (this^{Det}
 : <Att < rich^{Aj}>
 : : and^{CoConj}
 : : < flavorful^{Aj}>
 : >
 : cake^{CN}
)

- b. you'll have an elegant yet easy tablescape.

```
(      anDet
:      <Att  <      elegantAj>
:      :      yetCoConj
:      :      <      easyAj>
:      >
:      tablescapeCN
)
```

- c. Tempeh is a chunky, tender cake

```
(      aDet
:      <Att  <      chunkyAj>
:      :      <      tenderAj>
:      >
:      cakeCN
)
```

These examples demonstrate two features of coordination: (1) when phrases or clauses are coordinated, the function label appears only beside the mother's bounding markers, leaving the coordinated daughters without functions on their own; and (2) sometimes punctuation can act as the glue to hold coordinated constituents together. In all three examples, the attributive function subscript appears at the opening of the coordinated AjP; for instance, in (b), both *elegant* and *easy* are left without function labels, saving the *Att* subscript for the full coordinated phrase *elegant yet easy*. Coordinators bind their constituents together, making them function as one unit.

Example (c) demonstrates the use of a comma as coordinating punctuation, where the two adjective phrases *chunky* and *tender* have a comma holding them together. Semantically, you can replace that comma with *and*, as in *a chunky and tender cake*. In its annotation, you do not need to mark the punctuation because its annotation indicates it is a coordinated AjP, and the lack of a coordinator between the elements means punctuation filled that role as coordinator.

Predicative adjective phrases can also be coordinated, as demonstrated in the annotated COCA examples below:

- (4.16) a. Together, they're mean but funny.

```
<      <      meanAj>
:      butCoConj
:      <      funnyAj>
>
```


- b. It is neither necessary nor desirable.

```

<      neitheri
:      <      necessaryAj>
:      nori CoConj
:      <      desirableAj>
>

```

As predicative adjective phrases, these examples do not yet have their function labels, which will be provided in later chapters. Punctuation is less likely to act as the sole binder for coordinated predicative adjective phrases, but a comma can act as an informal coordinator, as in these COCA examples:

- (4.17) a. The air is brown, hazy.

```

<      <      brownAj>
:      <      hazyAj>
>

```

- b. She was cosy, mischievous, lovely.

```

<      <      cosyAj>
:      <      mischievousAj>
:      <      lovelyAj>
>

```

In (a), the comma takes the place of the coordinator between the adjective phrases *brown* and *hazy*; in (b), the commas join the three predicative adjective phrases *cosy*, *mischievous*, and *lovely*. Using commas by themselves without the aid of a coordinator in the predicative position is more acceptable in informal or fiction writing than in academic writing.

Central adjectives can head phrases that occur in both the attributive and predicative functions, but not all peripheral adjectives can occur in both environments. The table below includes the key features associated with central adjectives: they are semantically gradable, can take the morphological comparative and superlative inflections *-er* and *-est*, and can occur in both the attributive and predicative syntactic environments. Those features fill the columns for the table; the rows include examples of adjectives to identify whether they are a central or peripheral adjective. If an adjective matches the feature provided in the column, a plus sign (+) indicates a positive match, but if it does not match the feature, a minus sign (-) appears.

Adjective	Semantics	Morphology	Syntax	
	Gradable	Inflectionable -er -est	Attributive (the <adj> N)	Predicative (the N) is <adj>
cold	+	+	+	+
pink	+	+	+	+
fun	+	-	+	+
beautiful	+	-	+	+
afraid	+	-	-	+
amiss	+	-	-	+
lone	-	-	+	-
adjoining	-	-	+	+
mere	-	-/+	+	-

Table 4.2 Central/peripheral adjectives

A quick way to test for gradability is to add *very* before the adjective to see if it makes sense: *very cold* and *very beautiful* make sense, meaning they are gradable adjectives, but *very lone* and *very adjoining* do not, making them non-gradable. The morphology column is tested by adding the inflections to the adjective, such as *pinkier* and *pinkest* but **amisser* and **amisest*. For the syntax columns, you need to insert a noun of your choice and test whether the adjective works in both the attributive and predicative positions. For instance, I can say both *the fun party* and *the party is fun*, but I can only use *afraid* in the predicative position: *the child is afraid* is grammatical while **the afraid child* is not.

In general, central adjectives, such as *cold* and *pink*, are easier to identify and more flexible in the ways they can be used in English sentences. Peripheral adjectives do not match one or more of these features, and, as *lone* demonstrates, they may only match one feature. These adjective features are not predictable by an adjective's form, and native speakers naturally acquire senses about how adjectives are used with even closely related words yielding different results: for example, while I cannot say **the afraid child*, I can use the synonym *scared* and say *the scared child*. The final adjective in the table, *mere*, is interesting because of its odd combination of features. It is not semantically gradable and cannot take the comparative *-er*, yet it can take the superlative form:

- (4.18) the merest^{Aj} hint of exuberance in her husband's smile was enough^{Aj} to send her reeling (COCA)

English speakers have collectively agreed to use *merest* to mean ‘slightest’ or ‘smallest’ without extending that possibility to other forms, such as **merer*. Quirks like these are difficult to explain, especially to non-native speakers, beyond saying “that’s just the way it is.”

Adjectival words can be used as other lexical categories, depending on their grammatical contexts. Adjective forms can be used as head nouns within noun phrases, often being used as a common noun to represent an abstract category or quality or to represent a specific referent, as demonstrated in these COCA examples.

- (4.19) a. he was striving for a personal best.

(a^{Det}
: <Att personal>
: **best**^{CN}
)

- b. Orange is the new black.

(**orange**^{NN})

(the^{Det}
: <Att new^{Aj}>
: **black**^{NN}
)

- c. The non-rich always outnumber the rich.

(the^{Det}
: **non-rich**^{CollN}
)

(the^{Det}
: **rich**^{CollN}
)

In (a), the count noun *best* refers to a record of some type, whether it is a running record or a movie-watching marathon record. Other examples from COCA demonstrate plural uses of this count noun, such as *one of the year’s absolute bests*, *Your worst is better than a lot of bests I see*, and *He produced career bests*. When color words are used as nouns, they typically represent a non-count noun that refers to the color in general, as with *orange* and *black* in (b). In (c), *non-rich* and *rich* are collective nouns, referring to a group of members who fit a those qualities. As head nouns, these adjective-looking words can take attributive modifiers of their own, such *personal* in (a) and *new* in (b). As always, context is key in grammar.

Practice Set 4.2 Central or peripheral adjective?

The following sentences were taken from Louis Sachar's (1978: 10-11, 15-16) *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*. For each sentence, the adjectives have been identified with superscripts; your job is to fill out a table like Table 4.2 above to decide whether each adjective is central or peripheral.

1. The builder said he was very sorry^{Aj}.
2. The children at Wayside like having a sideways^{Aj} school.
3. They have an extra-large^{Aj} playground.
4. It has been said that these stories are strange^{Aj} and silly^{Aj}.
5. Mrs. Gorf had a long^{Aj} tongue and pointed^{Aj} ears.
6. She was the meanest^{Aj} teacher in Wayside School.
7. "If you children are bad^{Aj}," she warned, "or if you answer a problem wrong, I'll wiggle my ears, stick out my tongue, and turn you into apples!"
8. They were terribly afraid^{Aj} of nice^{Aj} teachers.
9. Mrs. Jewls walked up the winding^{Aj}, creaking^{Aj} staircase to the thirtieth story.
10. The children were flabbergasted^{Aj}.

4.3 Attributive function

This section focuses on grammatical features associated with the attributive function. The first focus is an issue of scope, which indicates how many head nouns are modified by a given adjective. Sometimes the scope of attributive adjectives is syntactically ambiguous, providing two or more semantic interpretations based on one grammatical form. For instance, the NP *a young man and woman* has two interpretations, depending on the scope of the adjective *young*, and each interpretation has its own annotation.

- (4.20) a. (a^{Det}
 : <Att young^{Aj}>
 : **man**^{CN} and^{CoConj} **woman**^{CN}
)
- b. ((a^{Det i}
 : : <Att young^{Aj}>
 : : **man**^{CN}
 :)
 : and^{CoConj}
 : (GAP^{i Det}
 : : **woman**^{CN}
 :)
)

The interpretation of (a) is that both the man and woman are young, and the interpretation of (b) is that only the man is young. Example (b) introduces a **GAP feature** that can be used alongside the co-index marker to indicate that a constituent appears in one location but has a grammatical role in another. In this case, the single determiner *a* is shared between two coordinated NPs, and the GAP serves as a placeholder for that shared determiner with a co-index marker connecting the two. The *Det* label after the co-index marker reminds you of the gapped constituent's grammatical form.

The last section provides examples of coordinated adjective phrases that work as a single unit with the larger sentence structure. Attributive adjective phrases are unique in that they can also be “stacked” rather than coordinated. **Stacked attributive modifiers** work as their own units within the NP:

- (4.21) a. And a big yellow taxi took away my old man. (Mitchell 1970)

```
(      aDet
:      <Att   bigAj>
:      <Att   yellowAj>
:      taxiCN
)
```

- b. The doctor dug into his duffel and pulled out a fuzzy red ball (COCA)

```
(      aDet
:      <Att   fuzzyAj>
:      <Att   redAj>
:      ballCN
)
```

As stacked phrases, each adjective phrase remains its own constituent within the NP, and they each take the attributive function marker. These adjective phrases are called “stacked” phrases because they are listed one after another, serving to modify the same head noun, yet they do not function as a grammatical constituent together. If you were to insert a coordinator, it would sound awkward and potentially ungrammatical: *?a big and yellow taxi* or *?a fuzzy and red ball*.

English allows more than just two stacked adjective phrases, and the COCA examples below provide NPs with three and four adjective phrases stacked inside them.

- (4.22) a. Sister Carmelita, my first-grade teacher, hands me a small green cloth-bound book

```
(      aDet
:      <Att  smallAj>
:      <Att  greenAj>
:      <Att  cloth-boundAj>
:      bookCN
)
```

- b. Trotting behind them came Dell, their mother, a pretty little gray Eskimo dog

```
(      aDet
:      <Att  prettyAj>
:      <Att  littleAj>
:      <Att  grayAj>
:      <Att  EskimoAj>
:      dogCN
)
```

- c. I threw the proverbial sleeveless little black dress over my head

```
(      theDet
:      <Att  proverbialAj>
:      <Att  sleevelessAj>
:      <Att  littleAj>
:      <Att  blackAj>
:      dressCN
)
```

You won't often see more than four stacked adjective phrases, which is more of a cognitive limitation than language limitation because stacking too many adjective phrases makes the larger noun phrase awkward and unwieldy.

Not only would a coordinator sound awkward between stacked adjective phrases, but native English speakers also have strong intuitions about the order of stacked adjectives. While coordinated adjective phrases can generally be switched around, stacked adjective phrases cannot, as demonstrated by the repeated examples below with rewordings:

- (4.23) a. I can highly recommend this rich and flavorful cake.
 ... this flavorful and rich cake.
 b. you'll have an elegant yet easy tablescape.
 ... an easy yet elegant tablescape

- c. Tempeh is a chunky, tender cake
... a tender, chunky cake
- d. And a big yellow taxi took away my old man.
*a yellow big taxi
- e. Sister Carmelita ... hands me a small green cloth-bound book
*a cloth-bound green small book

The order of stacked adjective phrases depends on semantic restrictions. Adjectives can be semantically categorized based on the type of description they provide, but the semantic categories—and even the number of categories—differ by scholar and approach.

Before reading the information about suggested semantic categories and their relationship with preferred word order, provide what you feel is the most natural word order for the six attributive modifiers below, which are listed in alphabetical order, inside a noun phrase headed by *dress*. While it may get awkward with so many attributive modifiers in a row, find the order that feels *most* natural to you in a single NP. Make sure you write your answer down before moving on with the content, and compare your answer to the ones offered in the discussion.

(4.24) (the modifier₁ modifier₂ modifier₃ modifier₄ modifier₅ modifier₆ **dress**)

- beautiful
- cream
- Italian
- old
- silk
- wedding

Three potential word orders of stacked adjective phrases, provided by scholars and language aficionados, are discussed below.

Biber et al. (1999: 511-513) provide the following semantic categories, which I have ordered based on the examples they provide in their text alongside the categories.

- (4.25) a. relational (*same, different, general, major*)
 b. evaluative (*good, right, nice, ugly*)
 c. size (*big, little, great, long*)
 d. time (*new, old, young*)
 e. color (*black, white, red*)
 f. affiliative (*American, Swedish*)
 g. miscellaneous (*wooden*)
 h. topical (*political, social, public, economic*)

These ordered categories indicate that the NP in (4.24) will likely appear as *the beautiful old cream Italian silk wedding dress* because *beautiful* is evaluative (b), *old* refers to time (d), *cream* indicates color (e), *Italian* is an affiliative modifier (f), *silk* best fits into the miscellaneous

category with *wooden* (g), and *wedding* is a topical modifier like *public* (h). Of these categories, (g) and (h) are perhaps the most difficult to consistently apply because they are so broad.

The *Cambridge Dictionary Online* separates attributive modifiers into ten categories and places them in this order:

- (4.26) a. opinion (*lovely, unusual*)
 b. size (*large, small*)
 c. physical quality (*thin, rough, untidy*)
 d. shape (*round, square*)
 e. age (*old, young*)
 f. color (*white, black, red*)
 g. origin (*Mayan, Japanese*)
 h. material (*wooden, ceramic*)
 i. type (*general-purpose, four-sided, U-shaped*)
 j. purpose (*cleaning, hammering, cooking*)

The NP from (4.24) retains the same order as before: *beautiful* is an opinion (a), *old* provides an age (e), *cream* is a color (f), *Italian* indicates the origin (g), *silk* refers to the material (h), and *wedding* indicates its purpose (j). One of the most difficult categories in this method is (i) ‘type’ because the name is a bit vague, and the examples are semantically difficult to connect; for instance, *four-sided* and *U-shaped* could also be considered shapes. Every example they provide on their website of ‘type’ modifiers is a hyphenated adjective, so perhaps that category is best considered as a hyphenated category.

Woodward English, an online English-learning platform, also provides ten categories, but they divide them a bit differently:

- (4.27) a. opinion: attitude/observations (*delicious, lovely, nice, cool*)
 b. size: size/height (*big, small, huge, tiny*)
 c. shape: shape/weight/length (*round, square, fat, long*)
 d. condition: condition/state (*clean, wet, rich, hungry*)
 e. age: how old is it? (*old, young, new, antique*)
 f. color: color/approximate color (*green, blue, reddish, purple*)
 g. pattern: pattern/design (*spotted, checked, flowery, zigzag*)
 h. origin: where is it from? (*American, British, Arabic, Turkish*)
 i. material: what is it made of? (*gold, wood, plastic, synthetic*)
 j. purpose: what is it used for? (*gardening, shopping, riding*)

On their webpage, they include an example NP with all ten modifier types: “ugly small thin dirty old red striped Italian cotton sleeping bags.” It is highly unlikely you would ever naturally produce such a lengthy NP, but it is theoretically possible. Once again, the order of the NP from (4.24) stays the same because *beautiful* is an opinion (a), *old* refers to its age (e), *cream* indicates its color (f), *Italian* provides its origin (h), *silk* indicates its material (i), and *wedding* refers to its purpose (j).

These different categorization methods indicate that while grammarians may not agree on how attributive modifiers should be categorized, they tend to agree on a general preferred order for specific strings of modifiers. According to all three methods, the list of modifiers in (4.24) creates the NP *the beautiful old cream Italian silk wedding dress*. If you came up with a slightly different order for the NP, that doesn't mean you're "wrong." Jenny Kung's (2013) *The English Student*, an online blog and collection of learning materials, provides the following infographic about stacked adjective order.

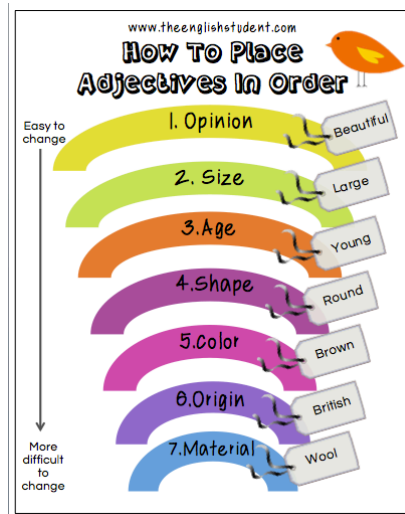


Image 4.2 How to place adjectives in order (Kung 2013)

The arrow running down the lefthand side of the image represents the fact that, in general, the order becomes more solidified as you get closer to that side of the spectrum. For instance, you may prefer to say *the big beautiful cat* while another speaker may prefer to say *the beautiful big cat*. However, the noun phrase *the Japanese silk kimono* would be less likely reordered as **the silk Japanese kimono*. In general, the more modifiers you try stacking, the more uncomfortable or unnatural it will feel—stacking two, or even three, attributive modifiers feels more natural than having five, six, or seven in a row. As previously stated, the limit to how many modifiers can appear in a row is not a grammatical one but is a cognitive one: you don't want to lose your train of thought or your addressee while listing a string of modifiers.

Semantic categories of modifiers affect more than the word order of stacked attributive phrases; if two attributive modifiers belong to the same semantic category, they need to be coordinated rather than stacked.

(4.28) Big yellow and black tags detail each unit's yearly savings. (COCA)

```
(    <Att    bigAj>
:    <Att    <    yellowAj>
:    :      andCoConj
:    :      <    blackAj>
:    :      >
:    :      tagsCN
:    :
:    )
```

The adjectives *yellow* and *black* belong to the same semantic category of color, so they cannot be stacked, as in **big yellow black tags*. Instead, they must be coordinated within the NP. The adjective *big* belongs to a different semantic category, so it is stacked with the coordinated AjP *yellow and black*.

Adjective phrases are not the only grammatical forms that can serve as attributive modifiers: NPs can also function as attributive modifiers. Noun phrases functioning as attributive modifiers tend to provide information about the head noun's material, purpose, or topic, such as *the* (_{Att} **steel**^N) *beam*, *that* (_{Att} **wedding**^N) *dress*, and (_{Att} **government**^N) *regulations*. When NPs are attributive, a head common noun loses its syntactic noun category and is labeled only with *N* to indicate its common noun status. For instance, even though *wedding* is typically a count noun, as in *She bought the dress for a wedding*, in the noun phrase *wedding dresses*, the singular form appears without a determiner and cannot take the plural form (e.g., **weddings dresses*). Therefore, *wedding* loses its count noun status in NPs like *wedding dresses*. As a modifier, it blurs the line between noun and adjective forms, but it maintains its nominal status because it can be modified by its own attributive modifiers.

Each example below includes at least one NP functioning as an attributive modifier, and those phrases are annotated for you.

(4.29) a. The damage may already be done—brain damage, that is, said neuroscientist Sigrid Veasey from the University of Pennsylvania. (Brumfield 2014)

```
(    (Att    brainN)
:    damageNN
:
:    )

(    (Att    neuroscientistN)
:    Sigrid VeaseyPropN
:
:    )
```

- b. We perform our sad little shiva smiles on cue and repeat the same inane conversations over and over again. (Tropper 2009: 165)

```
(    ourDet
:    <Att    sadAj>
:    <Att    littleAj>
:    (Att    shivaN)
:    smilesCN
)
```

- c. This charming northern New Mexico town put itself on the national map (COCA)

```
(    thisDet
:    <Att    charmingAj>
:    (Att    <Att    northernAj>
:    :      New MexicoPropN
:    )
:    townCN
)
```

Examples (a) and (b) feature NPs headed by common nouns functioning as attributive modifiers, and example (c) demonstrates that an attributive NP can have an embedded attributive modifier of its own, where *northern* modifies the head proper noun *New Mexico*, and the NP *northern New Mexico* modifies the head noun *town*.

Complications can arise when you're trying to figure out if you're dealing with a compound noun or a head noun modified by an attributive phrase. Consider the COCA examples below, focusing on the NPs placed in parentheses, each of which includes the stacked adjective phrases *big* and *yellow*. Before moving on to the discussion, annotate those three NPs.

- (4.30) a. sitting around in (the big yellow easy chairs)
 b. There was a porch swing with cushions in (a big yellow daisy pattern)
 c. one girl sets down (her big yellow Pokemon keychain) while she unwraps a sandwich

Of the three NPs, (a) is headed by the compound noun *easy chairs* while the other two feature an attributive NP modifying the head noun, with *daisy* modifying *pattern* in (b) and *Pokemon* modifying *keychain* in (c). The full annotations for each NP are presented below:

- (4.31) a. (the^{Det}
: <Att big^{Aj}>
: <Att yellow^{Aj}>
: **easy chairs**^{CN}
)
- b. (a^{Det}
: <Att big^{Aj}>
: <Att yellow^{Aj}>
: (Att **daisy**^N)
: **pattern**^{CN}
)
- c. (her^{Det}
: <Att big^{Aj}>
: <Att yellow^{Aj}>
: (Att **Pokemon**^{PropN})
: **keychain**^{CN}
)

The compound noun *easy chair* works as a single unit because *easy* isn't describing an aspect of the chair; rather, an easy chair is a special type of chair. As a compound, you can't replace *easy* with similar words without changing the interpretation, as in *the big yellow difficult chairs* and *the big yellow simple chairs*, which provide different interpretations about the chairs themselves (e.g., perhaps *difficult chairs* are difficult to assemble). On the other hand, *daisy* and *Pokemon* are both easily replaceable as attributive modifiers: *a big yellow gingham pattern*, *a big yellow sunflower pattern*, and *her big yellow Pikachu keychain* are all acceptable and relatively similar NPs to the ones provided above.

Along with that semantic distinction, compounds are treated differently in speech than attributive modifiers because the stress is placed on the first word of a compound but on the second word in an attributive modifier and noun combination. Therefore, the compound *greenhouse* is pronounced differently than the adjective and noun *green house*:

- (4.32) a. gréenhouse (a place for growing plants)
b. green hóuse (a house that happens to be painted green)

In the same way, the stress of the NP *easy chairs* is on *easy* (i.e., *eásy chairs*) but on the head noun in the other two examples: *daisy pátttern* and *Pokemon kéychain*.

The five example sentences below are taken from Ben Brumfield's (2014) news article "Shift workers beware: Sleep loss may cause brain damage, new research says." Annotate the underlined portions before moving on.

- (4.33) a. Are you a truck driver or shift worker planning to catch up on some sleep this weekend?
- b. Long-term sleep deprivation saps the brain of power even after days of recovery sleep, Veasey said.
- c. And that could be a sign of lasting brain injury.
- d. Veasey and her colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania medical school wanted to find out, so they put laboratory mice on a wonky sleep schedule that mirrors that of shift workers.
- e. After just a few days of “shift work” sleep, the cells start dying off at an accelerated pace.

Example (a) features a single determiner working with two head nouns, one of which is modified by an attributive NP.

(4.34) ((a^{Det i}
: (Att **truck**^N)
: **driver**^{CN}
:)
: or^{CoConj}
: (GAP^{i Det}
: **shift worker**^{CN}
:)
)

The head noun *driver* is modified by the NP *truck*, which can be replaced with similar NPs, such as *taxi driver*, *forklift driver*, or *ambulance driver*. The head noun *shift worker* is a compound, though, as it denotes a specific type of worker. A shift worker is not simply a worker of shifts but is instead someone who works a set of rotating shifts, where one crew is replaced by the next at the end of a shift. The two head nouns share a determiner but do not share the attributive modifier, so the annotation utilizes the GAP feature to indicate the shared determiner.

Examples (b) and (c) include NPs with similar structures, where a head noun is modified by both an adjective phrase and a noun phrase.

(4.35) a. (<Att long-term^{Aj}>
: (Att **sleep**^N)
: **deprivation**^{NN}
:)

b. (<Att lasting^{Aj}>
: (Att **brain**^N)
: **injury**^{NN}
:)

In each case, the head noun has two attributive modifiers; for instance, in (a), *long-term* and *sleep* both modify the head noun *deprivation*. These NPs demonstrate the typical order of combining attributive modifier types: any attributive AjPs usually precede any attributive NPs. However, example (d) includes a noun phrase with the opposite order.

(4.36) (the^{Det}
 : (Att **University of Pennsylvania**^{PropN})
 : <Att **medical**^{Aj}>
 : **school**^{CN}
)

In this case, the attributive NP *University of Pennsylvania* precedes the adjective phrase *medical*, thus reversing typical expectations.

The annotations for the final four underlined examples match the overall patterns seen throughout the chapter and are provided below:

(4.37) a. ((Att **laboratory**^N)
 : **mice**^{CN}
)

b. (a^{Det}
 : <Att **wonky**^{Aj}>
 : (Att **sleep**^N)
 : **schedule**^{CN}
)

c. ((Att **shift work**^N)
 : **sleep**^{NN}
)

d. (an^{Det}
 : <Att **accelerated**^{Aj}>
 : **pace**^{CN}
)

As these examples demonstrate, attributive modifiers appear frequently in English, including both adjective and noun phrases, especially in news and academic writing.

Practice Set 4.3 Attributive adjective and NP identification

The following sentences are taken from Jonathan Tropper's (2009: 97) *This Is Where I Leave You*. For each sentence, annotate the NPs and AjPs using the principles provided in this and previous chapters.

1. He stands up and then pulls her up by her hand to clutch her in a full-bodied embrace.
 2. "You're going to be fine, Hillary."
 3. Mom pats his back while he holds her tight.
 4. "The old guy just copped a feel," Paul says, joining in.
 5. "Give him a break," I say. "They've known each other for years."
 6. I remember Applebaum's wife: Adele was a tall, vivacious woman and had big teeth and a resounding laugh.²⁶
 7. She would grab my hair when I was a kid and say, "Oh, Hill, the girls are just going to go wild over this one!"
 8. Then she'd wink at me and say, "Look me up when you're legal."
 9. That was before she started having strokes.²⁷
 10. She could only smile with half her face and couldn't reach my hair with her withered arm.
-

²⁶ Original: I remember Applebaum's wife, Adele, a tall, vivacious woman with big teeth and a resounding laugh.

²⁷ Original: She started having strokes a few years ago.

Terms introduced in Chapter 4

Lexical form

adjective (Aj)

Phrasal form

adjective phrase (AjP)

Functions

attributive (Att)

predicative

Concepts

central adjective

form

function

gradable adjective

inflections for adjectives

comparative *-er*superlative *-est*

peripheral adjective

stacked adjectives

Chapter 4 Exercises

Exercise 4.1

The following sentences are taken from E.L. Konigsburg's (2002: 6-8) edition of her 1967 classic book *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. For each sentence, annotate the NPs and AjPs.

1. And she calculated needing *that* long to save her weekly allowances. [Italics in original.]
2. In the meantime she almost forgot why she was running away.
3. Claudia knew that it had to do with injustice.
4. She was the oldest child and the only girl and was subject to a lot of injustice.
5. Perhaps it was because she had to both empty the dishwasher and set the table on the same night while her brothers got out of everything.
6. She was bored with simply being straight-A's Claudia Kincaid.
7. When she was in the fourth grade, her class had gone on a trip to visit historical places in Manhattan.
8. She made a specialized geography course for herself.
9. Learning to do without hot fudge sundaes was good practice for her.
10. Normally, Claudia's hot fudge expenses were forty cents per week.

Exercise 4.2

Find the following 10 patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence, so you may end up with fewer than 10 sentences.

1. attributive adjective phrase
2. predicative adjective phrase
3. attributive noun phrase

4. NP with stacked attributive adjective phrases
5. NP with coordinated attributive adjective phrases
6. coordinated predicative adjective phrases
7. NP with a determiner, attributive modifier, and head count noun
8. NP with an attributive modifier and head count noun (without a determiner)
9. NP with an attributive modifier and head non-count noun (with or without a determiner)
10. NP with an attributive modifier and head proper noun

Exercise 4.3

Select an excerpt of a text that has at least 10 different adjectives in it; a good text type to use for this exercise is op-ed news writing (e.g., opinion pieces on CNN). Highlight the 10 different adjectives you've identified in the text—if the same adjective appears more than once, skip over its repeated forms. For instance, consider the sample excerpt below:

Ensberg was brought into the minor-league complex for a meeting. Spillman and Purpura waited inside a tiny room. “Harry said, ‘You have the talent to be in the big leagues. Now go out and play,’” Ensberg remembers. “He told me not to try to become a different type of player. That was a huge, huge help. You don’t know how huge.” (COCA)

Within those sentences, the adjective *huge* appears multiple times, but it should only be counted once for the purposes of this exercise. In the repeated excerpt below, the unique adjectives are highlighted.

Ensberg was brought into the **minor-league** complex for a meeting. Spillman and Purpura waited inside a **tiny** room. “Harry said, ‘You have the talent to be in the big leagues. Now go out and play,’” Ensberg remembers. “He told me not to try to become a **different** type of player. That was a **huge**, huge help. You don’t know how huge.” (COCA)

You need to do the same to your excerpt, highlighting the ten unique adjective forms that will serve as the foundation for the analyses below.

Create a table like the one below to categorize your 10 adjectives according to the three methods of categorization presented in this chapter.

	Biber et al.	Cambridge Dictionary	Woodward English
minor-league	topical	type	purpose
tiny	size	size	size
different	relational	opinion	opinion
huge	size	size	size

Table 4.3 Example adjective analysis

Categorizing the adjectives will be difficult, and, for many adjectives, there will not be a clear answer, so you need to make the best match you can, given the context of the adjective.

Write a brief paragraph comparing the three methods of categorization. In your paragraph, state which one you think is a better method for categorizing modifiers, and justify your selection.

Chapter 5: Prepositions and post-modifiers

*Aboard, about, above,
across, after, against,
along, among, around,
at, before, behind,*

*below, beneath, beside,
besides, between beyond,
but, by, concerning, down, during,
except, for, from, inside.*

OH-H-H!

*Into, like, near, of, off,
on, out, over, past,
since, through, throughout, till, to, toward,
under, underneath,*

*until, up, upon, with,
within, and without.
Now I know my prepositions
of that there's no doubt!*

—The Preposition Song (sung to the tune of “Jingle Bells”)

5.1 Preposition phrases

The unfortunate reality is that many students are taught songs like the one quoted above or mnemonic devices to memorize lists of prepositions without understanding what prepositions are or what they do. Being able to recite a list of prepositions won't always help with grammatical identification for at least two reasons: (1) rarely do the lists contain all possible prepositions in English because there are over 150, and (2) oftentimes, the same forms that can serve as prepositions can also serve as other lexical categories, depending on the context in which they're used. Memorizing a list of words that could be prepositions doesn't capture the importance of using context to determine if the word *is* a preposition in a particular sentence.

Along with coordinators, determiners, and pronouns, prepositions are function words, which means they belong to a closed class. As mentioned in Chapter 1, although closed classes do not easily accept new words into their categories, they are not entirely closed because new words can, over time, become a member of that category, often through grammaticalization. **Grammaticalization** is a process by which a content word starts losing some of its semantic definition and begins being used as a function word. This process is especially important when talking about prepositions because many English prepositions are the result of grammaticalization. Grammaticalization often results in at least two ways to use a single form: the original content word and the new, semantically bleached function word. Identifying prepositions requires you to heavily rely on syntactic environment because their forms often overlap with other lexical categories.

A **preposition** (Prep) is a relationship word that introduces and connects its object to other constituents while specifying its object's semantic relationship to those other constituents. Prepositions do not operate alone and require a following phrase or clause that functions as the **object of the preposition** (ObjPrep). The word *preposition* literally means ‘put before,’ which reflects the fact that prepositions are usually placed before their objects. Together, the preposition and its object create a **preposition phrase** (PP); unlike other phrases, a preposition phrase requires at least two daughters—the head preposition and the constituent functioning as the object of the preposition. While *preposition* refers to a lexical category and is a grammatical form, *object of preposition* refers to a role a constituent can take and is a grammatical function. A noun phrase is the most frequent constituent that functions as an object of the preposition, which

means prepositions often provide a connection between a noun phrase functioning as its object and another constituent.

The possible relationships²⁸ prepositions provide are semantically diverse, and a single preposition can provide multiple relationships. For instance, *The New Oxford American Dictionary* provides eleven distinct definitions for the preposition *from* (e.g., point in space, point in time, source, raw material) and twelve for the preposition *on* (e.g., location, target, medium), and each of those definitions represent a different relationship being expressed by that preposition.

Some of the most common prepositions provide spatial relationships, and, because these directional prepositions are easier to describe, define, and identify, they provide a good starting point for this discussion. In English classes, some teachers introduce their students to a squirrel named “Preppy,” asking their students to imagine Preppy and a nearby tree, and give them a sentence like the following:

(5.1) Preppy ran _____ the tree.

Words that can fill in that blank grammatically are prepositions, such as *around*, *into*, and *to*:

- (5.2) a. Preppy ran around^{Prep} the tree.
 b. Preppy ran into^{Prep} the tree.
 c. Preppy ran to^{Prep} the tree.

The object of the preposition in all three versions is the NP *the tree*, and each preposition provides a spatial relationship between the tree and Preppy’s running.

The prepositions that work best in that sentence indicate spatial relationships, such as the prepositions in the table below.

alongside	beside	into	through
around	by	near	to
at	down	on	toward
away from	from	out of	under
before	in	outside	underneath
behind	inside	over	within

Table 5.1 Spatial prepositions

²⁸ Some relationships provided by English prepositions are represented by grammatical cases in languages with a strong case system, such as Ancient Greek and Latin (e.g., their dative and genitive cases provide similar relationships as some English prepositions). English used to have a strong case system but now uses other syntactic means to show how constituents relate to one another within a clause, including prepositions.

This table is not exhaustive but provides some of the more common spatial prepositions found in everyday language. Spatial prepositions can often be metaphorically extended to represent temporal relationships, such as *in an hour*, *under three minutes*, and *on time*.

Though they are small words, prepositions provide important details about relationships that can change the entire meaning and connotation of a sentence. For example on May 10, 2017, *The Washington Post* printed a story, written by Jenna Johnson, about Sean Spicer and his staff disappearing in the hours after Trump fired FBI director James Comey. The original version included the wording “After Spicer spent several minutes hidden ... in the bushes,” but the article was later revised to read “After Spicer spent several minutes hidden in the darkness and among the bushes...” (Johnson 2017). The revised story appeared with the following Editor’s note:

This story has been updated to more precisely describe White House press secretary Sean Spicer’s location late Tuesday night in the minutes before he briefed reporters. Spicer huddled with his staff among bushes near television sets on the White House grounds, not “in the bushes,” as the story originally stated.

The connotation associated with being hidden “in the bushes” was strong enough that the article was revised and re-released, changing that one preposition. Both *in* and *among* provide a spatial relationship that, in the grand scheme of the English language, is relatively similar; yet, *in* suggests that Spicer was actually within the confines of the bushes—perhaps he jumped into the bushes to hide—while *among* suggests that he was merely standing close to the bushes that blocked him from view of the television sets.

Along with spatial and temporal relationships, prepositions can indicate comparison (*than*, *as*), instrument (*with*, *by*), possession (*of*), accompaniment (*with*), reason (*for*, *due to*, *because of*), and recipient or beneficiary (*to*, *for*). Prepositions are often one orthographical word, such as *from*, *during*, *into*, and *along*, but English also has compound prepositions consisting of multiple orthographical words, including those presented in the following table:

ending in <i>to</i>	ending in <i>of</i>	ending in <i>for</i>
according to	on top of	except for
due to	because of	
close to	in front of	
prior to	in case of	
in addition to	instead of	
	in spite of	

Table 5.2 Common compound prepositions

These compound preposition forms are rooted in full phrases that became grammaticalized over time. That is, over time, a phrase that includes a content word and a preposition became used as a unit so frequently that it stopped meaning the sum of its individual parts and started being used as a compound function word. As can be the case with grammaticalization, the original phrasal use may still exist alongside the grammaticalized preposition, as in these examples:

- (5.3) a. $\text{on}^{\text{Prep}} \text{the}^{\text{Det}} \text{top}^{\text{CN}} \text{of}^{\text{Prep}} \text{the}^{\text{Det}} \text{mountain}^{\text{CN}} = \text{on the peak of the mountain}$
 b. $\text{on\_top\_of}^{\text{Prep}} \text{that}^{\text{Pro}} = \text{along\_with that}$

In (a), *on the top* indicates a literal peak or top of a referent; however, in (b), the grammaticalized *on top of* does not and instead carries the meaning of ‘along with’ or ‘in addition to.’

Regardless of the semantic types of relationships offered by the preposition, its primary purpose is to connect its object to other constituents. In the annotation scheme, preposition phrases are represented with square brackets, and the most basic preposition phrase takes this form:

- (5.4) [$\text{Preposition}^{\text{Prep}}$
 : $(\text{Obj}^{\text{Prep}} \text{NP})$
]

Because it is a function, the *ObjPrep* label is a subscript inside the opening boundary marker of the phrase fulfilling that role, which, in this case, is a noun phrase. Preposition phrases can occur anywhere in a sentence, and prepositions themselves can take many grammatical forms as objects. For now, we will focus on preposition phrases with NPs as the object.

Before moving on, practice by identifying and annotating the preposition phrases in these two sentences.

- (5.5) a. He jumps to his feet and rushes out of the room. (Dunkle and Dunkle 2015: 7)
 b. He’s sending me to the States to a psychiatric institution. (7)

All four preposition phrases provide a spatial relationship, indicating directionality for an action or movement in the sentence. Three of the four PPs are headed by the preposition *to*.

- (5.6) a. [to^{Prep}
 : $(\text{Obj}^{\text{Prep}} \text{his}^{\text{Det}}$
 : : feet^{CN}
 :)
]
- b. [$\text{out of}^{\text{Prep}}$
 : $(\text{Obj}^{\text{Prep}} \text{the}^{\text{Det}}$
 : : room^{CN}
 :)
]

- c. [to^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
 : : **States**^{PropN}
 :)
]
- d. [to^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} a^{Det}
 : : <Att psychiatric^{Aj}>
 : : **institution**^{CN}
 :)
]

The layout of the phrases highlights the sisterhood of the preposition and its object because directly below every preposition, the NP opens with its function label. Example (d) demonstrates that other phrases with their own functions can be embedded within the object of the preposition, and, in this case, the attributive adjective phrase *psychiatric* appears within the NP *a psychiatric institution*, which functions as the object of the preposition *to*.

As stated earlier, due to processes of grammaticalization, preposition-like forms often overlap with other lexical categories; for example, consider the following COCA examples, focusing on *over*.

- (5.7) a. one of the men looked over the stall divider to see who'd come in.
 b. Richie looked over.
 c. The bodyguard looked over Mann's documents to make sure all was in order

To determine if *over* is a preposition in each sentence, the first question you need to ask is whether you can identify a potential object of the preposition. Of these three, example (b) has no potential object of *over*, which means it cannot be a preposition in that sentence.

In examples (a) and (c), though, *over* might be a preposition because *the stall divider* in (a) and *Mann's documents* in (c) provide potential candidates for an object of *over*. The following questions serve as basic tests to separate prepositions from related verb particles, which are preposition-like words that can serve as the final word of a compound verb. If you can answer "yes" to at least one of the questions, the word is most likely a preposition.

- PP-movement: Can you move the PP to another location in the sentence without changing the basic meaning of the sentence?
- Prep-substitution: Can you substitute another preposition without making the sentence ungrammatical or changing the meaning of the verb?
- PP-deletion: Can you delete the PP altogether without changing the meaning of the verb or the grammaticality of the sentence?

In the sentences from (5.7), the verb is *looked*, so these questions target whether *over* is a preposition or a part of the compound verb *look_over*. As a preposition, *over* provides a direction for where someone or something looked; the compound verb *look_over*, though, means ‘to examine.’ Applying the three tests to our two sentences provides these results.

- (5.8) one of the men looked over the stall divider to see who’d come in.
- a. PP-movement
Over the stall divider, one of the men looked to see who’d come in.
 - b. Prep-substitution
One of the men looked under the stall divider to see who’d come in.
 - c. PP-deletion
One of the men looked to see who’d come in.
- (5.9) The bodyguard looked over Mann’s documents to make sure all was in order
- a. PP-movement
*Over Mann’s documents the bodyguard looked to make sure all was in order.
 - b. Prep-substitution
≠ The bodyguard looked under Mann’s documents to make sure all was in order.
 - c. PP-deletion
≠ The bodyguard looked to make sure all was in order.

Over passes all three tests in the first sentence, indicating it is a preposition, but it does not pass any of the tests in the second sentence, so it is not a preposition. While the substitution and deletion tests provide grammatical results, the meaning of the verb changes because it no longer means ‘to examine,’ instead meaning ‘to gaze.’

Not all prepositions pass all three tests with the same degree of clarity; for example, consider the prepositions *with* and *like* in the examples below.

- (5.10) a. The cardiologist argues with him. (Dunkle and Dunkle 2015: 7)
b. Or maybe he just doesn’t care that he sounds like an ass. (7)

The preposition *with* in (a) passes the substitution and deletion tests, but it creates an awkward wording with the movement test:

- (5.11) a. ≠ With him, the cardiologist argues.
b. The cardiologist argues against him.
c. The cardiologist argues.

Moving the PP *with him* creates a potentially new meaning for the sentence indicating that the cardiologist is standing beside him or accompanying him, which is not the first interpretation I get from the original sentence. However, it passes the second two tests, indicating *with* is a preposition.

The preposition *like* only passes one of the three tests, and it requires a more complex substitution:

- (5.12) a. *Like an ass he sounds.
 b. He sounds similar to an ass.
 c. *He sounds.

The phrase *like an ass* cannot easily be moved or deleted, and replacing *like* requires an adjective and preposition pairing, as demonstrated in (b). Yet, being able to pass the substitution test without affecting the interpretation of the verb reflects its status as a preposition. You need to use all three tests in conjunction with each other because passing any one of those tests typically indicates that the word in question is a preposition.

Using the three tests, determine whether *as*, *with*, and *up* are prepositions in the following sentence, and annotate any PPs you identify.

- (5.13) You failed as a father with your own daughter, and now you've locked up another little girl so you can substitute-daddy me! (Dunkle and Dunkle 2015: 6)

The first two words, *as* and *with*, pass at least one test, as demonstrated in the examples below, so they are prepositions; the word *up* in this context, however, is not:

- (5.14) a. As a father, you failed with your own daughter...
 b. With your own daughter, you failed as a father...
 c. You failed, and now you've...
 d. *... up another little girl you've locked
 e. *...you've locked upward another little girl
 f. *...you've locked so you can substitute-daddy me

The first two examples demonstrate that the PPs *with your own daughter* and *as a father* can be moved to a different location without affecting the basic meaning of the sentence. The example in (c) shows that you can delete both PPs altogether without altering the meaning of the verb *failed* or the grammaticality of the sentence. However, you cannot move *up another little girl* as a unit, replace *up* with a related word, or delete *up another little girl*. The examples in (d)-(f) indicate that *up* is not a preposition, which means *up another little girl* is not a PP in this sentence. The two full PPs are annotated below.

- (5.15) a. [as^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} a^{Det}
 : : **father**^{CN}
 :)
]
- b. [with^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} your^{Det}
 : : <Att own^{Aj}>
 : : **daughter**^{CN}
 :)
]

Chapter 12 will return to compound verb structures like *lock up* for a more thorough analysis. In the meantime, you can use those three basic tests to help you figure out if the word you're looking at is a preposition or part of the verb.

Practice Set 5.1 Preposition phrases

These sentences were taken from Parnell Hall's (2000: 26-27) *A Clue for the Puzzle Lady*. Annotate any PPs you identify in the sentences, making sure you rely on the three tests presented above.

1. That TV ad pays for this house.
 2. You think that cop's here because of the newspaper column?
 3. That cop wouldn't do a crossword puzzle if his life depended on it.
 4. He's here because he saw you on TV.
 5. Cora Felton pushed the blanket to the floor, struggled to her feet.
 6. It seemed a good idea at the time.
 7. Cora plodded into the kitchen, dropping cigarette ash behind her.
 8. She had the belt in one hand, the drink in the other.
 9. She frowned at them as if they were a logic problem of annoying complexity.
 10. Cora cinched up the robe, retrieved the drink, took a huge sip, and exhaled happily.
-

5.2 Post-modifier function

Noun phrases have two potential "slots," so to speak, for modification. Introduced in Chapter 4, attributive modifiers appear in the pre-modification slot, which means they appear before the head noun they modify. **Post-modifiers** (PostM) also modify head nouns within noun phrases, but they appear in the second slot, which is after the head noun, often taking the

grammatical form of a preposition phrase. The COCA examples below demonstrate the two types of modification for NPs.

- (5.16) a. (the^{Det}
: <Att sparkly^{Aj}>
: **earrings**^{CN}
)
- b. (the^{Det}
: **fields**^{CN}
: [PostM of^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep **alfalfa**^{NN})
:]
)
- c. (this^{Det}
: <Att podunk^{Aj}>
: **town**^{CN}
: [PostM in^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep <Att southwest^{Aj}>
: : : **Arkansas**^{PropN}
: :)
:]
)
- d. (<Att strange^{Aj}>
: **flowers**^{CN}
: [PostM with^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep <Att strappy^{Aj}>
: : : <Att pink^{Aj}>
: : : **petals**^{CN}
: :)
:]
)

The NP *the sparkly earrings* has an attributive modifier, the AjP *sparkly*, which appears before the head noun *earrings*. The NP *the fields of alfalfa* includes a post-modifier, the PP *of alfalfa*, which appears after the head noun *fields*, providing more information about those fields. Noun phrases can take both kinds of modification, as demonstrated in (c) and (d); for instance, in (c), *town* takes the attributive modifier *podunk* and the post-modifier *in southwest Arkansas*. Examples (b)-(d) demonstrate that post-modifiers are part of a noun phrase, so the larger NP does not close out until the post-modifier is fully annotated. Just like attributive modifiers, post-modifiers are sisters to the head noun they modify.

Adjective phrases can also be post-modifiers, though typically only for indefinite pronouns like *something* or *someone*, as in the common refrain heard when planning weddings:

(5.17) Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.

(**something**^{Pro}
 : <PostM old^{Aj}>
)

The other three noun phrases take the same structure as the annotation for *something old* above, with a post-modifying adjective phrase.

The likeliness of encountering a noun phrase with modifiers depends on the genre. Biber et al. (1999: 578-579) studied NPs across four major genres to find the distribution of unmodified and modified NPs. They found that the overall distribution of NPs is roughly similar, but the use of modification within those NPs differs. In the figure below, the numbers along the left side are represented as thousands (e.g., 75 represents 75,000), and these numbers are reported per million words.

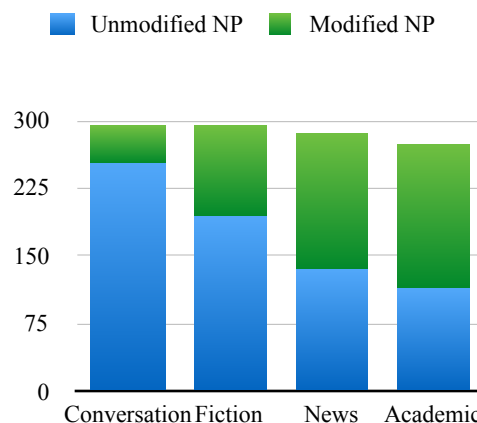


Figure 5.1 NP modification across genres (based on Figure 8.4 in Biber et al. (1999: 578))

You are much more likely to find unmodified NPs, such as *Joe*, *she*, and *the dog*, in conversation, and more likely to find modified NPs in news and academic writing.

Not all preposition phrases or adjective phrases that directly follow a noun function as a post-modifier but instead function separately from the NP in front of it. For example, consider the PP in the sentence below:

(5.18) She dropped her smartphone into her purse (COCA)

The PP *into her purse* is not a post-modifier for the noun *smartphone*; rather, the PP works independently from the NP *her smartphone* to provide a location for the dropping. Some basic tests you can use to figure out if a phrase is a post-modifier are these:

- Can you insert “that is/are” or “who is/are” between the noun and potential post-modifier without changing the meaning or grammaticality of the sentence?
- If it is a PP, can you replace the preposition with “that has” or “who has” without changing the meaning or grammaticality of the sentence?

If the answer to either of these is “yes,” you have a post-modifying phrase. For example, you can reword the following phrases:

- (5.19) a. the fields of alfalfa
 = the fields *that have* alfalfa
- b. this podunk town in southwest Arkansas
 = this podunk town *that is* in southwest Arkansas
- c. strange flowers with strappy pink petals
 = strange flowers *that have* strappy pink petals
- d. something old
 = something *that is* old
- e. her smartphone into her purse
 = *her smartphone *that is* into her purse
 = *her smartphone *that has* her purse

The grammatical rewordings of (a) through (d) indicate that the phrases in question are post-modifiers, but (e) is ungrammatical in both re-wordings, indicating the PP is not a post-modifier.

Noun phrases can also function as post-modifiers. The term **apposition** refers to one noun phrase post-modifying another noun phrase:

- (5.20) I just came here because my friend Paul didn’t want to come alone. (COCA)

The NP *Paul* serves as a post-modifier for the head noun *friend* and provides the necessary information to narrow down which friend is being referred to. The annotated NP *my friend Paul* looks like the following:

- (5.21) (my^{Det}
 : **friend**^{CN}
 : (PostM **Paul**^{PropN})
)

Post-modifying NPs are similar to attributive NPs in that they both modify a head noun; the difficulty is figuring out which noun is actually the head for the larger NP. Consider the following COCA examples:

- (5.22) a. Engert recalled something the MIT linguist Noam Chomsky once said
 b. Linguist David Crystal describes the English language as a vacuum cleaner
 c. West Virginia University linguist Kirk Hazen has spent two decades recording interviews around the state

One way to figure out which noun is acting as the head noun is to figure out which one cannot be deleted from the NP; for instance, in (a), three nouns occur side-by-side (*MIT*, *linguist*, and *Noam Chomsky*), yet only one of those nouns cannot be deleted:

- (5.23) the MIT linguist Noam Chomsky once said
 a. the linguist Noam Chomsky once said
 b. *the MIT Noam Chomsky once said
 c. the MIT linguist once said
 d. the linguist once said
 e. *the MIT once said
 f. *the Noam Chomsky once said

Of those variations, the only noun that is required for grammaticality is *linguist*, so it is the head noun. *MIT* is acting as an attributive modifier, and *Noam Chomsky* is acting as a post-modifier:

- (5.24) (the^{Det}
 : (Att MIT^{PropN})
 : linguist^{CN}
 : (PostM Noam Chomsky^{PropN})
)

Going back to the examples in (5.22), notice that (b) is different because *linguist* can be deleted (*David Crystal describes...*), but *David Crystal* cannot (**Linguist describes...*). In that case, the proper noun *David Crystal* is the head noun:

- (5.25) ((Att linguist^N)
 : David Crystal^{PropN}
)

Finally, the last example (5.22) has a more complex situation because the head noun *Kirk Hazen* has an attributive NP, which also has an embedded attributive NP:

- (5.26) ((Att (Att **West Virginia University**^{PropN})
 : : **linguist**^N
 :)
 : **Kirk Hazen**^{PropN}
)

The NP *West Virginia University* is modifying *linguist* to provide more information about where the linguist is employed; as an attributive modifier for *linguist*, it can be deleted (*Linguist Kirk Hazen has spent...*). Notice that you cannot have *West Virginia University* without its head noun *linguist*: **West Virginia University Kirk Hazen*. Altogether, the NP *West Virginia University linguist* functions as an attributive modifier for the head noun *Kirk Hazen*.

Preposition phrases in particular can be the source of **syntactic ambiguity**, which means a sentence has two or more potential interpretations based on different possible grammatical relationships. For example, I included the following sentence on a grammar test with the expectation that students could identify a post-modifying PP; however, I had inadvertently written a syntactically ambiguous sentence:

- (5.27) The man ran down the hall to the door with the exit sign.

My intended interpretation was for them to identify the following phrases and functions:

- (5.28) a. [down^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : **hall**^{CN}
 :)
]
- b. [to^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : **door**^{CN}
 : : [PostM with^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : : (Att **exit**^N)
 : : : : **sign**^{CN}
 : : : :)
 : : :]
 : :)
]

In my intended interpretation, the PP *with the exit sign* is a post-modifier for the head noun *door*, meaning the door at the end of the hallway had an exit sign over it. However, one student analyzed the larger PP in (b) as two distinct PPs, operating on their own within the sentence:

- (5.29) a. [to^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
 : : **door**^{CN}
 :)
]
- b. [with^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
 : : (Att **exit**^N)
 : : **sign**^{CN}
 :)
]

The student realized the interpretation I had intended but intentionally provided a different analysis and drew an accompanying picture showing a stick-figure man carrying an exit sign while running down a hallway toward an unmarked door. Syntactic ambiguity is the result of having two possible interpretations that hinge on how the constituents are grammatically linked, which means any constituent that is syntactically ambiguous will have at least two possible annotations.

While syntactic ambiguity relies on interpretations created by different grammatical relationships, **semantic ambiguity** is the result of a single word having multiple potential meanings. For example, the following sentence is semantically ambiguous because *with* has multiple meanings:

- (5.30) I broke down the door [with (my **brother**)].²⁹

[with^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} my^{Det}
 : : **brother**^{CN}
 :)
]

Without changing the annotation, that sentence has two potential meanings: (1) My brother and I worked together to break down the door, or (2) I used my brother as an instrument in breaking down the door. Regardless of the interpretation, the grammatical analysis of *with my brother* remains the same. The key difference between those types of ambiguity is that syntactic ambiguity creates two (or more) different grammatical analyses—one for each potential interpretation—while semantic ambiguity has one grammatical analysis with different potential meanings.

²⁹ I owe this memorable example to my undergraduate linguistics professor, Dr. Gregory Richter.

Using what you've learned so far, identify and annotate both the NPs and PPs in the following sentences. If you identify any syntactically ambiguous phrases, provide an annotation for each interpretation.

- (5.31) a. Amazingly enough, the psychiatrist still keeps my secrets for me. (Dunkle and Dunkle 2015: 7)
- b. In the hallway beside me, the ward nurses make *screw you* gestures at him behind the door, and my parents look stunned as the experts quarrel. (7)

In (a), the PP *for me* is best analyzed as its own unit rather than as a post-modifier within the NP *my secrets* because it does not pass either PostM-rephrasing tests: **my secrets that are for me*, **my secrets that had me*. The best analysis of the NPs and PPs for that sentence is the following:

- (5.32) a. (the^{Det}
: **psychiatrist**^{CN}
)
- b. (my^{Det}
: **secrets**^{CN}
)
- c. [for^{Prep}
: (ObjPrep **me**^{Pro})
]

The sentence includes three NPs, *the psychiatrist*, *my secrets*, and *me*, and the NP *me* functions as the object of the preposition *for* in the PP *for me*.

The second sentence has many more NPs and PPs, all of which are annotated below:

- (5.33) a. [in^{Prep}
: (ObjPrep the^{Det}
: **hallway**^{CN}
:)
]
- b. [beside^{Prep}
: (ObjPrep **me**^{Pro})
]
- c. (the^{Det}
: (Att **ward**^N)
: **nurses**^{CN}
)

- d. (<Att screw-you^{Aj}>
: **gestures**^{CN}
)
- e. [at^{Prep}
: (ObjPrep **him**^{Pro})
]
- f. [behind^{Prep}
: (ObjPrep the^{Det}
: : **door**^{CN}
:)
]
- g. (my^{Det}
: **parents**^{CN}
)
- h. (the^{Det}
: **experts**^{CN}
)

The PPs *at him* in (e) and *behind the door* in (f) are best analyzed as discrete constituents because they do not pass either rephrasing test for post-modifiers.

However, the opening PPs in (a) and (b) create syntactic ambiguity, so there are two potential annotations for that segment; the annotation below creates a different interpretation from the one above:

- (5.34) [in^{Prep}
: (ObjPrep the^{Det}
: : **hallway**^{CN}
: : [PostM beside^{Prep}
: : : (ObjPrep **me**^{Pro})
: :]
:)
]

The interpretation of the first annotation, provided in (5.33a) and (5.33b), is that both the nurses and I are standing next to each other in the same hallway. The interpretation of the second annotation, provided in (5.34), is that the nurses are in the hallway, but I am not, and the hallway where the nurses are standing is located beside me. The second interpretation allows for a rephrasing of *in the hallway that is beside me*, which supports its post-modifier status. However,

the first interpretation cannot be rephrased without changing the meaning: if I say *the hallway that is beside me*, I cannot be standing in the hallway. Therefore, if the intended meaning is that I am alongside the nurses in the hallway, the appropriate annotation is the one included in (5.33), but if I am not in the hallway, the appropriate annotation is (5.34).

Many post-modifying PPs are headed by the preposition *of*. The usual relationship provided by these phrases is possession, yet *of* can represent many non-possession relationships, including an indication of a specific quality or feature of the head noun. When it is used to mark possession, the object of the preposition must also be marked for possession:

- (5.35) a. He is my child.
 b. He is a child of mine.
 c. *He is a child of me.
 d. That is Jessie's book.
 e. That is a book of Jessie's.
 f. ≠ That is a book of Jessie.

Examples (a) and (b) are synonymous, and the rephrasing of *my child* with an *of*-PP requires the possessive pronoun *mine*. Using *me* in that context is ungrammatical even though *me* is the expected form of a personal pronoun within an object role (e.g., *from me*, *to me*, *about me*). In the same way, turning *Jessie's book* into a post-modifying *of*-PP requires the possessive noun *Jessie's* as the object of the preposition. Using the form *Jessie* does not create an ungrammatical sentence but instead creates a sentence that means something else. In (e), the book belongs to Jessie; in (f), the book is about Jessie or, in the archaic use, Jessie wrote the book (e.g., *the book of John*).

Of-preposition phrases are also used to count non-count nouns. For instance, you can use quantifying and packaging nouns to count *water*, *corn*, and *paper*:

- (5.36) a. two bottles^{CN} of water, one glass^{CN} of water, three liters^{CN} of water
 b. an ear^{CN} of corn, eighteen kernels^{CN} of corn
 c. a ream^{CN} of paper, three sheets^{CN} of paper

As these examples demonstrate, counting a non-count noun requires a quantifying or packaging count noun followed by an *of*-PP. The non-count noun determines what quantifying/packaging noun can be used; notice that you wouldn't typically say *two ears of paper* or *three sheets of corn*. A quantifying noun provides an interpretation of individual instances of the noun; for instance, a sheet of paper is a single sheet. A packaging noun results in the interpretation of a package of multiple instances of the noun, so a ream of paper is a package containing 500 individual sheets of paper.

You can also use this method to turn count nouns into larger groups by using a collective noun and *of*-PP, such as *a group of ten people*. When referring to animals in this way, English often has specific words associated with the grouping:

- (5.37) a. a school^{CollN} of fish
 b. a pride^{CollN} of lions
 c. a congregation^{CollN} of alligators
 d. a murder^{CollN} of crows

In all these instances, the post-modifying *of*-PP indicates the individual referents, whether those referents are being counted or collected into a group; two phrases are annotated below as examples.

- (5.38) a. (three^{Det}
 : sheets^{CN}
 : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep paper^{NN})
 :]
)
 b. (a^{Det}
 : pride^{CollN}
 : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep lions^{CN})
 :]
)

Some scholars treat these examples as complex determiners (e.g., they treat *a ream of* as a determiner for the noun *paper*). However, that analysis doesn't capture the ability to count the quantifying or packaging noun (e.g., *two reams of paper*) or to change the count nouns, depending on how you want to quantify or package the noun (e.g., *a sheet of paper* versus *a ream of paper*).

Regardless of the meaning being expressed, the most common use of the preposition *of* is to introduce a post-modifier, as in the following examples. For each one, the *of*-PP and its larger noun phrase are annotated.

- (5.39) a. White-hot daggers of rage flash through my brain and light up sparkling patterns behind my eyes. (Dunkle and Dunkle 2015: 7)
- (<Att white-hot^{Aj}>
 : daggers^{CN}
 : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep rage^{NN})
 :]
)

- b. His face is turning the color of raw steak. (7)

```
(   theDet
:   colorCN
:   [PostM ofPrep
:   :   (ObjPrep <Att rawAj>
:   :   :   steakNN
:   :   )
:   ]
)
```

- c. It's the end of Mr. Nice Guy. (6-7)

```
(   theDet
:   endCN
:   [PostM ofPrep
:   :   (ObjPrep Mr. Nice GuyPropN)
:   ]
)
```

These three examples demonstrate some of the different relationships provided by the preposition *of*. The example in (a) is similar to the examples like *sheets of paper* that quantify or solidify a non-count noun; in this case, it turns an abstract noun, *rage*, into a more concrete concept of *daggers*. The PP *of raw steak* in (b) provides a further description of the head noun *color* to identify the specific color of his face. Finally, the example in (c) expresses a metaphorical spatial relationship, creating the interpretation that *Mr. Nice Guy* is a state of being that has ended.

Throughout this chapter, examples have demonstrated that English syntax is **hierarchical**, so a single word becomes a part of a phrase, and that phrase can work with other phrases to form a sentence. English syntax is also **recursive** because a phrase can be embedded inside another phrase, which can then be embedded inside yet another phrase. The sentence below includes an example of recursion in its final NP:

- (5.40) But for the very first time, I feel a spark of sympathy for my psychiatrist. (Dunkle and Dunkle 2015: 7)

```

(      aDet
:      sparkCN
:      [PostM  ofPrep
:      :      (ObjPrep sympathyNN
:      :      :      [PostM  forPrep
:      :      :      :      (ObjPrep myDet
:      :      :      :      :      psychiatristCN
:      :      :      :      :      )
:      :      :      :      ]
:      :      :      )
:      :      ]
:      )

```

In this example, the noun phrase *my psychiatrist* appears inside a preposition phrase that is inside a noun phrase that is inside a preposition phrase that is inside a noun phrase. The NP *my psychiatrist* functions as the object of the preposition *for*; the PP *for my psychiatrist* post-modifies the head noun *sympathy*; the NP *sympathy for my psychiatrist* functions as the object of the preposition *of*; and the PP *of sympathy for my psychiatrist* post-modifies the head noun *spark*. Regardless of how much recursion occurs, each individual constituent follows expected patterns described throughout this and previous chapters.

Practice Set 5.2 Preposition phrases and modifiers

The following sentences were taken from M.F. Craig's (1986: 1-2) *The Mystery at Peacock Palace*. Fully annotate the noun phrases, adjective phrases, and preposition phrases. Make sure you identify any phrases that take the functions you've learned so far (i.e., Att, ObjPrep, PostM).

1. A stupid rabbit started the whole thing.
2. Peacock Place is spooky enough when you ride past it on your bike and hear the coarse cries of those birds.³⁰
3. The grown-ups shake their heads when they mention old Miss Peacock.
4. They say she grew that hedge around her place and has Mr. Anderson run all her errands for her because she hates everybody in town.
5. He manages everything at that place.
6. She hasn't any family, except a brother off in Hong Kong or the East or somewhere.
7. But we've all seen the Peacock horses.

³⁰ Original: It is spooky enough when you ride past it on your bike and hear the coarse cries of those birds carried on the wind.

8. That family has been raising the fanciest Arabian horses in our part of the country for almost a hundred years.
 9. The star horse in the Peacock stable is a stallion, and his name is Caliph Haroun.³¹
 10. He's worth a whole lot of money.
-

³¹ Original: The star horse in the Peacock stable is a stallion named Caliph Haroun.

Terms introduced in Chapter 5

Lexical form

preposition (Prep)

Phrasal form

preposition phrase (PP)

Functions

object of a preposition (ObjPrep)

post-modifier (PostM)

Concepts

apposition

grammaticalization

hierarchical

recursive

semantic ambiguity

syntactic ambiguity

Chapter 5 Exercises

Exercise 5.1

The following sentences were taken from Ken Liu's (2015: 19-20) *The Grace of Kings*. Annotate all NPs, AjPs, and PPs, remembering to label the functions you've learned thus far: Att, PostM, ObjPrep.

1. Dazu looked with distaste at the crude weapon with no edge, but he swung obediently.
2. He looked at the sword in his hand with wonder.
3. "It's not the sword," his teacher said.
4. "Have you looked at yourself lately?"
5. He brought Dazu to stand in front of a polished shield.³²
6. The young man could hardly recognize the reflection.
7. His shoulders filled the frame of the mirror.
8. Dazu was unmatched on the battlefield.
9. Because his troops were outnumbered, Duke Zyndu placed them in strategic locations across Cocru.
10. Whenever Xana invaded, he directed his men to ignore the taunts of Xana commanders.

Exercise 5.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence. All preposition phrases you identify for these patterns need to have a NP as its object of preposition.

1. post-modifying PP (x2)
2. non-post-modifying PP (x4)
3. NP with a post-modifying NP

³² Original: He brought Dazu to stand in front of a brightly polished shield.

4. NP with a post-modifying AjP
5. NP with both an attributive modifier and a post-modifier
6. PP within a noun phrase functioning as the object of another preposition

Exercise 5.3

Select two texts from different genres, such as fiction, non-fiction, academic, or newspaper. From each text, take an excerpt of 100 words, which means altogether you will have 200 words for this analysis.

Within each text, identify all preposition phrases that incorporate a noun phrase functioning as the object of the preposition. Provide abbreviated annotations within the text, as demonstrated in the example below, taken from John Jakes's *North and South* (1982: 3):

“The lad should take my name,” Windom said [after^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} supper)]. “It’s long [past^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} time)].”

It was a sore point [with^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} him)], one he usually raised when he’d been drinking. [By^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} the small fire)], the boy’s mother closed the Bible [on^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} her knees)].

As in this example, each PP, at minimum, needs to include an annotated preposition and noun phrase, but all other details can be omitted.

You may find some PPs are embedded inside another and some NPs functioning as the object of the preposition may be complex:

The boy, Joseph Moffat, sat [with^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} his back [against^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} a corner [of^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} the chimney)]))]), whittling a little boat. He was twelve, [with^{Prep} (Obj^{Prep} his mother’s stocky build, broad shoulders, light brown hair, and eyes so pale blue they seemed colorless sometimes)].

The first PP *with his back against a corner of the chimney*³³ includes several layers of embedding, and six phrases close out after the word *chimney*, as indicated by the string of closing markers. The second PP has a complex NP functioning as its object, and the full noun phrase begins with *his mother’s* and does not end until *sometimes* at the end of the sentence. The internal structure of the NP does not have any other annotations, as there are no embedded PPs within it.

After annotating both excerpts in this manner, write a paragraph that answers the following questions:

³³ I have annotated this PP based on the information you have so far at your disposal, but in Chapter 16, you will see that the object of *with* in this PP is better analyzed as a non-finite clause rather than a noun phrase. Without more advanced knowledge, though, this NP analysis is a solid way to approach this phrase.

- How many preposition phrases did you identify in each 100-word excerpt?
- Did the genres differ in how they used those preposition phrases? How did they differ, or what patterns did they share?
- Based on this activity, what preliminary conclusions can you draw about the frequency of prepositions taking NP objects in English?
- Based on this activity, what preliminary conclusions can you draw about the frequency of prepositions in general in English?

For each answer you provide, justify your response with examples.

Chapter 6: Subjects and predicates

*The point I have been patiently trying to make ... is that you expect far too much of a first sentence. Think of it as analogous to a good country breakfast: what we want is something simple, but nourishing to the imagination. Hold the philosophy, hold the adjectives, just give us a plain subject and verb and perhaps a wholesome, nonfattening adverb or two. —Larry McMurtry, *Some Can Whistle* (1989: 5-6)*

6.1 Verbs

If sentences had a head word, it would be a verb because the verb determines the grammatical and semantic type of constituents that can appear within the sentence alongside it. The word *verb* ultimately originates from a root meaning ‘to speak,’ whose meaning was extended to ‘word of God.’ This etymology reflects how verbs are like little deities of the sentence because they choose what else can occur alongside them. Verbs are so important—and complex—that their phrases cannot be described in one or even two chapters, and the next seven chapters explore verbs and their phrases. This section defines verbs through semantics and morphology before focusing on syntactic environments.

The most basic semantic definition of a **verb** (V) defines verbs as action words, such as *hit*, *run*, *kick*, and *scream*. While many verbs do indeed fall into that “action word” category, that definition does not capture the full complexity of identifying verbs. The first problem is that the action words mentioned as examples can all be used as nouns or verbs, illustrated by the COCA examples below:

- (6.1)
- a. She smells revolution in the air and has hit the books to better her mind and better her employment chances.
 - b. Awkerman was (a **hit**) with the audiences.
 - c. the last remaining question is whether or not we’ll run with it or just let it lie.
 - d. We want them to throw, but we want to stop (the **run**) first.
 - e. My mother tried to kick the guy and he tried to shoot her, but his gun jammed
 - f. Whether that’s support, whether that’s (a **kick** in the fanny), whether that’s understanding.
 - g. I scream, reach down into the black again, even deeper than before
 - h. (Her **scream**) bounced off the ceiling.

In each pair of examples, the verb and noun look exactly the same on the surface, yet they belong to different lexical categories. The verb forms are underlined, as in (a), and the noun forms are bolded and enclosed in parentheses with their noun phrases, as in (b).

The second problem with the definition is that English has two major semantic categories of verbs: dynamic and stative. **Dynamic verbs** include the verbs that express an action, such as

walk, read, scramble, toggle, and yell, and **stative verbs** express a state of being, cognition, or reality, such as *be, prefer, have, love, and realize*. The semantic category a verb belongs to affects its grammatical use within a sentence. For example, if you want to talk about this very moment, dynamic verbs require a form of *be* in front of its *-ing* form while stative verbs require a simple present tense form, as in these COCA examples.

- (6.2) a. Right now Emma is typing madly = dynamic
 b. Right now people want information = stative

The dynamic verb *type* requires the *be typing* form to express an activity happening right now, but the stative verb *want* takes the simple present tense form. If you use a dynamic verb in the simple present tense form, its typical interpretation is of a habit or ability rather than an ongoing activity; for example, if I say, “I play the piano,” that does not mean I am playing the piano in the moment that I am speaking. In fact, I could utter that statement without even being near a piano. Instead, it is interpreted as a habit (e.g., I play the piano frequently and plan on continuing that habit) or as a stative verb that expresses an ability (e.g., I am able to play the piano).

Practice Set 6.1 Semantic verb type

In the following two passages, the verbs have been underlined for you. Your goal is to identify whether each verb is stative or dynamic. The two passages come from the 2004 edition of J.R.R. Tolkien’s (2004[1954]) *The Lord of the Rings*. The first excerpt is the opening passage of *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2004: 21), which is the first book of the trilogy, while the second excerpt is from the later chapters of *The Return of the King* (2004: 891), the final book of the trilogy.

After identifying the verb types for each excerpt, compare the two passages in terms of how they use verbs and connect your observations to ways that authors can use semantic verb types to build a narrative.

Excerpt 1: The Fellowship of the Ring

When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End announced that he would shortly be celebrating his eleventy-first birthday with a party of special magnificence, there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton. Bilbo was very rich and very peculiar, and had been the wonder of the Shire for sixty years, ever since his remarkable disappearance and unexpected return. The riches he had brought back from his travels had now become a local legend, and it was popularly believed, whatever the old folk might say, that the Hill at Bag End was full of tunnels stuffed with treasure. And if that was not enough for fame, there was also his prolonged vigour to marvel at. Time wore on, but it seemed to have little effect on Mr. Baggins. At ninety he was much the same as at fifty. At ninety-nine they began to call him *well-preserved*; but *unchanged* would have been nearer the mark. There were some that shook their heads and thought this was too much of a good thing; it seemed unfair that anyone should possess (apparently) perpetual youth as well as (reputedly) inexhaustible wealth.

Excerpt 2: The Return of the King

Rage filled him and his mouth slavered, and shapeless sounds of fury came strangling from his throat. But he looked at the fell faces of the Captains and their deadly eyes, and fear overcame his wrath. He gave a great cry, and turned, leaped upon his steed, and with his company galloped madly back to Cirith Gorgor. But as they went his soldiers blew their horns in signal long arranged; and even before they came to the gate Sauron sprang his trap. Drums rolled and fires leaped up. The great doors of the Black Gate swung back wide. Out of it streamed a great host as swiftly as swirling waters when a sluice is lifted. The Captains mounted again and rode back, and from the host of Mordor there went up a jeering yell. Dust rose smothering the air, as from nearby there marched up an army of Easterlings that had waited for the signal in the shadows of Ered Lithui beyond the further Tower. Down from the hills on either side of the Morannon poured Orcs innumerable.

The four inflectional suffixes associated with verbs are the two tense suffixes and two participle-forming suffixes. The tense suffixes appear on verbs that do not require any auxiliary support to form complete sentences while the two participle forms require preceding auxiliaries. The past participle requires a form of *have* or *be* while the present participle requires a form of *be*. The discussion below summarizes information presented throughout the chapters focusing on verbs and their forms.

Inflectional suffix	Grammatical information	Examples from COCA
-s	third-person singular present tense	- Woolsey <u>smiles</u> tightly. - It <u>goes</u> everywhere.
-ed	past tense	- When I was a kid, I used to read through the whole encyclopedia just because it <u>interested</u> me. - I used to study history, and languages <u>fascinated</u> me
-ed/-en	past participle	- Spread out before me is a city that has <u>charmed</u> visitors for centuries. - Luckily for Gus, his wife had <u>taken</u> the precaution of buying a house in Miami - And, her son had <u>frozen</u> her out.
-ing	present participle	- The pilots started the plane and we were <u>taxiing</u>. - She looks down to where her five-year-old son is <u>hopping</u> from bench to bench. - I'm going to go apartment-hunting tomorrow, and I was <u>hoping</u> you'd come with me.

Table 6.1 Verbal inflections

The third-person singular present tense *-s* appears when the subject of the verb is a third-person singular subject. Third-person singular subjects include third-person personal pronouns (*he, she, it*), singular non-personal pronoun forms (e.g., *that, this, each*), and any singular noun (e.g., *cat, information, team*). This inflection is regular for most verbs, which means it is largely predictable, as in the forms *run/runs, forage/forages, and rescue/rescues*, where the inflected form adds an *-s* to the base form. Some spelling changes can affect the shape of the suffix, though. If the verb ends in <y>, the <y> changes to an <i> before adding *-es*, so *apply* becomes *applies*. If the verb ends in an <o> that follows a consonant, the suffix takes the form of *-es* rather than just *-s*, as in *go/goes* and *do/does*, but *boo/boos* and *radio/radios*. Two verbs are highly irregular in their third-person singular present tense forms: *have* takes the form *has*, and *be* takes the form *is*. Even the irregular forms end in <s> for this inflection.

The other three inflectional suffixes share these spelling convention features that slightly change the form of the verb's base when the suffix is added:

- If the verb ends in a “silent *e*,” the <e> is dropped before adding the suffix: *hope/hoping/hoped* and *fascinate/fascinating/fascinated*.
- If the verb's final syllable is stressed and ends with a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter,³⁴ the consonant is doubled before adding the suffix: *hop/hopping/hopped, forget/forgetting/forgotten*. However, words like *target*, where the stress is not on the final syllable, do not take doubled consonants: *target/targeting/targeted*.
- If the verb ends in the letter <c>, a <k> is added before the suffix: *mimic/mimicking/mimicked*.

A fourth spelling convention differs between British and American English. In British English, if the verb ends in <l>, the <l> is doubled before adding the suffix, but American English does not follow the “double *l*” convention; thus, we were travelling in England, but we were traveling in America.

The present participle *-ing* suffix is regular for all verbs, making the present participle forms predictable, as in *run/running, see/seeing, taxi/taxiing, and quote/quoting*. Even the most irregular verbs are regular in their present participle form, such as *being, having, doing, and getting*. For most verbs, the past tense and past participle forms are the same, and their forms are predictable for regular verbs, which take the *-ed* suffix for both forms, as in *walk/walked, play/played*.

Irregular verbs follow different conventions for past tense and/or past participle forms. For example, some verbs require *-t* rather than *-ed*:

- (6.3) a. That's—that's what I dreamt about. (COCA)
 b. The more her grandmother and mother kept their secrets, the more she felt compelled to write about him. (COCA)

³⁴ In phonetic terms, a single vowel letter followed by only a single consonant letter will result in a lax vowel: lax vowels in English include [ɪ] as in *sit*, [ɛ] as in *let*, [ɑ] as in *stop*, and [æ] as in *tap*.

Verbs like *dream* take the *-t* suffix without any spelling changes, but the pronunciation of the vowel in the base shifts; verbs like *keep* and *feel* undergo both spelling and pronunciation changes when adding the *-t* suffix. For some dialects, the past tense and past participle forms of *dream* have become regularized, so *dream* appears as *dreamed* in those dialects.

Verbs that take the *-en* past participle are often irregular in their past tense forms, too, and some *-en* verb forms change spelling in the verb base:³⁵

- (6.4) a. take/took/taken
 b. choose/chose/chosen
 c. freeze/froze/frozen
 d. eat/ate/eaten

In these sets, the base form of the verb is listed first, followed by the past tense and then past participle forms. These verbs demonstrate that some past-tense forms do not have a suffix at all but instead change shapes internally, specifically in their vowel sounds, which is referred to as an ablaut form.

Other classes of irregular verbs do not take any suffixes for either the past tense or past participle forms, including the following:

(6.5) a.	internal vowel change	<i>run/ran/run, sing/sang/sung</i>
b.	final <d> becomes <t>	<i>build/built, send/sent</i>
c.	vowel and consonant change	<i>teach/taught, bring/brought</i>
d.	final consonant becomes <d>	<i>make/made, have/had</i>
e.	no change	<i>hit/hit, cut/cut</i>

The verbs with only two forms listed, such as *build/built* and *cut/cut*, share the past tense and past participle forms; however, the verbs with three forms, such as *sing/sang/sung*, have differing past tense and past participle forms. Verbs like *run* and *come* have a past tense form with an internal vowel change (*ran, came*), but their past participle forms match their bare forms (*have run, have come*).

Some regular verbs are becoming irregular in dialectal use. For instance, *sneak* was a regular verb with a past tense of *sneaked*, but for some dialects, it is now irregular with a past tense of *snuck*. Also, some dialects use different irregular forms, as demonstrated in the examples below:

- (6.6) a. And she had gave our name and address and everything. (COCA)
 b. He had gaven me notes.³⁶

³⁵ The irregular forms reflect the seven classes of strong verbs in Old English. Over time, languages tend to keep irregular forms of highly frequent words but lose them for less frequent words. You'll notice that all our irregular words in English today are more frequently used.

³⁶ I overheard this example in class one day.

- c. Anyway, what brang you out on a day like this? (COCA)
- d. That's why I brung him. (COCA)

Some dialects use *gave* or even *gaven* for the past participle form of *give* (rather than *given*), and some dialects have further changed the already irregular *bring/brought* to *bring/brang/brung*. The process of verbs becoming regular or irregular over time has left many speakers—regardless of dialect—on edge about using either the past tense or past participle forms of verbs like *shrink* and *sting*.

The irregular verbs *go* and *be* don't fit into any of these categories because their forms are the result of multiple verbs coming together as one. The *go* forms come from two distinct verbs, with *go/going/gone* stemming from Old English *gan* and *went* from Old English *wendan*. After the verbs *go* and *wend* merged, *go* took the past tense form *went*, yet the verb *wend* remained in English with a regular past tense form:

(6.7) Still, as I wended my way around Pulaski and Orleans Square (COCA)

Thus, I *went* to New Orleans, but I *wended* my way around the beautiful streets.

The most irregular verb in English, *be*, is also the most common one, and its forms are a result of a merge of the Old English verbs *beon* and *wesan*. There are eight distinct forms of *be* in English, including these inflected forms:

Subject	Present tense	Past tense
first-person singular <i>I</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>was</i>
first-person plural <i>we</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>were</i>
second-person <i>you</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>were</i>
third-person singular <i>he/she/it</i> and any singular noun (e.g., <i>the business</i> , <i>the Eiffel Tower</i>)	<i>is</i>	<i>was</i>
third-person plural <i>they</i> and any plural noun (e.g., <i>the businesses</i>)	<i>are</i>	<i>were</i>

Table 6.2 Common singular and plural forms of *be*

The present tense forms of *be* are frequently contracted (e.g., *I'm happy*, *he's tall*, *you're here*, *the building's on the right*). The other three forms of *be* are the bare form *be*, present participle *being*, and past participle *been*.

Compound verbs can be problematic for speakers when they are inflected, as seen in Dave Kellett's Sheldon cartoon below:

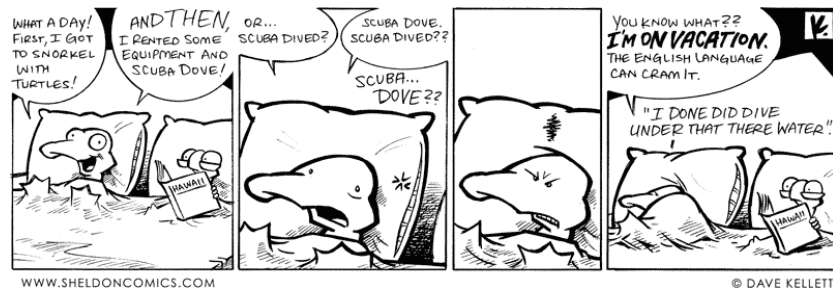


Image 6.1 Dave Kellett's Sheldon and scuba diving in the past

Just like Sheldon is confused about how to make *scuba dive* past tense, speakers often struggle with the past tense of verbs like *sleepwalk* and *jump rope*, and there are often competing forms available for speakers, such as *she jumped rope* and *she jump roped*.

Along with those four inflectional suffixes, the following derivational suffixes are associated with verbs.

Derivation	Examples	Derivation	Examples
-ate	<i>associate, compensate</i>	-(i)fy	<i>qualify, mortify</i>
-en	<i>strengthen, thicken</i>	-ise/ize	<i>advertise, realize</i>
-er	<i>glimmer, patter</i>	-le	<i>dazzle, babble, stumble</i>

Table 6.3 Derivational suffixes associated with verbs

The derivations *-ate*, *-ify*, and *-ize* (spelled *-ise* in British English) tend to only appear on verbs; however, some of the suffixes in overlap in form with derivational suffixes that create nouns (e.g., *writer*) and adjectives (e.g., *golden*), making it necessary to rely on more information than just these derivational suffixes when identifying lexical category.

One reason syntactic environment is crucial for determining verbs is that the two participle forms can be used as other lexical categories. The present participle *-ing* form can be used as a noun or adjective, and the past participle *-en/-ed* form can be used as an adjective, as in these COCA examples:

- (6.8) a. (a^{Det}
: <Att dripping^{Aj}>
: faucet^{CN}
)
- b. (the^{Det}
: <Att broken^{Aj}>
: chair^{CN}
)

c. (**Stalking**^{NN})
 can take on
 (many^{Det}
 : <Att different^{Aj}>
 : **meanings**^{CN}
)

Examples (a) and (b) demonstrate the adjectival use of participles, or **participial adjectives**. When a participle fits the syntactic environment of an adjective, such as the attributive position between a determiner and noun, and works as an adjective to provide a description of a head noun or full noun phrase, it's best to label it as an adjective.

Example (c) is an example of a **gerund**, or a present participle acting as a noun. A few tests can help you determine whether an *-ing* form is a verb or noun in its context:

- Is it plural? If not, could it take the plural *-s* in that context and still be grammatical?
- Is it supported by a determiner (e.g., *my painting*)?
- Can you replace the *-ing* word with *it*?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of those questions, the *-ing* word is a noun. For instance, going back to the example in (c), you can replace *stalking* with *it* to create the grammatical sentence *It can take on many different meanings*, and *meanings* appears in a plural form and is also supported by the determiner *many*. Gerunds can be either non-count nouns (e.g., *stalking*, *thinking*, *swimming*) or count nouns (e.g., *meaning*, *painting*, *building*).

Practice Set 6.2 Identify the inflected verbs

The following sentences were taken from Ingrid Law's (2008: 1-12) *Savvy*. For each underlined participle, identify whether its best classification is verb, noun, or adjective in the sentence.

1. When my brother Fish turned thirteen, we moved to the deepest part of inland because of the hurricane and, of course, the fact that he'd caused it.
2. Unlike any normal hurricane, Fish's birthday storm had started without warning.
3. One minute, my brother was tearing paper from presents in our backyard near the beach; the next minute, both Fish and the afternoon sky went a funny and fearsome shade of gray.
4. But I was only two days away from my very own thirteen dripping candles—though *my* momma's cakes never lopped to the side or to the middle.
5. Across from me, Gypsy prattled endlessly, counting the make-believe creatures she imagined seeing in the room, and begging me to help her name them.

6. We were all smiling to each other around the kitchen table at the smart way we'd taken care of those beans when Momma dropped the phone with a rattling clatter and a single sob—perfectly devastated.
 7. The air in the room grew warm and humid as though the house itself had broken out into a ripe, nervous sweat, and the many dusty, tightly lidded, empty-looking jars that lined the tops of all the cupboards rattled and clinked like a hundred toasting glasses.
 8. The lights in the house pulsed, and blue sparks popped and snapped at the tips of his nervous, twitching fingers.
 9. Later that night, as I lay awake in the dark bedroom I shared with Gypsy, I listened to my sister's even breathing and to the steady patter of Fish's worried rain.
 10. And though Grandpa had gone to bed as well, every now and then the ground would rumble and the floor would shake as though the earth below us had a bellyache.
-

6.2 Subject and predicate

In written English, the largest clauses are sentences, which are marked by final punctuation, such as a period, and a **sentence** (S), which is also referred to as an independent clause or main clause, provides the structure within which other constituents operate. For now, the focus is on basic sentence structure in declarative sentences, which require two components, at minimum, to be grammatically complete: a subject and a predicate.

A **subject** (Subj) is a grammatical function that is often defined in semantic terms, including common definitions like the following:

- the noun or NP that is doing the action in the verb
- what or who the sentence is about
- the part of the sentence about which something is said

The first definition can help identify subjects in sentences like the COCA examples below:

- (6.9) a. I shook the bag out into my lap.
 b. The robots sealed the impact holes.
 c. In surprise, Angel delivers a big half-wail.

In each case, the subject is the one doing the action of the underlined verb: I did the shaking, the robots did the sealing, and Angel did the delivering.

However, the definition relies on a noun phrase subject and dynamic verb pairing. Two problems with that definition are (1) not all subjects are noun phrases, which you will see in later chapters, and (2) subjects are not always doing an action because not all verbs are action verbs in the active voice. For instance, using that definition alone would make it difficult to identify the subject of these COCA examples:

- (6.10) a. That sentiment was delivered by President Obama
 b. the last two armed guards were chased off.
 c. she looked happy and carefree

In (a), President Obama is the one who is delivering the sentiment, yet he is not the subject of the sentence—*that sentiment* is the subject. The entity doing the chasing is absent in (b), and the NP *the last two armed guards* is the subject. The subject of *looked* in (c) is *she*, but *she* is not doing an action; rather, she is being described.

The last two definitions of “subject” offer similar information, and they are both ambiguous at best. They depend on the subject of a sentence also being the focus or topic of the sentence, which isn’t always the case. Furthermore, it can be difficult to identify “what or who the sentence is about,” as in these COCA examples:

- (6.11) a. Suzanne shook the hundreds of dark ringlets that tumbled from her upswept hair.
 b. Erdogan delivers a speech at parliament at 2:32 a.m. Sunday, marking the moment a year ago when the building was attacked.

Both sentences provide more information about a constituent that does not function as the subject, making it difficult to say, for example, that (a) is more about Suzanne than the dark ringlets and (b) is more about Erdogan than the speech. Another complication is that sometimes heavy constituents that are the focus or topic shift to the end of the sentence:

- (6.12) It was the early years of auto-correct on phones. (COCA)

This sentence is about “the early years of auto-correct on phones,” yet that phrase is not the subject of the sentence; instead, the NP *it* is the subject.

Another common definition states that subjects are always at the beginning of a sentence, followed by the verb. Most sentences with basic grammatical structure do indeed follow the subject-verb order:

- (6.13) **Henry** patted the mane of the horse. (COCA)

The subject, *Henry*, appears as the first constituent of the sentence and is before the verb. However, the subject is not always the first constituent of the sentence:

- (6.14) Built seventy years before, **the fence** had rotted down (COCA)

The opening constituent of this sentence is not the subject, but the subject, *the fence*, does appear before the verb *rotted*. However, English also offers the ability to place the subject after the verb:

- (6.15) To their left ran **the zigzagging split rail fence** (COCA)

If you base your definition of a subject on where it appears in the sentence, you would have difficulties identifying the subject in sentences like those above.

The syntactic definition of a subject is that it triggers subject-verb agreement. Singular subjects require singular verb forms while plural subjects require plural verb forms, which is most evident for third-person singular subjects with present tense verbs. For example, the regular verb *prefer* changes forms to agree with the subject if the verb is in the present tense and if the subject is a third-person singular subject:

- (6.16) a. I prefer green pens, but you prefer red pens.
 b. Matt prefers motorcycles, but she prefers cars.
 c. We prefer skydiving, but they prefer scuba diving.
 d. I preferred *The Voice*, but she preferred *American Idol*.

The first three sets are all in the present tense, and the only instances where *prefer* changes shape is (b), where both subjects are third-person singular subjects. The final example is in the past tense and demonstrates that regular verbs in the past tense do not change forms to match the subject, even if the subject is a third-person singular subject like *she*.

Irregular verbs provide more opportunities to check subject-verb agreement, especially forms of *be*. In the repeated example below, subject-verb agreement can help you identify the subject:

- (6.17) It was the early years of auto-correct on phones. (COCA)

The NP *the early years of auto-correct on phones* cannot be the subject of the sentence because the singular verb *was* does not agree with the plural head noun *years*. Instead, the singular *was* agrees with the singular pronoun *it*, which is the NP functioning as a subject in that sentence. In academic writing, most subjects are third-person subjects because any noun is a third-person subject. Because the present tense is the most common tense for academic writing, identifying subject-verb agreement can be quite helpful in that genre.

The best way to identify subjects is to take a mixed approach between semantic and syntactic definitions: (1) start at the beginning of the sentence, focusing your attention on phrases that appear before the verb, (2) look for a subject that represents the person or thing “doing” the action of a dynamic verb or the person or thing being described by a stative verb, and (3) check the verb form to ensure its form matches the constituent you’ve identified as a subject in person and number. For instance, practice identifying the subjects and verbs in the simple sentences below, taken from COCA.

- (6.18) a. He smiled.
 b. The boy at third kicked the dirt.
 c. Everything seemed funny.

Along with identifying the subject with a subscript, two more features of the annotation scheme are introduced in the examples below: verbs are underlined, and an *S* represents the full sentence.

- (6.19) a. S (Subj **he**^{Pro})
smiled
- b. S (Subj **the**^{Det}
: **boy**^{CN}
: [PostM **at**^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep **third**^{NN})
:]
)
kicked
(**the**^{Det}
: **dirt**^{NN}
)
- c. S (Subj **everything**^{Pro})
seemed
< **funny**^{Aj}>

The S-level represents the highest level of the syntactic hierarchy for annotating written sentences and is the only clause type that does not receive bounding markers in the annotation scheme. The *S* indicates the beginning of the sentence, and all constituents working within it are tabbed over and aligned, as in these annotations.

The subject of each verb is labeled with a subject function subscript, so the NP *he* is the subject of the verb *smiled* in (a). Some grammarians call the head word of the subject the simple subject and refer to the full phrase or clause functioning as the subject as the complete subject. Therefore, the simple subject in (b) is *boy*, but the complete subject is *the boy at third*; as demonstrated in the annotation for (b), only the complete subject takes the subject function label.

Subject-verb agreement is triggered by the head word of the phrase or clause functioning as a subject (i.e., the simple subject).

- (6.20) a. The boy in the photos is Steve Tarabokija (COCA)

S (Subj **the**^{Det}
: **boy**^{CN}
: [PostM **in**^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep **the**^{Det}
: : : **photos**^{CN}
: : :)
:]
)
is
(**Steve Tarabokija**^{PropN})

- b. The boys from the village are strong (COCA)

S (Subj the^{Det}
 : **boys**^{CN}
 : [PostM from^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : **village**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
)
 are
 < strong^{Aj}>

In (a), the singular verb *is* agrees with the head noun *boy* within the subject NP; in (b), the plural verb *are* agrees with the head noun *boys* within the subject NP. Both sentences have post-modifiers with a noun of a different number, which does not affect subject-verb agreement. Therefore, although the singular noun *village* appears directly before the verb *are*, it does not affect the plural verb form because only the head noun triggers subject-verb agreement.

Along with the subject, the other half of a basic sentence structure is the **predicate** (Pred), and the only grammatical form that can function as a predicate is a long verb phrase. The **long verb phrase** (LVP) is headed by a verb and contains all the constituents working to complete or modify the head verb, whether those constituents are required or optional. The most basic LVP includes only a head verb:

- (6.21) Bethesda shrugs. (Goodman 2006: 152)

S (Subj **Bethesda**^{PropN})
 ||Pred shrugs||

In this sentence, the subject is the one-word NP *Bethesda*, and the predicate is the one-word LVP *shrugs*. Also, as demonstrated in the annotation above, the LVP is enclosed within double-lined bounding markers, and the predicate function subscript is inside the opening double-lined marker.

To help identify the constituents working with the head verb in the LVP, you can rely on questions to target the constituents that modify and/or complete the meaning of the head verb, providing information such as who or what received the action from the verb, what description is provided for the subject, and where/when/how the verb was accomplished. For example, consider the sentence below.

- (6.22) The whole hillside is really a maze. (Goodman 2006: 152)

The subject is *the whole hillside*, and the head verb is *is*; the NP *a maze* provides a description for the subject, and the word *really* modifies the verb to provide a matter-of-fact reading of *is*. Because the form and function of words like *really* have not yet been covered, it remains unannotated within the LVP.

(6.23) S (Subj the^{Det}
 : <Att whole^{Aj}>
 : **hillside**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred is
 : really
 : (a^{Det}
 : : **maze**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

In basic sentence structures, the predicate begins with the head verb and ends at the conclusion of the sentence, and the majority of the sentences in this chapter follow those expectations.

Using what you know of the annotation scheme so far, annotate the following sentences, taken from Roald Dahl's (1990) *Matilda*, before moving on to the annotations and explanations.

- (6.24) a. I borrow them from the library. (Dahl 1990: 81)
 b. Miss Honey stared at her. (74)
 c. The human brain is an amazing thing. (74)

Each of these sentences has a basic subject-predicate sentence structure with all constituents belonging to either the subject or the predicate. The predicate in (a) begins with the head verb *borrow* and provides what is being borrowed (*them*) and where they are being borrowed (*from the library*). The predicate in (b) begins with the head verb *stared* and tells us where Miss Honey is staring (*at her*). Finally, the predicate in (c) begins with the head verb *is* and provides a description of the subject (*an amazing thing*). The annotations for these sentences are below:

- (6.25) a. I borrow them from the library.

S (Subj I^{Pro})
 ||Pred borrow
 : (them^{Pro})
 : [from^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : **library**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 ||

- b. Miss Honey stared at her.

S (Subj **Miss Honey**^{PropN})
 ||Pred stared
 : [at^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **her**^{Pro})
 : :
 ||

- c. The human brain is an amazing thing.

S (Subj the^{Det}
 : (Att **human**^N)
 : **brain**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred is
 : (an^{Det}
 : : <Att amazing^{Aj}>
 : : **thing**^{CN}
 : :
 ||

The subjects of all three sentences are basic NPs: in (a) and (b), the NP contains only the head word, and in (c), the head noun is modified by a single attributive NP.

So far, the examples have included shorter sentences, but even longer sentences can follow this same basic subject-predicate structure, such as the following example:

- (6.26) The whole of Miss Honey's pale and pleasant face blushed a brilliant scarlet.
 (Dahl 1990: 79)

S (Subj the^{Det}
 : **whole**^{CN}
 : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep (**Miss Honey**^{PropN})'s^{Det}
 : : : <Att < pale^{Aj}>
 : : : : and^{CoConj}
 : : : : < pleasant^{Aj}>
 : : : : >
 : : : **face**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
)
 ||Pred blushed
 : (a^{Det}
 : : <Att brilliant^{Aj}>
 : : **scarlet**^{CN}
 : :
 ||

The complete subject NP is *the whole of Miss Honey's pale and pleasant face*, which features an embedded PP functioning as a post-modifier. Within the post-modifying PP, the object NP includes a possessive NP acting as a determiner and a coordinated attributive adjective phrase. The verb *blushed* begins the LVP that functions as the predicate.

The examples above feature sentences with the subject as the opening constituent; however, as previously stated, subjects do not have to be the first constituent, as in the following examples. Before moving on, annotate these two sentences.

- (6.27) a. Then suddenly he struck again. (Dahl 1990: 38)
 b. At that moment the bell in the corridor sounded for the end of class. (81)

In your annotation of (a), *then* and *suddenly* should be on the first two lines, yet they should remain unannotated because their forms and functions have not yet been introduced; in (b), the PP *at that moment* appears before the subject NP.

- (6.28) a. Then suddenly he struck again.

S then
 suddenly
 (Subj **he**^{Pro})
 ||Pred struck
 :
 again
 ||

- b. At that moment the bell in the corridor sounded for the end of class.

S [
 : at^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep that^{Det}
 : :
 : **moment**^{CN}
 :)
 :]
 (Subj the^{Det}
 :
 bell^{CN}
 :
 [PostM in^{Prep}
 :
 (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 :
 corridor^{CN}
)
]
)
 ||Pred sounded
 :
 [for^{Prep}
 :
 (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 :
 end^{CN}
 :
 [PostM of^{Prep}
 :
 (ObjPrep **class**^{NN})
]
)
]
)
 ||

While the subjects are not the first constituents in these sentences, they appear before the verb, reflecting the common expectation for subjects to appear before the verb. More complex sentence structures will be introduced and discussed in future chapters.

6.3 Coordination in subjects and predicates

Coordination exists at all levels of the sentence, including within subjects and predicates. Throughout this discussion of coordination, the example sentences are taken from Carol Goodman's (2006) *The Ghost Orchid*, and the first focus is on coordinated subjects. A coordinated NP subject can take two forms: (1) two or more head nouns that share determiners and attributive modifiers are held together by a coordinating conjunction, or (2) two or more distinct NPs are joined by a coordinating conjunction. The two examples below demonstrate the different forms.

- (6.29) a. The hedges and shrubbery overgrew their neat geometry³⁷ (6)

S	(Subj	the ^{Det}	
	:	hedges ^{CN}	and ^{CoConj} shrubbery ^{NN}
	)		
	Pred	<u>overgrew</u>	
	:	(	their ^{Det}
	:	:	<Att neat ^{Aj} >
	:	:	geometry ^{NN}
	:	)	

- b. David Fox and I are ... alone on the terrace (7)

S	(Subj	(	David Fox ^{PropN}
	:	and ^{CoConj}	
	:	(	I ^{Pro}
	)		
	Pred	<u>are</u>	
	:	<	alone ^{Aj} >
	:	[	on ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	terrace ^{CN}
	:	)	
	:	]	

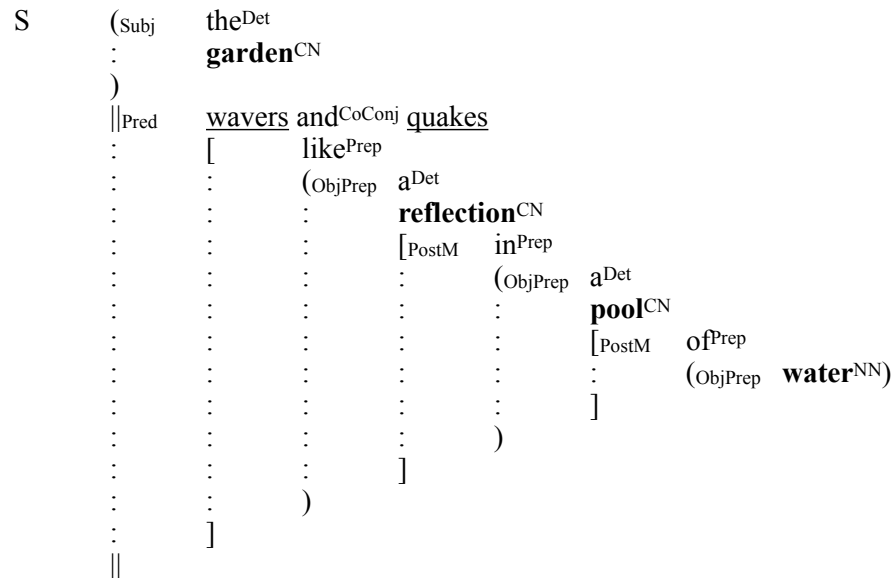
The subject NP *the hedges and shrubbery* in (a) share a determiner without having any separate modifiers, allowing them to appear on the same line as coordinated head nouns within the NP. However, the subject NP in (b) contains two smaller NPs coordinated together, *David Fox* and *I*, and the plural verb *are* agrees with the plural coordinated NP that functions as the subject. If *and*

³⁷ Original: The hedges and shrubbery—once clipped and ordered—have overgrown their neat geometry...

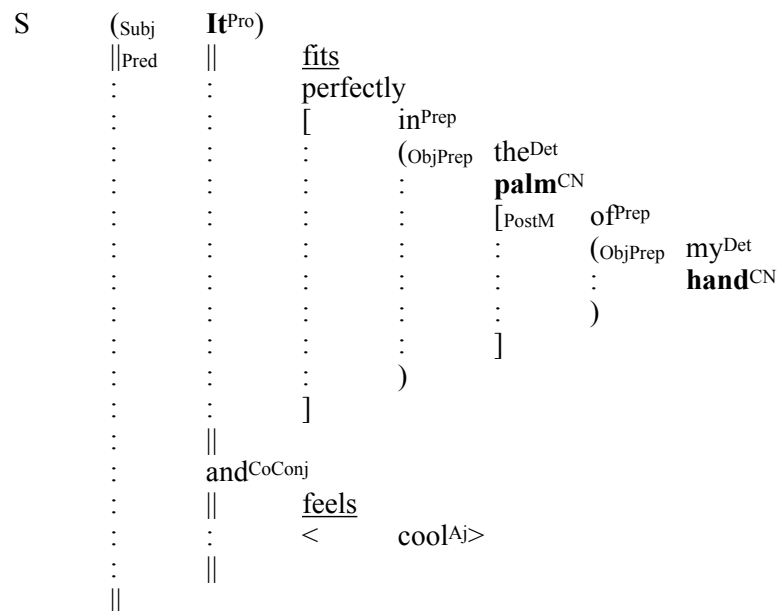
joins the compound constituents within the subject, the verb form is typically plural to agree with the subject, but if *or* joins the constituents, the verb typically agrees with the final head noun in number.

The same types of coordination are available for the LVP functioning as a predicate, where verbs can be coordinated within a single long verb phrase or entire LVPs can be coordinated to serve as the predicate. These two options are exemplified below:

- (6.30) a. The garden wavers and quakes like a reflection in a pool of water (8)



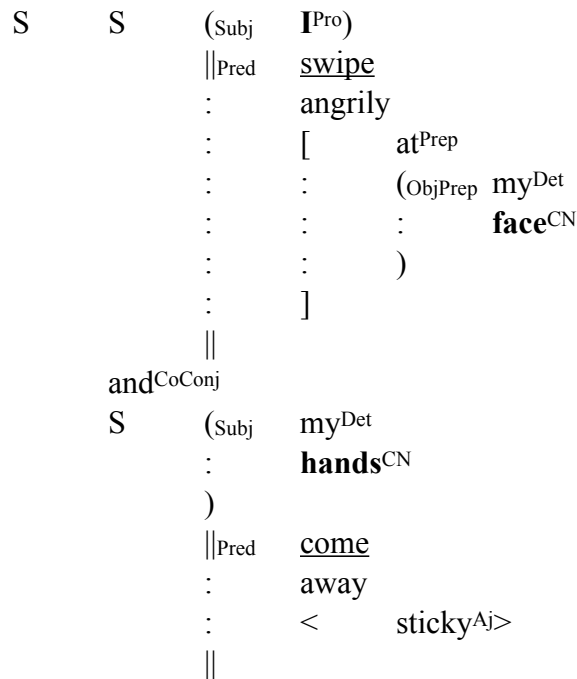
- b. It fits perfectly in the palm of my hand and feels cool. (153)



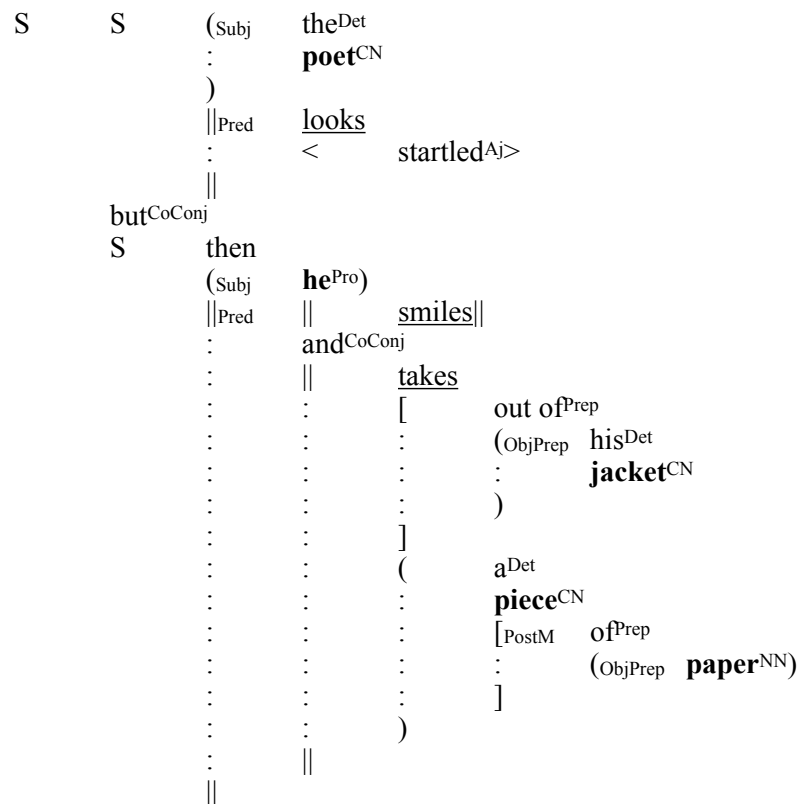
The predicate in (a) coordinates two verbs, and the verbs share the rest of the predicate: the garden not only wavers, but it also quakes, and the wavering and quaking together resemble a reflection in a pool. However, the predicate in (b) consists of two full coordinated LVPs, and the subject, *it*, is the subject of *fits* and *feels* within the two LVPs.

Another important type of coordination is the coordination of entire sentences, each with their own subject and predicate. When two smaller sentences are coordinated, an additional sentence marker is added to house the two smaller sentences, as in the examples below.

(6.31) a. I swipe angrily at my face, and my hands come away sticky. (154)



- b. The poet looks startled, but then he smiles and takes out of his jacket a piece of paper (7)



The coordinators line up with the two smaller sentences to show that two complete sentences are held together to create an even larger sentence. Each of the coordinated sentences takes its own subject and predicate; for instance, the two subjects in (a) are *I* and *my hands*, and the two predicates are *swipe angrily at my face* and *come away sticky*. Example (b) demonstrates that coordinated constituents can appear within other coordinated constituents; in this case, the coordinated predicate *smiles and takes out of his jacket a piece of paper* appears within a sentence that is coordinated with another sentence.

These examples also demonstrate that, when annotating, the only punctuation from the original sentence you should include is any apostrophes, which provide grammatical information relevant to the words themselves. All other punctuation marks (e.g., commas, periods, semicolons, parentheses) need to be taken out of the sentence so that those marks don't get confused with conventions of the annotation scheme. In general, punctuation is a convention used for the convenience of readers and for writers to more clearly communicate their ideas rather than as a grammatical tool for analysis.

Applying the information from this section, annotate the following sentences from *Matilda*, being careful to identify any coordinated constituents. The three compound verbs are identified for you.

- (6.32) a. Matilda and her brother sat quietly on the sofa³⁸ (Dahl 1990: 50)
 b. Then she let_out a scream ... and she dropped the plate with a crash and a splash (60)
 c. Then she picked_up a pencil and quickly worked_out the sum on a piece of paper. (74)

The coordinator *and* in the first sentence connects two NPs, which, when coordinated together, function as the subject of the sentence:

- (6.33) Matilda and her brother sat quietly on the sofa

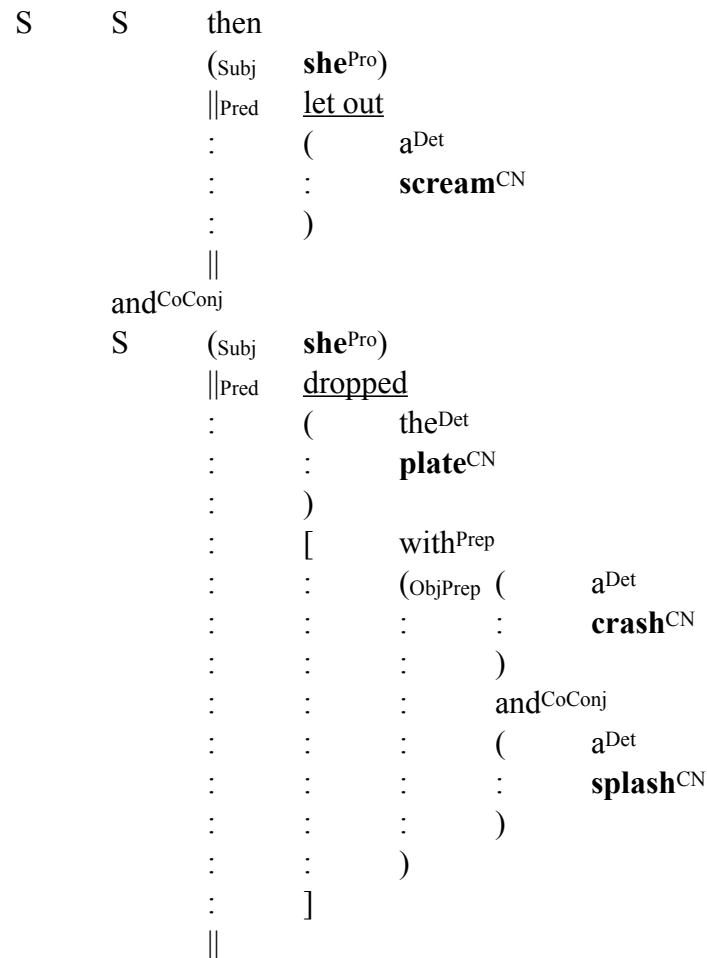
S	(Subj	(	Matilda ^{PropN})
:	:	and ^{CoConj}	
:	:	(	her ^{Det}
:	:	:	brother ^{CN}
:	:	)	
)	:		
^{Pred}	:	sat	
:	:	quietly	
:	:	[	on ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(Obj ^{Prep} the ^{Det}
:	:	:	sofa ^{CN}
:	:	)	
:	:	]	
	:		

The full subject of this sentence is the compound noun phrase *Matilda and her brother*, and, as discussed in past chapters, only the full coordinated NP takes the function label. The annotation reflects that, for instance, *Matilda* is not the subject of the verb *sat*, so the NP headed by *Matilda* is left without a function label.

The second sentence includes one coordinator that binds together two full sentences to form a larger sentence and a second coordinator that joins two noun phrases within a preposition phrase, with the compound NP functioning as the object of the preposition *with*.

³⁸ Original: Matilda and her brother were sitting quietly on the sofa

(6.34) Then she let_out a scream ... and she dropped the plate with a crash and a splash



The larger sentence structure consists of two smaller complete sentences, each taking its own subject and predicate. One feature of compound sentence structures like the example above is that each sentence could stand on its own as a complete grammatical sentence (e.g., *Then she let out a scream* is a full sentence). The second *and* connects the two NPs *a crash* and *a splash*, which function together as the compound object of the preposition *with*. As with other examples, the compound NP takes the function label while the daughter NPs do not carry individual functions.

The final sentence features coordinated LVPs that work together to form a single predicate for the subject *she*. While *she* only appears once, *she* is the subject for both *picked up* and *worked out*, both of which head their own long verb phrase.

3. The street door was still open, just a little, and wisps of nighttime mist slithered and twined into the house through the open door.⁴¹
 4. The man Jack paused on the landing.
 5. With his left hand he pulled a large white handkerchief from the pocket of his black coat, and with it he wiped off the knife and his gloved right hand; then he put the handkerchief away.⁴²
 6. He flexed his fingers.
 7. His hair was dark and his eyes were dark and he wore black leather gloves of the thinnest lambskin.
 8. The toddler's room was at the very top of the house.
 9. The man Jack walked up the stairs.⁴³
 10. Then he pushed open the attic door, and he walked in.
-

⁴¹ Original: The street door was still open, just a little, where the knife and the man who held it had slipped in, and wisps of nighttime mist slithered and twined into the house through the open door.

⁴² Original: With his left hand he pulled a large white handkerchief from the pocket of his black coat, and with it he wiped off the knife and his gloved right hand which had been holding it; then he put the handkerchief away.

⁴³ Original: The man Jack walked up the stairs, his feet silent on the carpeting.

Terms introduced in Chapter 6

Lexical forms

long verb phrase (LVP)
verb

Functions

predicate (Pred)
subject (Subj)

Concepts

semantic verb type
dynamic verb
stative verb
inflections for verbs
past participle
past tense
present participle
third-person singular present tense

Chapter 6 Exercises

Exercise 6.1

The following sentences were taken from Mary Higgins Clark's (1989: 128-132) *While My Pretty One Sleeps*. Annotate the sentences.

1. She hung the purse on the mannequin's arm.
2. Neeve glanced around the shop.
3. Her first call was to Toni Mendell at *Contemporary Woman*.
4. Toni was at an all-day seminar of magazine editors.
5. Long seconds passed in total silence.
6. Neeve heard a click in her ear.
7. Givvons and Marks occupied the top six floors of the building on the southwest corner or Park Avenue and Forty-first Street.
8. Jack Campbell's personal office was a huge corner room of the forty-seventh floor with dazzling views of downtown Manhattan.
9. His face was too thin and his features were too irregular...
10. She took a deep breath and told him about Ethel.

Exercise 6.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. *-ing* verb form
2. *-ing* adjective form
3. *-ing* noun form

4. *-ed* verb form
5. *-ed* adjective form
6. subject and predicate
7. sentence beginning with a constituent that is not the subject
8. coordinated subject
9. coordinated predicate
10. coordinated sentence structure

Exercise 6.3

Verbs are often a focus during the revision process, and students are often told by teachers to replace “bland” verbs or semantically bleached verbs, such as *be*, *get*, *do*, and *go*. In fact, some teachers go so far as to tell students to omit any uses of those verbs throughout their writing. While revising for better verb choices is a good practice, it can also cause problems when students become so afraid of using the same verbs that they use a thesaurus to provide an array of options, not all of which will fit the necessary context. For instance, my thesaurus has 16 different sets of lists of synonyms for the verb *go* (not to mention the lists for the noun *go* and the many idioms), which can make it difficult to find the right word to match the right context.

James Hagerty (2015) wrote an article for *The Wall Street Journal* about teachers want students to avoid the word *said*—so much so that the teachers arranged an activity where students put together a funeral for *said*. The teachers’ goal was to get students to expand their vocabulary by using more specific verbs when quoting dialogue. If you search online, you’ll find compiled lists of alternatives for *said*, including A.J. Barnett’s (2016) “550 Alternative Words for ‘Said’” on *LetterPile*. Find one of those compiled lists, and then select a news story with at least five instances of the verb *say*. Every time the author uses *said* (or *say/says/saying*), switch the verb out for one of the alternatives, making sure you never use any of the alternatives more than once.

Write a paragraph to compare the original text to the new one you’ve created, focusing on any meaning or tone shifts created by the substitutions and stating whether you agree with teachers’ concern about *said*, making sure you justify and support your argument.

Chapter 7: Short verb phrase

I believe the road to hell is paved with adverbs, and I will shout it from the rooftops. —Stephen King

Adjectives are the sugar of literature and adverbs the salt. —Henry James

7.1 Short verb phrase

As described in the last chapter, the long verb phrase includes all constituents that modify and/or complete the meaning of the head verb, and the LVP can function as the predicate. Within the LVP is the **short verb phrase** (SVP), which includes the head verb and any auxiliaries supporting the head verb. Some texts refer to the LVP as the complete predicate and the SVP as the simple predicate. The focus in this section is on identifying the constituents within short verb phrases to build a foundation for the next chapter, which explores the connections among features of the short verb phrase and grammatical information, such as tense, mood, aspect, and voice (TMAV).

In the same way that determiners add a specific grammatical interpretation to the head noun, an auxiliary adds a specific grammatical interpretation to the head verb. In other words, both determiners and auxiliaries are specifiers rather than modifiers, which means they add grammatical information to support the head word rather than adding content or lexical meaning to modify the head word. While each SVP typically has only one head verb unless coordination is involved, it can have up to four or five auxiliaries, depending on dialect, supporting that head verb. English has three types of auxiliaries: primary, modal, and semi-modal. These auxiliaries differ in the type of information they provide, their ability to inflect for tense and subject-verb agreement, and their syntactic placement within the SVP.

Like head verbs, **primary auxiliaries** (PriAux) are able to inflect for tense and exhibit features of subject-verb agreement. English has four primary auxiliaries (*be*, *have*, *get*, and *do*), and all four forms overlap with head verb forms; that is, *be*, *have*, *get*, and *do* can either be a primary auxiliary or a head verb, depending on its context, as demonstrated by these COCA examples.

- (7.1)
- a. the weather outside is lovely.
 - b. Twitter ^{PriAux} is taking the Department of Homeland Security to court
 - c. Certainly he ^{PriAux} is bewitched by the rich, the royal, the thin, and the beautiful
 - d. Brian Wilson has moxie
 - e. the President ^{PriAux} has spoken on this.
 - f. He got a kitten.
 - g. Bob ^{PriAux} got busted by security.
 - h. David did the work gladly
 - i. Nonetheless, Cole ^{PriAux} did complete the series

In each of these four sets, the first example demonstrates the form's use as a head verb, and the second (and third) example demonstrates the form's use as a primary auxiliary. Just like the head verb forms, the primary auxiliaries inflect for tense and person, such as *has* in example (e), which is a third-person singular present tense form, and *did* in example (i), which is a past tense form.

Furthermore, each primary auxiliary requires a specific form of the auxiliary or verb that follows it. The primary auxiliary *be* requires one of the participle forms to follow it, either present participle, such as *is taking* in (b), or past participle, such as *is bewitched* in (c). Both *have* and *get* require a past participle form, demonstrated by *has spoken* in (e) and *got busted* in (g), and *do* requires a bare form of a verb, as in *did complete* in (i). Using other forms provides ungrammatical results; for example, both **the President has speak* and **the President has speaking* are ungrammatical.

Because the same form can serve as both auxiliary and head verb, a single SVP can have instances of both forms, as in these COCA examples:

- (7.2) a. At least he was^{PriAux} being nice to Reba.
 b. Very few of the students have^{PriAux} had any exposure to electronics or to real-time programming
 c. people are coming out of the mazes laughing because they got^{PriAux} gotten in the maze—you know, 'I can't believe that guy got me,' and all of those things
 d. General Flynn did^{PriAux} do something wrong.

In (a), *was* is the primary auxiliary *be* in its singular past tense form, and it supports the head verb *be*, which is in its present participle form. Example (c) includes additional context for *got gotten* because not all dialects are able to use that construction. In instances of *have* and *do* supporting their same forms as head verbs, you can find repeated forms back-to-back that can look awkward in writing:

- (7.3) a. she had^{PriAux} had enough of foster homes. (COCA)
 b. Now, people do^{PriAux} do it. (COCA)

Examples like these often look like typos because the same form appears side-by-side, yet they are grammatical. The first *had* in (a) is the past tense form of the auxiliary, and the second *had* is the past participle form of the head verb *have*. The first *do* in (b) is the present tense form of the auxiliary, and the second *do* is the bare form of the head verb.

All dialects of English allow more than one primary auxiliary in a single SVP, though they must appear in a specific order. The COCA examples below demonstrate those combinations:

(7.4) BE + *being* + past participle

- a. Residents there are^{PriAux} being^{PriAux} told to evacuate.

HAVE + *been* + present or past participle

- b. They had^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} opening the doors early
 c. The helicopter has^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} found

HAVE + *been* + *being* + past participle

- d. This has^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} being^{PriAux} hashed around for almost a decade.

HAVE + *gotten* + past participle

- e. Aharon had^{PriAux} gotten^{PriAux} caught by Rami

BE + *getting* + past participle

- f. Many parts of the northeast are^{PriAux} getting^{PriAux} hit with more feet of snow in a month than they usually get all winter

HAVE + *been* + *getting* + past participle

- g. We have^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} getting^{PriAux} flooded by these bizarro phone calls.

The first primary auxiliary in each pattern is presented in small capital letters to represent any inflected form; for example, *HAVE* represents all three of its inflected forms (*have*, *has*, *had*). After the first auxiliary, the forms are specified, following the grammatical expectations for the auxiliaries. For instance, because *have* requires a past participle form, all primary auxiliaries following *have* are in their past participle forms.

The only primary auxiliary that does not typically occur in such a string is *do*, except in dialectal variations, such as the following:

(7.5) Don't tell me you done^{PriAux} got^{PriAux} knocked up already (COCA)

Not all English speakers accept that sentence as grammatical, but some dialects use *done* as a primary auxiliary form. When they do, the form *done* does not inflect, and the form after it appears in its past tense form, such as *done finished*, *done got*, and *done walked off*.

Modal auxiliaries (ModAux) express modality, providing interpretations such as condition, certainty, possibility, and necessity, and they do not inflect for person. Historically, the modal auxiliaries inflected for tense, resulting in the pairs *can/could*, *will/would*, *shall/should*,

and *may/might*.⁴⁴ Along with *must*, which does not have a grammatical past tense counterpart, these nine are the “pure” modal auxiliaries. As you will see in the next chapter, the modern-day uses of the modals’ tensed forms do not match the grammatical uses of the tensed forms of head verbs and other auxiliaries. In other words, rather than inflecting for grammatical tense, each modal form provides a slight shift in interpretation of a modality. Because modals do not inflect for tense in the same way that other auxiliaries do, they do not have a bare form and cannot occur in conjunction with the word *to*. For example, you can use the combination *to sing* in a sentence, or you could use the grammatical combination *to be singing* or *to have sung*; however, you cannot use the combination **to can sing* or **to might sing*.

The verb that follows a modal auxiliary must be in its bare form, as demonstrated in the COCA examples below:

- (7.6) a. I can^{ModAux} handle a grumpy old man.
 b. you would^{ModAux} recognize the signs of trouble?
 c. They should^{ModAux} play this tape to Kanye
 d. Certain goats may^{ModAux} develop pneumonia as well.
 e. Secondly, the coach must^{ModAux} address the issue

The verbs *handle*, *recognize*, *play*, *develop*, and *address* are in their bare, non-inflected forms. Since modal auxiliaries do not inflect for person and number, their forms remain the same regardless of the subject, as in these COCA examples:

- (7.7) a. he can^{ModAux} make a lot of money that way
 b. the company can^{ModAux} turn you down.
 c. margaritas can^{ModAux} throw you off under the best of circumstances

While head verbs and other auxiliaries inflect for subject-verb agreement, specifically for third-person present tense forms, modal auxiliaries do not. Therefore, *can* takes the same form whether the subject is *I*, *he*, *the company*, or *margaritas*.

While southern U.S. dialects can have more than one modal in an SVP (e.g., *might could*), most dialects restrict the SVP to having only one modal. However, modal auxiliaries can be used in conjunction with other types of auxiliaries, including primary auxiliaries, as long as the modal appears first in the string, as in the sentences from COCA below.

- (7.8) a. Letters may^{ModAux} be^{PriAux} edited for clarity and length.
 b. Winners could^{ModAux} get^{PriAux} clobbered.

⁴⁴ Both *can* and *will* have homonyms that act as head verbs, as in these COCA examples:

- a. he canned Comey / ABC ultimately canned the project = ‘fire (someone)’ or ‘reject (something)’
 b. we canned vegetables = ‘preserve in a can’
 c. Jessica willed herself invisible = ‘make (something) happen through desire or intention’
 d. He ... had even willed his scrubby land to Coyote. = ‘to bequeath (something) to (someone)’

These verb forms inflect like other head verbs (e.g., *can/cans/canned*).

- c. Something like a grasshopper might^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} singing.
- d. whoever was responsible for this directly might^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} being^{PriAux} used by some other group

These examples demonstrate that, no matter how many primary auxiliaries are added to the string, the modal auxiliary occurs first. They also demonstrate that the primary auxiliary immediately following the modal auxiliary is in its bare form; for instance, in (a), the primary auxiliary *be* is in its bare form because it follows *may*. Any auxiliaries after the first one take their required form, so the primary auxiliary *be* takes the form *been* after the primary auxiliary *have* in *might have been singing*.

Due to grammaticalization, English also has a category of **semi-modal auxiliaries** (SemiAux), which semantically function as modals and, like the “pure” modals, require a bare non-inflected form to follow it; unlike the pure modals, they can inflect for both tense and person. The majority of semi-modals in English are compound forms that end in *to*, such as *be going to*, *have to*, *be supposed to*, and *be fixing to*. The COCA examples include a semi-modal auxiliary:

- (7.9)
- a. Haters are going to^{SemiAux} hate.
 - b. He just has to^{SemiAux} believe it.
 - c. The Astros’ offensive juggernaut was supposed to^{SemiAux} be their key advantage
 - d. They were fixing to^{SemiAux} confiscate all our equipment

The first word within the compound semi-modal reflects tense and person, so *are going to* in (a) inflects for present tense and the plural subject *haters* while *has to* in (b) inflects for a third-person singular subject and present tense. The compounded forms of semi-modals are often reduced, especially in speech and informal writing:

- (7.10)
- a. And your law firm ’s gonna^{SemiAux} be so starstruck the first year (COCA)
 - b. You wanna^{SemiAux} talk depopulation. (COCA)

When semi-modals appear in reduced forms, the final *to* is often reduced to an unstressed syllable attached to the word before it, as in *gonna*, *wanna*, *finna*, and *hafta*. If the first word of the semi-modal is *be* or *have*, it often takes its contracted form, as in (a), and that initial word can drop out entirely, as in the COCA examples below:

- (7.11)
- a. Sandusky had better^{SemiAux} keep his mouth shut
 - b. we ’d better^{SemiAux} watch our step.
 - c. You better^{SemiAux} believe it.

In its most reduced state, the semi-auxiliary appears as *better* in (c).

When semi-modals appear in strings of auxiliaries in positive declarative statements, they occur in a slot between any modal and primary auxiliaries, as demonstrated in these COCA examples:

- (7.12) a. he 's_gonna^{SemiAux} have_to^{SemiAux} check with them
 b. it might^{ModAux} be_supposed_to^{SemiAux} exhibit an arrogance at once incorrigible and unconscious.
 c. This all has_to^{SemiAux} be^{PriAux} going somewhere, right?
 d. These vehicles will^{ModAux} have_to^{SemiAux} be^{PriAux} designed with reliability, safety and comfort in mind.

Example (a) demonstrates that two semi-modals can work together within one SVP. If a modal and semi-modal are used together, the modal comes first, as in (b); if a semi-modal and primary auxiliary are used together, the semi-modal appears first, as in (c). Finally, if all three types are present, the semi-modal is sandwiched between the modal and any primary auxiliaries, as in (d).

The annotation scheme encloses the SVP within single-line boundary markers with the head verb underlined, as in the annotations below.

- (7.13) a. Brian Wilson has moxie

S (Subj **Brian Wilson**^{PropN})
 ||Pred | has
 : (**moxie**^{NN})
 ||

- b. the President has spoken on this.

S (Subj the^{Det}
 : **President**^{PropN}
)
 ||Pred | has^{PriAux}
 : : spoken
 : |
 :
 : [on^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **this**^{Pro})
 :]
 ||

- c. I can handle a grumpy old man.

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})
	Pred	can ^{ModAux}
:	:	: <u>handle</u>
:	:	:
:	:	:
:	:	:
:	:	: (a ^{Det}
:	:	: <Att grumpy ^{Aj} >
:	:	: <Att old ^{Aj} >
:	:	: man ^{CN}
:	:	:)

Some SVPs consist only of the head verb, as in (a); when auxiliaries support a head verb, as in (b) and (c), the auxiliary appears on its own line with its appropriate superscript label. SVPs with multiple auxiliaries follow the same principles:

- (7.14) a. Aharon had gotten caught by Rami

S	(Subj	Aharon ^{PropN})
	Pred	had ^{PriAux}
:	:	: gotten ^{PriAux}
:	:	: <u>caught</u>
:	:	:
:	:	:
:	:	: [by ^{Prep}
:	:	: (ObjPrep Rami ^{PropN})
:	:	:]

- b. he's gonna have to check with them

S	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
	Pred	's gonna ^{SemiAux}
:	:	: have to ^{SemiAux}
:	:	: <u>check</u>
:	:	:
:	:	:
:	:	: [with ^{Prep}
:	:	: (ObjPrep them ^{Pro})
:	:	:]

- c. Something like a grasshopper might have been singing.

S	(Subj	something ^{Pro}
:	[_{PostM}	like ^{Prep}
:	:	(Obj _{Prep} a ^{Det}
:	:	grasshopper ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	]	
:	)	
_{Pred}		might ^{ModAux}
:	:	have ^{PriAux}
:	:	been ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>singing</u>
:		

Examples (a) and (b) have SVPs with two auxiliaries, and example (c) demonstrates that some long verb phrases require nothing more than the SVP to be grammatical, as with *might have been singing*.

7.2 Negation

Along with the head verb and any auxiliaries, other constituents can appear within the short verb phrase, including *not*, which is English's **negator** (Neg). To negate a short verb phrase, the negator must either be supported by an auxiliary (e.g., *has not rained*) or appear with the head verb *be* (e.g., *is not*). If the SVP would not otherwise have an auxiliary, the “dummy *do*” is required for negation (e.g., *did not run*). Because the negator leans on the auxiliary or form of *be* in front of it, it often appears in its contracted form *n't* after an auxiliary, as in *isn't*, *hasn't*, and *didn't*.

If the negator is contracted or could be replaced with a contraction, it remains on the same line as the auxiliary in the annotation, as in these COCA examples:

- (7.15) a. one participant did not get a needed update.

S	(Subj	one ^{Det}
:	:	participant ^{CN}
:	)	
_{Pred}		did ^{PriAux} not ^{Neg}
:	:	<u>get</u>
:		
:	:	
:	(	a ^{Det}
:	:	< _{Att} needed ^{Aj} >
:	:	update ^{CN}
:	)	

- b. Many do not survive beyond their teenage years.

S	(Subj	many ^{Pro})
	Pred	do ^{PriAux} not ^{Neg}
	:	: <u>survive</u>
	:	:
	:	:
	:	:
	:	[beyond ^{Prep}
	:	: (ObjPrep their ^{Det}
	:	: : <Att teenage ^{Aj} >
	:	: : years ^{CN}
	:	:)
	:	:]

- c. The author doesn't provide a lot of clues for this word.

S	(Subj	the ^{Det}
	:	author ^{CN}
	)	
	Pred	does ^{PriAux} n't ^{Neg}
	:	: <u>provide</u>
	:	:
	:	:
	:	:
	:	(a lot of ^{Det}
	:	: clues ^{CN}
	:	:)
	:	:
	:	[for ^{Prep}
	:	: (ObjPrep this ^{Det}
	:	: : word ^{CN}
	:	:)
	:	:]

The negator is one of the only words that appear on the same line as another word because they have different grammatical behaviors, depending on whether they can be contracted, and the negator's appearance on the same line as another constituent reflects those grammatical distinctions. Both (a) and (b) can be reworded with contracts, as in *didn't get* and *don't survive*. The sole purpose of the “dummy *do*” is to act as a placeholder for a head verb's tense within negated SVPs (or SVPs of commands or questions, which will be discussed in Chapter 13). In the same sentences with positive polarity, the head verb would inflect for tense and would not

need the *do*-support, as in *one participant got a needed update* and *the author provides a lot of clues for this word*.

If the head verb is a form of *be*, the *do* auxiliary is not required for negation; the following COCA examples demonstrate negation with *be*:

- (7.16) a. However, change for change's sake is not the goal.

S however
 (Subj **change**^{NN}
 : [PostM for^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep (**change**^{NN})^{sDet}
 : : : **sake**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
)
 ||Pred | is not^{Neg}
 :
 : (the^{Det}
 : : **goal**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

- b. Actually, I'm not that old.

S actually
 (Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||Pred | 'm
 : : not^{Neg}
 : |
 :
 : < that
 : : old^{Aj}
 : >
 ||

While example (a) can include a contracted form (i.e., *isn't*), example (b) cannot, so the negator appears on its own line. Regardless of whether the negator is contracted, it appears directly after the *be* verb without support of the *do* auxiliary. Changing the order or inserting *do* results in ungrammatical sentences:

- (7.17) a. *However, change for change's sake not is the goal.
 b. *However, change for change's sake does not be the goal.

Neither of those rewordings is grammatical in English.

If the SVP has one auxiliary, *not* appears between the auxiliary verb and the head verb, as seen in the following COCA examples.

- (7.18) a. you could^{ModAux} n't^{Neg} look at everything
 b. Lope was^{PriAux} not^{Neg} supporting, wholeheartedly, the implications of this display of power and hierarchy.
 c. I have^{PriAux} n't^{Neg} seen you in a while
 d. my own life has^{PriAux} not^{Neg} been without its troubles

Regardless of the type of auxiliary, the negator is situated between the auxiliary and the head verb.

When two verbs share an auxiliary and are held together by a coordinator, a negator can create potential ambiguity. Consider the following COCA example:

- (7.19) Gore should^{ModAux} not^{Neg} concede and keep fighting.

Both *concede* and *keep* are being supported by the modal auxiliary *should*, but it is unclear how much *not* is negating. The question is whether Gore should keep fighting. Grammatically, it is ambiguous because the scope of *not* is not clearly defined: *not* may only be referring to the head verb *concede* (i.e., Gore should not concede; Gore should keep fighting), which is reflected in the annotation below:

- (7.20) S (Subj **Gore**^{PropN})
 ||Pred || | should^{ModAux} i
 : : : not^{Neg}
 : : : concede
 : : |
 : ||
 : and^{CoConj}
 : || | GAPⁱ ModAux
 : : : keep
 : : |
 : : fighting⁴⁵
 : ||
 ||

If *not* applies only to *concede*, it cannot appear in its contracted form, so the negator occurs on its own line, and only the modal auxiliary is shared with the second SVP.

However, *not* could also have scope over both verbs (i.e., Gore should not concede; Gore should not keep fighting), resulting in the following annotation:

⁴⁵ The grammatical form of *fighting* in this sentence is introduced in Chapter 15, so it is left unannotated for now.

(7.21)	S	(Subj	Gore ^{PropN})	
		_{Pred}		should ^{ModAux} not ^{Neg} i
		:	:	:
		:	:	:
		:	:	:
		:	:	
		:		
		:	and ^{CoConj}	
		:		
		:	:	:
		:	:	:
		:	:	
		:	:	
		:	:	fighting
		:		

In this case, the negator can be contracted and shared with both head verbs (*shouldn't concede*, *shouldn't keep*), so it appears on the same line as the modal auxiliary, and the co-index marker refers to the full line. It is likely the speaker intended the first interpretation, where the *not* only negates *concede*, but it's possible that the speaker is referencing a situation in which Gore should not concede but should also not keep fighting (i.e., the situation is at a standstill and neither action will help). Writers need to be aware of this potential syntactic ambiguity with the scope of negation when coordinating two verbs supported by a single auxiliary.

If the short verb phrase has more than one auxiliary verb, *not* usually appears between the first two auxiliaries, as in these COCA examples:

- (7.22) a. There are issues that have^{PriAux} n't^{Neg} been^{PriAux} resolved
 b. And your reasoning is that, if he hasn't changed the password to where he sleeps, he wo^{ModAux} n't^{Neg} have^{PriAux} changed the entry to the secret chamber.

In (a), the two auxiliary verbs *have* and *been* are working with the head verb *resolved*, and *not* appears between those two auxiliary verbs. In (b), the same pattern occurs, where *not* appears between the two auxiliaries *will*, which becomes *wo* when contracted with the negator, and *have*. Though less frequent, the negator can occur in other positions, as in the COCA examples below:

- (7.23) a. there would^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} not^{Neg} been any reason to have a trial
 b. If I would^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} not^{Neg} following my heart
 c. they almost certainly would^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} not^{Neg} been^{PriAux} convicted or would have been charged and convicted of much lesser crimes.

These examples could be reworded with *not* appearing in different locations; for instance, (c) could read *would not have been convicted* or *would have been not convicted*. When the negator appears anywhere other than after the first auxiliary or after the head verb *be*, it cannot appear in

its contracted form, so *wouldn't have been any reason* is grammatical, yet **would haven't been any reason* is ungrammatical.

Because semi-modals are typically compound forms, they negate differently, depending on the individual parts of the compound. When the negator is used with a semi-modal that begins with the *be* verb, *not* typically interrupts the compounded semi-modal:

- (7.24) And she knew then she was not going to die alone on the mesa top (L'Amour 2004)

	was not ^{Neg} going to ^{SemiAux}
:	<u>die</u>

In this example, the semi-modal *be going to* has *not* situated within it in the most frequent position, between *be* and *going*, and, when it occurs in that position, it can be contracted, as in *wasn't going to*. Another option is for the negator to appear after the full compounded semi-modal:

- (7.25) He exclaimed, 'It's a beer for the people—one to get in at a party. No one is going to not like that.' I have to say I was taken by this beer's charms too and would certainly rate it as my perfect Blonde. (Hamilton 2013: 254)

	is going to ^{SemiAux}
:	not ^{Neg}
:	<u>like</u>

In this example, *is going to* is followed by the negator *not*, which cannot appear in its contracted form (e.g., **is going ton't*).

For other semi-modal auxiliaries, three patterns can occur, as demonstrated by the negated forms of *need to* in these COCA examples:

- (7.26) a. We need not to overpromise.

	need ⁱ
:	not ^{Neg}
:	to ⁱ SemiAux
:	<u>overpromise</u>

- b. We need to not compromise quality simply for the sake of structure.

	need to ^{SemiAux}
:	not ^{Neg}
:	<u>compromise</u>

- c. You don't need to burden Samuel with office politics.

	do ^{PriAux} n't ^{Neg}
:	need to ^{SemiAux}
:	<u>burden</u>

Even though the negator can appear within or after the compounded semi-auxiliary, as seen in (a) and (b) above, the most frequent pattern is the pattern in (c), where the *do* auxiliary is inserted with the negator following it, and the negator may appear in its contracted form. One exception is the semi-auxiliary *had better*, where the negator occurs after the auxiliary without any *do* support:

- (7.27) You'd better not count on me. (COCA)

	'd better ^{SemiAux}
:	not ^{Neg}
:	<u>count</u>

When *had better* is negated, the negator doesn't appear in its contracted form (**had bettern't, ? hadn't better*).

The negator is not limited to negating SVPs and can be used in other phrases, including NPs, AvPs, and AjPs. For instance, on Facebook, one of my friends changed their cover photo to a black background with the message "All monsters are humans" written in white text. As a reply to that image, someone else wrote, "but not all humans are monsters," in which the negator *not* works inside a noun phrase.

- (7.28) S but^{CoConj}
- | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| (Subj | not ^{Neg} |
| : | all ^{Det} |
| : | humans ^{CN} |
|) | |
| Pred | <u>are</u> |
| : | (monsters ^{CN}) |
| | |

When the negator is used with in a noun phrase, it typically requires a quantifying determiner, such as *many*, *all*, *few*, and *every*, to immediately follow it.

The form *not* can also be the first half of a correlative coordinator that requires a form of *but* to follow with a second option. For instance, consider how the negator functions in the following example:

(7.29) I was going not to Cordner's office but instead to the Wednesday matinee performance of *Macbeth* at the Merrimont Theatre. (Bailey 2000: 136)

The best analysis of *not* in this sentence is as the introductory constituent of a correlative coordinator: *not ... but instead*. The correlative coordinator joins two PPs and indicates that the second option is the one that was chosen. A condensed form of the full coordinated PP is annotated below to demonstrate how *not* functions in this context.

```
(7.30) [      noti
      :      [      toPrep
      :      :      (ObjPrep (      CordnerPropN)sDet
      :      :      :      officeCN
      :      :      )
      :      ]
      :      but insteadi CoConj
      :      [      toPrep
      :      :      (ObjPrep theDet
      :      :      :      (Att      matineeN)
      :      :      :      performanceCN
      :      :      )
      :      ]
      ]
```

The annotation omits several modifiers from the object of the preposition in the second PP to draw attention to the use of *not ... but instead* as a correlative coordinator. Other common forms of this correlative pair are *not ... but* and *not ... but rather*.

Practice Set 7.1 Annotating SVPs

Annotate the SVPs in the sentences below, which were taken from Erica Bauermeister's (2009: 65-75) *The School of Essential Ingredients*. Remember that sentences can have more than one SVP, so be sure to identify all SVPs in each sentence.

1. Helen had been writing when Carl first met her, fifty years before ...
2. She gave him a long, considering look, during which time he decided he was getting no points for originality.
3. She clicked her pen shut and looked in his eyes.
4. "Actually," she said, "I think I'd rather be a book."
5. And when he had nodded, as if hers was the most logical statement in the world, she smiled, and Carl realized he would be sitting in that moment for the rest of his life.

6. Carl noticed that Claire was leaning forward eagerly; there was something different about her tonight—a haircut? Clothes?
 7. Helen would know, if he asked her, but Helen was focused on Lillian.
 8. Helen had not been available the cherry blossom day when Carl sat down next to her—and she wasn't available for a long time after.
 9. Wherever she wrote, whatever she did, she was his Helen, and Carl loved her as completely in the silvery light of the Northwest as he had on the bench in northern California where they had honeymooned.
 10. "I'd give you some," she teased, "but then we wouldn't have enough for the cake."
-

7.3 Adverb phrases

Along with nouns, verbs, and adjectives, adverbs are a content lexical category, which means they also act as the head word of their own phrases. Semantically, **adverbs** (Av) are difficult to define because, depending on the adverb used and the surrounding context, they can provide a variety of semantic information, including the following:

- time (when)
- place (where)
- manner (how)
- reason (why)
- speaker's attitude (stance)
- connection (linking)
- frequency (how often)
- amount (how much)

These eight semantic definitions are demonstrated by the adverbs in the following three sets of examples, all taken from COCA.

- (7.31) a. But there can't be recognition in that look, because he doesn't come here^{Av} often^{Av}. Still^{Av} he wonders if it's wise to come again^{Av} tomorrow^{Av}.
- b. Obviously^{Av}, we butchered it. Unfortunately^{Av}, I threw my teammates under the bus, unintentionally^{Av}.
- c. This type of fee is very^{Av} difficult to model; thus^{Av}, for this study, it is assumed that managers will not outperform the market. The impact of this assumption is rather^{Av} low given the number of funds using a relative benchmark. Nevertheless^{Av}, the performance fee might be slightly^{Av} underestimated.

In (a), *here* provides the place, indicating where he comes while *often* and *again* provide frequency of his arrivals. Both *still* and *tomorrow* provide information about time: *still* works with *he wonders*, indicating that his wondering continues, and *tomorrow* works with *to come*,

indicating a time frame for when he may show up again. In (b), both *obviously* and *unfortunately* provide information about the speaker's attitude: the speaker feels it is obvious that they butchered it, and he also finds it unfortunate that he threw his teammates under the bus. The adverb *unintentionally* provides information about manner, suggesting that throwing his teammates under the bus was unintentional. In (c), the three adverbs *very*, *rather*, and *slightly* provide an amount: *very* indicates the amount of difficulty, *rather* indicates how low the impact is, and *slightly* indicates how underestimated the fee might be. The adverb *thus* provides a reason, indicating that the assumption is based on the modeling difficulties. Finally, *nevertheless* serves as a connection, linking the assumed low impact to the potential underestimation of the performance fee.

Morphologically, adverbs are the only content words that do not inflect, but they do have a handful of derivations associated with them, including these four:

Derivation	Examples
-ly	<i>quickly, joyfully</i>
-ward(s)	<i>eastward, homewards</i>
-ways	<i>always, edgeways</i>
-wise	<i>clockwise, otherwise</i>

Table 7.1 Derivations associated with adverbs

The *-ly* suffix can be tricky because you have to also consider its base to identify the derived lexical category. If the base is an adjective, the *-ly* derivation creates an adverb, so the adjective *happy* becomes the adverb *happily*, and *sure* becomes *surely*. If, however, the base is a noun, the *-ly* derivation creates an adjective, so the noun *friend* becomes the adjective *friendly*, which can, somewhat awkwardly and usually only in speech, be turned into the adverb *friendlily*. Oftentimes, students are told to look for this derivational *-ly* when identifying adverbs, but that method will only allow you to identify a subset of adverbs, leaving out a host of common adverbs like *just*, *very*, *now*, *quite*, *so*, *tomorrow*, and *well*.

Adverb phrases (AvP) are often single-word phrases, consisting only of their head adverbs. The word *adverb* literally means ‘add to verb,’ but that name is a bit of a misnomer because, although adverbs do frequently modify head verbs, SVPs, or LVPs, they can also modify adjectives, other adverbs, determiners, nouns, prepositions, and entire clauses. As this list suggests, adverbs appear in a variety of syntactic environments.

Adverb phrases most frequently modify a full clause or a head verb. Adverb phrases that modify an entire clause often indicate the speaker's attitude toward the statement or a connection to or a transition from an earlier statement, and adverb phrases that modify a head verb often indicate time, place, manner, reason, or frequency. For instance, in the following COCA examples, the same AvP, *thankfully*, means something slightly different in the first two than in the second two.

- (7.32) a. Thankfully^{Av}, racist Christian extremists are today a tiny minority within American Christianity.
 b. The firefighter was not hurt by the fire or the snow, thankfully^{Av}.
 c. The back door closed, and Crystal shut her eyes thankfully^{Av}.
 d. Then, I took another swig of vodka, and dived thankfully^{Av}, furiously into Scott Fitzgerald Has Left the Garden of Allah.

In examples (a) and (b), the speaker is thankful about the information being expressed, so the speaker is thankful that racist Christian extremists are a minority in (a) and thankful the firefighter is safe in (b). However, in examples (c) and (d), the subject of the verb is doing something in a thankful manner: Crystal shut her eyes in a thankful manner in (c) while I dived in a thankful (and furious) manner into a short story in (d). And so, *thankfully* is modifying an entire clause in (a) and (b) but modifying a verb in (c) and (d).

Consider the following examples and determine which one of the COCA examples uses *clearly* to modify the entire clause, providing the speaker's attitude rather than a manner of doing something.

- (7.33) a. Gerard clearly^{Av} demonstrated interest, initiative, and innovation
 b. Clearly^{Av}, this situation in New York and similar situations elsewhere lack fairness
 c. the main point was not clearly^{Av} stated

In both (a) and (c), *clearly* modifies the verb to provide the reading 'in a clear manner' or 'with clarity.' In example (b), though, it is clear to the speaker that those situations lack fairness. When an adverb phrase modifies a verb or clause, providing information about time, manner, place, frequency, or reason, its function is **adverbial** (AvI), which is the most common function for adverb phrases. The adverb phrases *thankfully* in (7.32c) and (7.32d) and *clearly* in (7.33a) and (7.33c) take the adverbial function.

When an adverb phrase serves to link two or more clauses or to provide the speaker's attitude, the function is more likely to be that of a **discourse marker** (DiscM). The discourse marker function indicates that the phrase provides information relevant to the full discourse and not just to the specific clause in which it occurs. The adverb phrase *thankfully* in (7.32a) and (7.32b) provides the speaker's (or writer's) attitude about the situation, which is information that is external to the grammatical structure of the clause itself. Likewise, the adverb phrase *clearly* in (7.33b) takes the discourse marker function. Oftentimes, discourse-marking adverb phrases are set off from the rest of the clause with commas.

If an adverb phrase modifies an adjective or another adverb to create a gradable reading, it takes the **degree** (Deg) function. In each of the following COCA examples, an AvP modifies an adjective or another adverb.

- (7.34) a. That is going to be <very^{Av} problematic^{Aj}>.
 b. When she spoke again, her words were <horribly^{Av} garbled^{Aj}>.

- c. Our ability to /more^{Av} efficiently^{Av}/ convert sunshine into energy has happened quicker than anyone predicted
- d. Everybody was < /so^{Av} very^{Av}/ happy^{Aj}>.

In (a), *very* modifies the adjective *problematic* to indicate how problematic it is going to be, and in (b), *horribly* modifies the adjective *garbled* to indicate how garbled her words were. Both (c) and (d) demonstrate how AvPs can modify other head adverbs and introduce the bounding markers for adverb phrases in the annotation scheme: forward slashes (/ /). In (c), *more* modifies the adverb *efficiently* to indicate the degree of efficiency used in converting sunshine into energy, and *so* modifies the adverb *very* to indicate a higher degree of happiness. The larger adverb phrase *so very*, in turn, modifies the adjective *happy* to indicate a high degree of happiness.

In each of the following sentences, taken from Louisa May Alcott's (1983[1868]: 201) *Little Women*, identify the adverbs and the constituents they modify before moving on.

- (7.35) a. As Christmas approached, the usual mysteries began to haunt the house, and Jo frequently convulsed the family by proposing utterly impossible or magnificently absurd ceremonies, in honor of this unusually merry Christmas.
- b. Laurie was equally impracticable, and would have had bonfires, skyrockets, and triumphal arches, if he had had his own way.
- c. After many skirmishes and snubbings, the ambitious pair were considered effectually quenched and went about with forlorn faces, which were rather belied by explosions of laughter when the two got together.
- d. Several days of unusually mild weather fitly ushered in a splendid Christmas day.

Rather than annotating the full sentence structures for those sentences, the focus here is on annotating the adverb phrases and their mother phrase.

The first sentence includes three phrases with embedded adverb phrases, which are annotated below.

- (7.36) As Christmas approached, the usual mysteries began to haunt the house, and Jo frequently convulsed the family by proposing utterly impossible or magnificently absurd ceremonies, in honor of this unusually merry Christmas.

- a. ||_{Pred} /_{AvI} frequently^{Av}/
 : | convulsed|
 : (the^{Det}
 : : **family**^{CollN}
 :)
 ||

- b. (<Att < /Deg utterly^{Av}/
 : : : impossible^{Aj}
 : : >
 : : or^{CoCord}
 : : < /Deg magnificently^{Av}/
 : : : absurd^{Aj}
 : : >
 : >
 : **ceremonies**^{CN}
)
- c. (this^{Det}
 : <Att /Deg unusually^{Av}/
 : : merry^{Aj}
 : >
 : **Christmas**^{PropN}
)

In (a), the AvP *frequently* works as an adverbial modifier for the within the LVP to provide information about frequency of the head verb, *convulsed*. The NP in (b) features a coordinated attributive AjP, and each AjP includes an AvP with a degree function. The same type of structure is present in (c), where the AvP *unusually* provides a degree modification for the adjective *merry* in the attributive AjP *unusually merry*.

The second sentence from the set has only one adverb phrase, which is embedded inside an adjective phrase:

- (7.37) Laurie was equally impracticable, and would have had bonfires, skyrockets, and triumphal arches, if he had had his own way

< /Deg equally^{Av}/
 : impracticable^{Aj}
 >

The AvP *equally* provides a degree modification for the adjective *impracticable*. The third sentence has two adverb phrases:

- (7.38) After many skirmishes and snubbings, the ambitious pair were considered effectually quenched and went about with forlorn faces, which were rather belied by explosions of laughter when the two got together.

a. < /Deg effectually^{Av}/
 : quenched^{Aj}
 >

b. ||Pred | got
 : /Avl together^{Av}/
 ||

The degree AvP *effectually* modifies the adjective *quenched*, and the AvP *together* functions as an adverbial element in the LVP to modify the head verb *get*. The fourth and final sentence includes two AvPs:

(7.39) Several days of unusually mild weather fitly ushered in a splendid Christmas day.

a. (<Att /Deg unusually^{Av}/
 : : mild^{Aj}
 : >
 : **weather**^{NN}
)

b. ||Pred /Avl fitly^{Av}/
 : | ushered in
 : (a^{Det}
 : : <Att splendid^{Aj}>
 : : (Att **Christmas**^{PropN})
 : : **day**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

The same patterns are at work in this sentence as in the others, with a degree AvP modifying a head adjective and an adverbial AvP working within a long verb phrase.

When modifying a head verb or full clause, adverbs can occur in many environments relative to the SVP. The COCA examples below demonstrate that relative freedom by illustrating how adverbs can occur before the SVP, within the SVP, or after the SVP.

(7.40) a. Reverse mortgages traditionally have been used by older retirees

||Pred /Avl traditionally^{Av}/
 : | have^{PriAux}
 : : been^{PriAux}
 : : used
 : |
 : [by^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep <Att older^{Aj}>
 : : : **retirees**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 ||

- b. Behind closed doors the Austrian bishops have recently been working on a new pastoral document on divorce.

Pred		have ^{PriAux}
:	:	/Avl recently ^{Av/}
:	:	been ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>working on</u>
:		
:	:	
:	(	a ^{Det}
:	:	<Att new ^{Aj>}
:	:	<Att pastoral ^{Aj>}
:	:	document ^{CN}
:	:	[PostM on ^{Prep}
:	:	: (ObjPrep divorce ^{NN})
:	:	]
:	)	
:	:	

- c. For 200 million years, on any warm evening, male crickets have been eagerly rubbing their forewings together, “singing” to attract mates.

Pred		have ^{PriAux}
:	:	been ^{PriAux}
:	:	/Avl eagerly ^{Av/}
:	:	<u>rubbing</u>
:		
:	:	
:	(	their ^{Det}
:	:	forewings ^{CN}
:	)	
:	:	
:	/	together ^{Av/}

- d. The characteristic behaviors of underachieving gifted students have been studied extensively since the 1950s

Pred		have ^{PriAux}
:	:	been ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>studied</u>
:		
:	/Avl	extensively ^{Av/}
:	[	since ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
:	:	: 1950s ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	]	

These examples demonstrate that adverb phrases can occur (a) before the SVP, (b) in between auxiliaries within the SVP, (c) in between an auxiliary and the head verb within the SVP, or (d) directly after the SVP.⁴⁶

Adverbs can, at times, modify a noun or determiner within a noun phrase. Some nouns are more willing to work with adverbs than others, so the ability for adverbs to modify a noun depends on the noun being used. Semantically, these nouns most often denote time or location, such as *year* or *street*. For instance, consider the NP *three years ago*, where the head noun *years* is post-modified by the adverb phrase *ago*. As another example, in the NP *two streets over*, the head noun *streets* is post-modified by the adverb phrase *over*.

- (7.41) (**three**^{Det}
 : **years**^{CN}
 : /_{PostM} **ago**^{Av}/
)

When AvPs function as a post-modifier for a head noun, they appear in the same location as any other post-modifier.

AvPs can also modify prepositions in examples like *just over the bridge* and *right at noon*, and these preposition-modifying adverb phrases are often limited to providing spatial or temporal relationships.

- (7.42) a. [/Avl just^{Av/}
: over^{Prep}
: (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
: : **bridge**^{CN}
:)
]
- b. [/Avl right^{Av/}
: at^{Prep}
: (Obj^{Prep} **noon**^{NN})
]

As in these PPs, the AvP precedes the head preposition when modifying it. In (a), *just* provides a spatial modification of the preposition *over*, and *right* in (b) provides temporal modification, indicating how close to noon something will occur.

⁴⁶ In some grammars, *not* is lumped into the same category as adverbs because it can occur in similar syntactic environments, including in between an auxiliary and head verb. However, unlike adverbs, unless the head verb is a form of *be*, negators require *do*-auxiliary support when no auxiliary is present. Furthermore, the negator *not* does not have the same degree of freedom with placement, which is why it doesn't quite fit into the true adverb category.

Finally, AvPs can provide degree modification within NPs, as in *nearly all the students*, where *nearly* functions as a degree modifier for the quantifying determiner *all* to limit the amount being indicated.

(7.43) (/Deg nearly^{Av}/
 : all^{Det}
 : the^{Det}
 : **students**^{CN}
)

Degree AvPs within NPs require a quantifying determiner or quantifying head pronoun to follow it. An example of a quantifying pronoun is provided below:

(7.44) Luckily I knew quite a lot about pot-bellied pigs.

S /DM luckily^{Av}/
 (Subj I^{Pro})
 ||Pred | knew
 : (/Deg quite^{Av}/
 : : **a lot**^{Pro}
 : : [PostM about^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep <Att pot-bellied^{Aj}>
 : : : : **pigs**^{CN}
 : : :)
 : :]
 :)
 ||

In this sentence, the AvP *quite* provides a degree modification of the head pronoun *a lot*. While AvPs can modify nouns, prepositions, and determiners, these instances are much more semantically restricted and much less frequent than instances of AvPs modifying verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and entire clauses.

Adverbs can be difficult to define because they are so diverse and because there is not a single set of definitions, uses, or syntactic environments that can work for every adverb. This difficulty in defining adverbs has led to the adverb category being referred to as the “trash can” category: if you come across a word whose lexical category you can’t figure out, it’s probably an adverb. In other words, some people identify adverbs through a process of elimination, where, if all other lexical category possibilities have been eliminated, the word is tossed into the adverb bin. While that method can work in some situations, it’s helpful to have a foundation in understanding what roles and meanings can be provided by adverbs, especially since later chapters build on that foundation by exploring how constituents other than adverb phrases can take the adverbial function and by investigating words often confused with adverbs, such as verb particles.

7.4 Inserts and vocatives

A lexical category that can, at times, overlap with adverbs is **inserts**, which Biber et al. (1999: 93-94) define as a larger category that includes the following subcategories:

- interjections (*oh!*) and hesitators (*um, er*)
- greetings/farewells (*hello*) and attention signals (*hey*)
- discourse markers (*right, well*)
- response elicitors (*you know*) and responses (*yeah, okay*)
- thanks (*thank you*), politeness markers (*please*), and apologies (*sorry*)
- expletives (*damn*)

A common thread throughout these inserts is that no meaning is added to clause itself. Instead, inserts are often indicative of larger situational context (i.e., pragmatic context), so they are important for understanding the discourse and its participants, but they do not carry morphological or syntactic information that plays a role in the grammatical structure of a sentence.

Inserts are more frequent in spoken language or in written language meant to imitate spoken language; the following example comes from a news interview and includes three inserts:

(7.45) Well, the airports try to keep the birds away, but, you know, this was probably a mile or two away from La Guardia, because, you know, birds are free to fly.
(COCA)

The utterance opens with *well*, which is a discourse marker; like a linking adverb, it often appears at the beginning of the clause and, when written, is separated from the rest of the clause with a comma. However, while linking adverbs provide a direct connection to a previous clause and/or information about the speaker's stance or awareness of connected information, discourse-marking inserts are more likely to show how a speaker feels in that moment, regardless of what they're communicating. In this example, *well* can be indicative of how the speaker feels during the interview as he tries to explain problems with keeping birds away from airports and airplanes. (This interview occurred right after Captain Sullenberger landed on the Hudson after a bird strike.) The *well* doesn't help grammatically connect the material in the upcoming clause to anything said before it but instead is a pragmatic or discourse signal. The speaker goes on to use two instances of *you know*, which are, in this case, an insert rather than a part of the clause structure. As an insert, the *you know* can be deleted without grammatically changing the meaning or structure of the sentence.

The annotation scheme labels the lexical category as *Insert* and uses the ^ symbol for a bounding marker to reflect its status as an inserted special phrase that does not play a role in the grammatical structure of the clause as a whole. Multi-word inserts (*I mean, thank you, you know*) are treated as compounds when they are annotated: ^ you know^{Insert}^. This annotation helps distinguish between the instances where, for example, *you know* is acting as a grammatical part of the larger clause (e.g., *You know how to fly*) versus an insert (e.g., *You know, I learned how to*

fly when I was pretty young). Because so many inserts provide information about the larger discourse or pragmatic context, they take the function of a discourse marker. As for their structural alignment, inserts appear at the sentence level of annotation, alongside the subject and predicate, as seen in the following example:

(7.46) I you know call home (COCA)

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})
	^ _{DiscM}	you know ^{Insert} ^
	_{Pred}	<u>call</u>
	:	(home ^{NN})

In this example, the insert *you know* appears at an even margin with the subject *I* and its predicate *call home*.

Another similar function to discourse markers is the **vocative** (Voc), or the use of someone's name, title, or term of endearment to get their attention or to indicate they are the addressee (e.g., *It's good to see you again, **Delilah** or **Dude**, where's my car?*). The vocative function requires a noun phrase. Like inserts, the vocative use of a noun phrase does not grammatically add information to the structure of the clause and so is aligned at the sentence level with the subject and verb.

(7.47) Maureen, we've been through this. (COCA)

S	(Voc	Maureen ^{PropN})
	(Subj	we ^{Pro})
	_{Pred}	've ^{PriAux}
	:	: <u>been</u>
	:	
	:	[through ^{Prep}
	:	: (ObjPrep this ^{Pro})
	:	]

In this example, *Maureen* indicates who is being addressed yet plays no grammatical function within the clause (i.e., it's not a part of the subject or predicate).

Practice Set 7.2 Annotating AvPs, inserts, and vocatives

Annotate the following sentences, which were taken from *Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane* by Suzanne Collins (2004: 53-56). Gregor and Solovet are characters' names in the novel.

1. the roaches never would have run off with her.
 2. But then, the rats could have reached her first.
 3. He finally gave up and took a walk around the palace.⁴⁷
 4. They were somewhat muffled by the curtain, but still audible
 5. Usually, she spoke in a gentle, stately voice.
 6. He pushed away the sword, Solovet.
 7. maybe somebody in the room enjoyed fighting.
 8. Oh, the prophecies are often misleading.
 9. “He did very well last time with no common weapon”
 10. Gregor retreated from the doorway quickly and somehow made it back to his room.⁴⁸
-

⁴⁷ Original: He finally gave up and decided to take a walk around the palace.

⁴⁸ Original: Gregor retreated from the doorway as quickly as possible and somehow made it back to his room.

Terms introduced in Chapter 7

Lexical forms

adverb (Av)

auxiliaries

modal auxiliary (ModAux)

primary auxiliary (PriAux)

semi-modal auxiliary (SemiAux)

insert (Insert)

negator (Neg)

Phrasal form

adverb phrase (AvP)

short verb phrase (SVP)

Functions

adverbial (AvI)

degree (Deg)

discourse marker (DiscM)

vocative (Voc)

Chapter 7 Exercises

Exercise 7.1

The following sentences were taken from *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris (1999: 176-177). Annotate the sentences.

1. She stopped abruptly and looked at her watch.
2. “I’ve talked too much”
3. “I won’t have any time for any chocolate”
4. Her fists dug repeatedly into her stomach.
5. “You have to stay here.”
6. She returned my look for a moment, half-defiant.
7. “He’ll say things, he’ll twist everything—”
8. Then Joséphine sat down, very deliberately on one of my red stools, put her face against the counter, and cried silently.
9. Instead I went into the kitchen and very slowly prepared the *chocolat espresso*.
10. It’s a small kind of magic, I know, but it sometimes works.

Exercise 7.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. SVP with a head verb only
2. SVP with primary auxiliary
3. SVP with modal auxiliary
4. SVP with semi-modal auxiliary
5. SVP with two or more auxiliaries

6. SVP with negation
7. AvP functioning as a degree modifier
8. AvP functioning as a discourse marker
9. Insert
10. Vocative NP

Exercise 7.3

Some writing guides, including Stephen King's *On Writing*, advise writers to avoid the use of adverbs (a quote from King showing his view of adverbs is included at the start of this chapter). Select an excerpt of at least 250 words from one of a text you enjoyed reading, whether it's a novel, poem, short story, essay, or op-ed piece. In the excerpt, highlight all adverbs.

After highlighting the adverbs, copy the text and, on the copied text, revise it by removing all those highlighted words.

Compare the original version to your edited version, and answer the following questions in at least one paragraph:

- How many adverbs did you identify in the text?
- Which version do you prefer, and why?
- Go back to the opening quotes from this chapter: which quote do you agree with, and why? Connect your answer to the analysis of your text.
- Why do you think writing guides often warn writers to not use adverbs?

Chapter 8: TMAV

*You keep sayin' you've got somethin' for me
Somethin' you call love, but confess
You've been a-messin' where you shouldn'ta been a-messin'
And now someone else is gettin' all your best*

*These boots are made for walkin'
And that's just what they'll do
One of these days these boots are gonna walk all over you*

*You keep lyin' when you oughta be truthin'
And you keep losin' when you oughta not bet
You keep samin' when you oughta be a-changin'
Now what's right is right, but you ain't been right yet*

*You keep playin' where you shouldn't be playin'
And you keep thinkin' that you'll never get burned, ha!
I just found me a brand new box of matches, yeah
And what he knows you ain't had time to learn*

—Nancy Sinatra, “These Boots are Made for Walking” (written by Lee Hazlewood)

8.1 Tense and mood

Tense, mood, aspect, and voice (TMAV) are grammatical features expressed by the short verb phrase. Brief introductions to those four features are below:

- Tense helps you figure out *when* the head verb occurred/occurs and is marked either directly on the head verb or on the first primary or semi-modal auxiliary.
- Mood helps you figure out *if* the head verb should, could, or would occur and requires a modal or semi-modal auxiliary.
- Aspect tells you whether the head verb is complete or ongoing and requires a primary auxiliary followed by a participle form.
- Voice refers to the relationship between the SVP and its subject: in the active voice, the subject is both the grammatical and semantic subject of the verb, but in the passive voice, the subject is only the grammatical subject. Passive voice requires a primary auxiliary followed by a past participle form.

While all SVPs are either active or passive voice, not all SVPs inflect for tense, mood, and/or aspect. A **finite**, or fully inflected, clause requires a short verb phrase that is marked for tense and/or modality and that agrees with an expressed subject. This section focuses on tense and mood of finite clauses.

Tense helps identify when the verb's state or activity occurred on a timeline. If a finite SVP consists only of the head verb, the verb carries the tense; however, if the SVP includes a primary or semi-modal auxiliary, the first auxiliary carries the tense. Consider the following COCA examples.

- (8.1) a. My name lollygags on his tongue like something he can't get enough of.

|^{Pres} lollygags|

- b. On rocky islands, sea lions, adults and pups, lollygagged in the sun.

|^{Past} lollygagged|

- c. Benn didn't lollygag.

Past	did ^{PriAux} n't ^{Neg}
:	<u>lollygag</u>

In (a) and (b), the head verb is the entire SVP, and tense is directly marked on the verb: *lollygags* is present tense while *lollygagged* is past tense. In (c), though, a primary auxiliary precedes head verb as part of its SVP, so tense is shifted to the primary auxiliary *did*. In the annotation scheme, the tense of the SVP is indicated with a superscript inside the opening SVP bounding marker, as demonstrated by the examples above. When tense is carried by the head verb or by the auxiliary *do*, as in these examples, it is referred to as a **simple tense**; therefore, example (a) is in the simple present tense, and (b) and (c) are in the simple past tense.

English has two grammatical tenses, past and present, and they are indicated by inflections on the head verb or first primary or semi-modal auxiliary in a short verb phrase. Grammatical tense does not always match semantic tense because you can use the two simple tenses for a variety of purposes, and not all those purposes line up with events on a real-world timeline. For instance, consider the underlined present tense SVPs in the following COCA examples.

- (8.2) a. I'll be able to tell you more when its full report arrives in about five minutes.
 b. Kelly Harris, 32, jogs on Sunday mornings.
 c. I play the bassoon. And I love every second of it.
 d. Carder (1990) argues that music educators continually need to review "what we teach and why" (p. v).

In (a), the present tense form *arrives* indicates an event that will occur in the future because the report has not yet arrived but should arrive about five minutes in the future. The SVP in (b), *jogs*, indicates a habit, which means it covers both the past and the future: in the past, Kelly has regularly jogged on Sundays, and he plans on continuing that habit on future Sundays. The SVP *play* in (c) indicates an ability rather than something that is happening right now, so it is similar to a stative interpretation of an otherwise dynamic verb. The stative verb *love* in (c) represents an ongoing state of love. Finally, the example in (d) demonstrates the ability to use present tense verbs, such as *argues*, in the historic present tense, which allows you to use a present tense verb to talk about the past. Carder argued for music educators reviewing their practices in 1990, yet a paper written much later frames it as a present tense activity with the form *argues*.

For dynamic verbs, the present tense form rarely expresses something happening in the present moment, except in genres like sports commentary:

- (8.3) and Katie Bell of Gryffindor dodges Pucey, ducks Montague... and she throws to Johnson, Angelina Johnson takes the Quaffle, she's past Warrington. (Rowling 2003: 410)

This example was taken from the sports commentary provided by Lee Jordan during a Quidditch match between Gryffindor and Slytherin in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Lee provides in-the-moment commentary about what's happening in the game and uses the simple present tense of verbs to represent them: *dodges*, *ducks*, *throws*, *takes*, and *(i)s*. Outside of genres like sports commentary, it would sound odd to walk around narrating our day in the simple present tense.

The figures that illustrate tense and aspect use the following image to represent a semantic or logical timeline:



Figure 8.1 Semantic timeline

The vertical line in the middle represents the current moment, and the area to the left of the vertical line represents the past while the area to the right of the line represents the future. The basic potential interpretations of the present tense are illustrated on that timeline below:

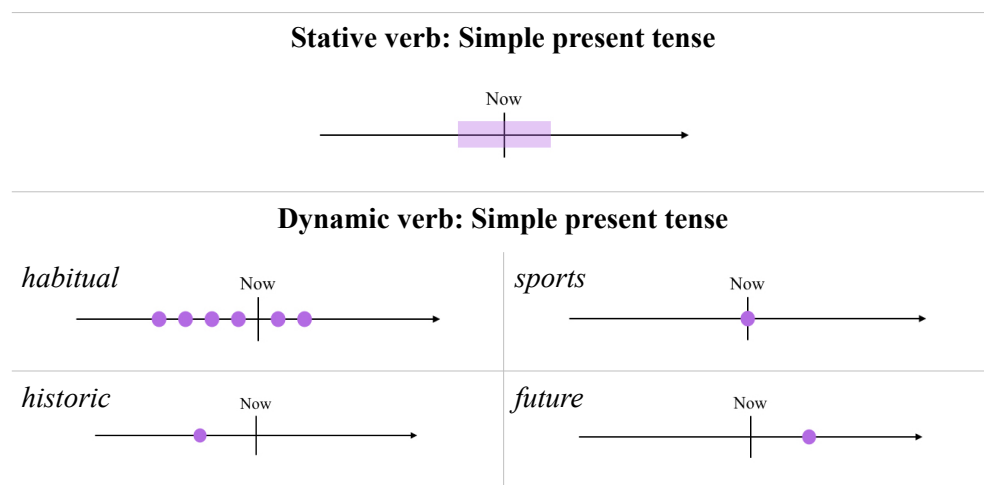


Figure 8.2 Interpretations of simple present tense verbs

Present tense stative verbs represent a state or condition that began before the moment of speaking or writing, continue through that moment, and will likely continue into the future until something happens to change the state. For instance, if I say, “I am hungry,” my state of hunger began sometime before I made that statement, and my hungry state will continue until I’ve eaten enough to have satisfied that hunger. Some states have no foreseeable end in sight, such as those indicated by statements like “I am an American.” My state of being American has been present since my birth and will likely continue throughout my entire life.

Dynamic verbs have variable meanings in the present tense, each of which is represented with dots to show that events or activities are being represented for these verbs. The habitual interpretation indicates that events matching the verb’s activity have taken place regularly in the

past and will continue to take place in the future; for instance, if I say, “I walk to school,” the understanding is that I have regularly walked to school in the past and plan on continuing that practice. Sports commentary is the only interpretation of the dynamic verb happening in this moment (e.g., *he shoots, he scores!*). The historic present represents an event that occurred in the past. In many genres/registers, this semantic representation tends to be represented by the simple past tense, but some genres, such as academic writing, are more likely to use historic present to show the relevance of that past event to the current argument being made. Sometimes narratives, whether fiction or non-fiction, are told entirely in historic present, again as a way of bringing relevance of past events to the current situation, such as eyewitness accounts. Finally, present tense can be used to represent future events (e.g., *Joey plays Dr. Drake Romoray in an episode next week*). The appropriate context must be provided either in the sentence itself or in the surrounding discourse for a future interpretation to be made, such as phrases like *next week*, *tomorrow*, and *in five minutes*.

The figure below provides common interpretations of a verb in the simple past tense:

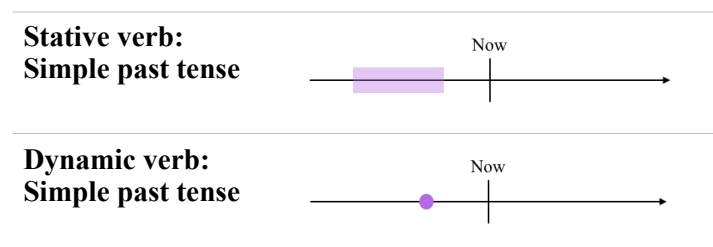


Figure 8.3 Interpretations of simple past tense verbs

A stative verb in the simple past tense indicates that the state used to be true for a past time frame but is no longer true for the current moment (e.g., *I was hungry*). The most common meaning for dynamic verbs in simple past is that an event occurred a single time at some point in the past. With context, though, a habitual past tense reading is also possible: *I walked to school every day*. Phrases like *every day* provide a habitual interpretation, making it clear that my walking to school happened on a regular basis in the past but is no longer occurring.

As a marker of a simple tense, the primary auxiliary *do* has two basic uses: (1) the emphatic *do* and (2) the “dummy *do*.” The emphatic *do* puts emphasis on the head verb:

(8.4) you *do* create your own reality, which is a very powerful thought. (COCA)

Pres	doPriAux
:	<u>create</u>

The use of *do* before the head verb in this example creates an emphatic reading of the head verb *create*. The “dummy *do*” is a placeholder to carry the tense for many negated SVPs, as in the COCA examples below:

- (8.5) a. Damien, however, doesn't see those scars.

Pres	doesPriAux n'tNeg
:	<u>see</u>

- b. I do not think that my art is sick.

Pres	doPriAux notNeg
:	<u>think</u>

- c. Fortunately he didn't mind a little pain now and then.

Past	didPriAux n'tNeg
:	<u>mind</u>

Although *do* carries the tense in these examples, it doesn't provide any other additional information about the SVP or add any semantic meaning, such as emphasis. Its sole purpose is to carry the tense.

While primary auxiliaries can inflect for tense, providing clues about when the head verb occurred, modal auxiliaries indicate grammatical **mood**,⁴⁹ providing clues about what conditions need to be met in order for the head verb to occur. Most finite SVPs carry either tense or mood, but semi-modals are special in that they provide both tense and mood. The three major categories of semantic modality expressed by modals and semi-modals are the following:

- volition, prediction, future (VPF)
- ability, possibility, permission (APP)
- advice, obligation, necessity (AON)

The abbreviations provided after each category are the ones used throughout this chapter in discussions of modality. The table below provides commonly used modals and semi-modals for each of these categories.

⁴⁹ The line between the terms *mood* and *modality* are often blurred; some scholars use them interchangeably while others use them to differentiate between syntactic mood and semantic modality (i.e., *mood* refers to a syntactic or grammatical feature while *modality* refers to the semantic meaning being expressed by grammatical mood). In this book, I will use *mood* when referring to identifying the grammatical information on a verb (in TMAV) but *modality* when referring to the meanings being expressed.

Modality	Examples
VPF	<i>will, would, be going to (BE gonna), be fixing (BE finna) to, want to (wanna), shall</i>
APP	<i>can, could, may, might</i>
AON	<i>must, should, have to (hafta), need to, ought to (oughta), be supposed to, have got to (HAVE gotta), got to (gotta), had better</i>

Table 8.1 Commonly used modals and semi-modals for each modality

Some grammars further subcategorize uses of modals within those three categories, thus labeling one SVP as expressing ability but another as expressing permission. Subcategorization distinguishes the different interpretations possible for a single word and helps to explain why the following well-known scenario is possible:

- (8.6) a. Can I go to the bathroom?
 b. I don't know. Can you?

The speaker in (a) *can* to indicate permission, but the speaker in (b) uses *can* to indicate ability.

Differences in interpretation result from modals having two major types of meaning: deontic (intrinsic) and epistemic (extrinsic). Biber et al. (1999: 485) write that **deontic** (or intrinsic) modality “refers to actions and events that humans (or other agents) directly control: meanings relating to permission, obligation, or volition (or intention).” **Epistemic** (or extrinsic) modality, on the other hand, “refers to the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood: possibility, necessity, or prediction” (485). The word *epistemic* is used to refer to knowledge or logic, so epistemic modals indicate logical conclusions or knowledge of situations. If you look outside and see the ground is wet, you might say, “It must have rained.” By saying that, you are not indicating an obligation for it to rain but are drawing a logical conclusion and stating the likelihood that it rained.

Within the three larger categories of meaning, each category has a deontic interpretation, an epistemic interpretation, and an interpretation that either ambiguously straddles the line between deontic and epistemic or does not fit nicely into either.

Modality	Deontic/Intrinsic	Epistemic/Extrinsic	Ambiguous/Neither
VPF	volition	prediction	future
APP	permission	possibility	ability
AON	obligation	necessity	advice

Table 8.2 Deontic and epistemic interpretations

Depending on its context, a single modal can be used in different interpretations. Going back to the discussion of the modal *can*, consider the COCA examples below, which are annotated to demonstrate that modality is indicated by a superscripted *Mod* in the annotation scheme.

- (8.7) a. You can leave now. = permission

|Mod can^{ModAux}
: leave
|

- b. She can be here in an hour. = possibility

|Mod can^{ModAux}
: be
|

- c. You can speak Zulu, PK? = ability

|Mod can^{ModAux}
: speak
|

In (a), the speaker grants the addressee permission to leave, but the speaker in (b) uses *can* to express a possibility. Relying on previous knowledge, the speaker comes to a logical conclusion about the time it will take for her to arrive. The speaker in (c) uses *can* to express an ability because he is not giving PK permission to speak Zulu, nor is he questioning a possibility of speaking Zulu. The ability interpretation can be ambiguous because it draws from both deontic and epistemic interpretations: if you have the ability, then you likely have permission to use it, and there exists a possibility of you using it.

Older prescriptive grammars of English provide particular uses of modals as they relate to deontic and epistemic interpretations. For instance, some grammars state that when the subject of *shall* is a first-person singular subject (*I*), *shall* is epistemic and represents a prediction; however, when the subject is anything else, *shall* is deontic and represents a command, expressing volition. The related modal *will*, on the other hand, expresses the opposite: when the subject is first-person singular, it expresses a command-like volition or desire while all other subjects result in *will* being used as a prediction. You may have heard of a scenario that involves a man who fell or jumped into a river and yelled out to passersby, and his choice of modals determines whether he is crying out for help or expressing a desire to drown.

- (8.8) a. I will drown; you shall not save me. = suicidal intent/desire to drown
b. I shall drown; you will not save me. = prediction/cry for help

The examples above are, at best, confusing, and these prescriptive rules for *will* and *shall* don't match native speakers' and writers' use of them. According to Biber et al. (1999: 496), *shall* is disappearing from modern English usage, but when it is used—regardless of the subject—it

expresses volition. *Will* is overwhelmingly preferred and is used to represent all three possible interpretations: volition, prediction, and future.

Most dialects of English have a restriction of one pure modal auxiliary per SVP unless coordination is involved for the two modals, as in the Miranda Warning.

(8.9) Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

Mod	can ^{ModAux}	and ^{CoConj}	will ^{ModAux}
:	be ^{PriAux}		
:	<u>used</u>		

The coordination of *can* and *will* indicates that the SVP expresses two distinct meanings at once: whatever you say has a possibility of being used against you (i.e., it's legal for that to happen), and, moreover, whatever you say is going to be used against you (i.e., it will happen in the future). Without a coordinator, though, dialects generally restrict SVPs to one modal.

Many U.S. Southern dialects, though, allow multiple modals, as in these examples from COCA:

- (8.10) a. She might could have a live interview.
 b. actual soldiers are a good sign that Saddam's regime and military might could crumble from within
 c. They might can win a round, but that's it.
 d. I might can fit them in for a few minutes.
 e. But I think there are some ways we may can get there.
 f. You may can go to these schools
 g. some of the Iraqi civilians may could have been—or, possibly could have been involved in this attack
 h. I consider where each person has come from, what their talent levels are, where they may could have come from, and where they're going

These examples were taken from the spoken register, specifically from spoken interviews (e.g., *Dateline*, news programs), rather than fiction books, where the use of a double modal may be the result of a particular effect the writer is trying to achieve. Furthermore, as the content of the examples suggests, many of them come from interviews with people involved in politics and military. My selection of these is not random. Some people have the misconception that double modal use is either rural and rustic or unintelligent and uneducated, but double modals are a feature of widely spoken dialects in the U.S. As such, the only information about the speaker that is communicated by the use of double modals is that the speaker is likely from a southern region. The use of double modals says nothing of intelligence or levels of education. Double modals tend to follow these patterns:

- It typically only involves the pairing of *may/might* and *can/could*, and, when it does, the *may/might* appears first.
- The most common combination is *might could*, with *may could* being the least common.
- The combination creates a dual reading of ability and possibility.

For instance, in (a), the speaker is expressing that she has been put into a situation where she has the ability to have a live interview, and there is a possibility she might do it.

Another use of double modals comes from regional dialects that allow *might* with *ought to*,⁵⁰ as in the following examples, which are also taken from the spoken register in COCA:

- (8.11) a. But it has been suggested today that Rudy Giuliani might ought to send him a campaign contribution
- b. how long has this sort of transfer been going on that we might ought to have been more concerned about?
- c. If evil is so easily accomplishable, can good be done as well by a very few individuals that might ought to act at this moment and are not?

The combination of *might ought to* is not as widespread, but its use generally indicates a dual reading of possibility and advice; thus, in (a), there is a possibility that Giuliani may send a contribution, but the speaker also suggests that perhaps he should send one.

Semi-modals, as mentioned earlier, express modality but also inflect for tense. The first word in the semi-modal's compound carries the tense, as demonstrated by these COCA examples:

- (8.12) a. I'm gonna make you the envy of the crowd!

	PresMod	'm gonna	SemiAux
:		<u>make</u>	

- b. The show needed to have an ending.

	PastMod	needed to	SemiAux
:		<u>have</u>	

⁵⁰ The auxiliary *ought (to)* is treated as a modal auxiliary in some dialects but a semi-modal in others. For instance, consider the following examples:

- You oughtn't play games you're bound to lose. (COCA)
- she ought not to draw more attention to herself than is necessary. (COCA)
- You don't ought to go putting blazers through the mangle. (*GoogleBooks*)
- we'd ought to have fewer storms this year than we would normally have. (COCA)

Requiring the use of *do* for negation, as in (c), and allowing *ought to* within a tensed SVP, as in (d), are indicators that the dialect treats *ought to* as a semi-modal.

- c. Everybody has to live with that.

PresMod	has to	SemiAux
:	<u>live</u>	

- d. You know, you have got to give him credit.

PresMod	have got to	SemiAux
:	<u>give</u>	

Since the SVP inflects for tense and expresses a modality, both labels appear in the TMAV superscript. In more casual registers, most semi-modals are shortened: *going to* often appears as *gonna*, as in (a), *have to* is often pronounced *hafta*, and *have got to* shows up as *gotta* without the *have*. In southern dialects, the semi-modal *be fixing to* can be shortened to *(be) finna*: *I'm finna go* or *He finna leave*.

Because semi-modals are of a slightly different category than modals, it is more likely to come across examples in any dialect of a modal being followed by a semi-modal:

- (8.13) a. she would need to relocate (COCA)

Mod	would	ModAux
:	need to	SemiAux
:	<u>relocate</u>	

- b. I don't think we should have to put them in that position (COCA)

Mod	should	ModAux
:	have to	SemiAux
:	<u>put</u>	

Example (a) demonstrates that the modal and semi-modal can express different modalities, where *would* expresses a prediction (VPF) while *need to* expresses a necessity (AON). However, in (b), both the modal and semi-modal express obligation or necessity (AON). English also allows more than one semi-modal in a single SVP:

- (8.14) I'm going to need to know what you're wearing. (COCA)

PresMod	'm going to	SemiAux
:	need to	SemiAux
:	<u>know</u>	

In this SVP, *am* inflects for the present tense, the full semi-modal *be going to* expresses VPF modality, and the semi-modal *need to* expresses AON modality. Doubling up on these modals and semi-modals offers speakers an efficient way to incorporate more meaning into a single SVP.

8.2 Aspect and voice

While tense refers to a time frame, grammatical **aspect** indicates whether the head verb is ongoing or completed. English marks two major grammatical aspects, perfect and progressive, both of which are marked in addition to tense and/or mood. Therefore, a short verb phrase can be present perfect, past progressive, modal perfect progressive, and so on. While tense or mood is required for finite clauses, grammatical aspect is not. When an SVP is marked for grammatical aspect, it must follow one of the patterns specified in this section.

The **perfect** aspect marks a verb's completion, indicating that the state or event being expressed by the verb is completed. The grammatical form of the perfect aspect requires the primary auxiliary *have* followed by a past participle. If the SVP is tensed, the tense provides a reference point for the state of completion of the head verb.

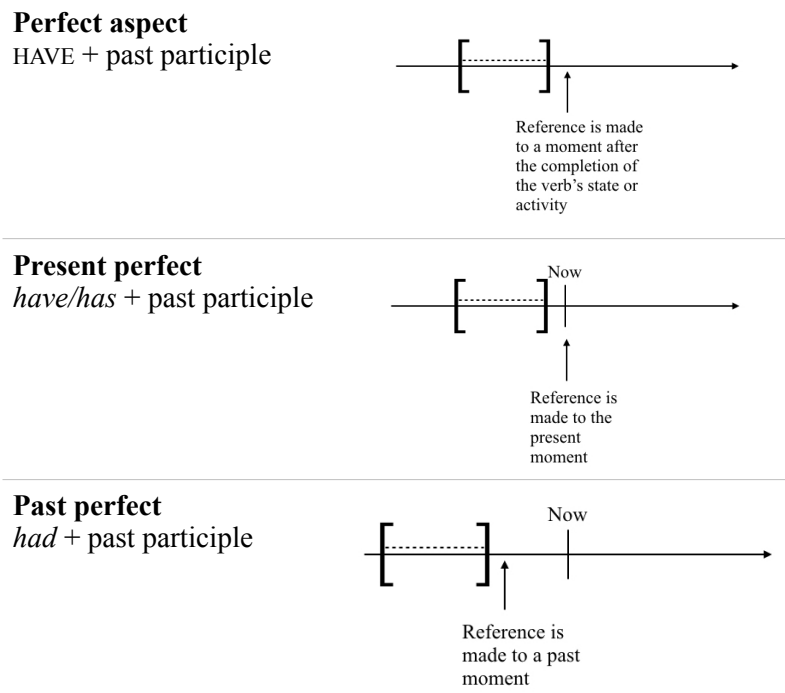


Figure 8.4 Perfect aspect

If an SVP is in the present perfect, the action or state indicated by the head verb is complete before the moment of speaking or writing; if it is in the past perfect, the action or state indicated by the head verb is complete before some referenced moment in the past.

For example, each COCA example below has two SVPs, and one SVP per sentence is grammatically marked for aspect.

- (8.15) a. she has read Archy and Mehitabel and knows that sometimes even a rat can type.

PresPerf	has	PriAux
:	<u>read</u>	
Pres	<u>knows</u>	

- b. I read the other day that I had slid into the Peninsula Hotel...

Past	<u>read</u>	
PastPerf	had	PriAux
:	<u>slid</u>	

In (a), *has read* indicates that, as of the present moment, she has finished reading Archy and Mehitabel, and the simple present on *knows* indicates a state of knowledge that exists during the present moment. The set-up of the *has read* SVP occurring before the SVP *knows* suggests that her reading Archy and Mehitabel is a precursor to her knowing that a rat can type. In (b), *read* is in simple past tense to indicate the reading took place in the past, and the action expressed by *had slid* was completed prior to that event of reading.

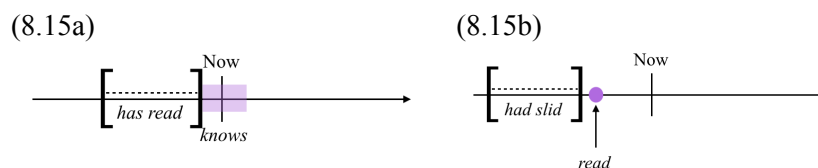


Figure 8.5 Visual representations of (8.15)

As the examples in Figures 8.4 and 8.5 demonstrate, a short verb phrase in the present perfect indicates that the verb occurred in the past, yet its grammatical tense is present.⁵¹

Modals can co-occur with grammatical aspect, and, if a pure modal is the first auxiliary in the SVP, the SVP will not be marked for tense but for modality, as in the example below.

- (8.16) he won't have changed the entry to the secret chamber (COCA)

ModPerf	wo	ModAux	n't	Neg
:	have	PriAux		
:	<u>changed</u>			

⁵¹ This division between grammatical features and semantic meaning exists for the perfect aspect in general: the simple past is semantically perfective because it indicates a completed action or state; however, the simple past is not an example of grammatical perfect aspect, which requires *have* + past participle.

The modal *will*, which is shortened to *wo-* for its negated contracted form, carries the VPF modality; the combination of *have* followed by the past participle *changed* creates the perfect aspect.

The **progressive** aspect indicates that the verb's action or state is an ongoing one, and, if tensed, the tense of the first primary auxiliary indicates the point of reference for the ongoing action/state. The progressive aspect is formed by the primary auxiliary *be* followed by a present participle. The present progressive in English most commonly indicates an activity of a dynamic verb that is going on in the moment of speaking or writing (i.e., English uses present progressive in much the same way other languages use the simple present tense).

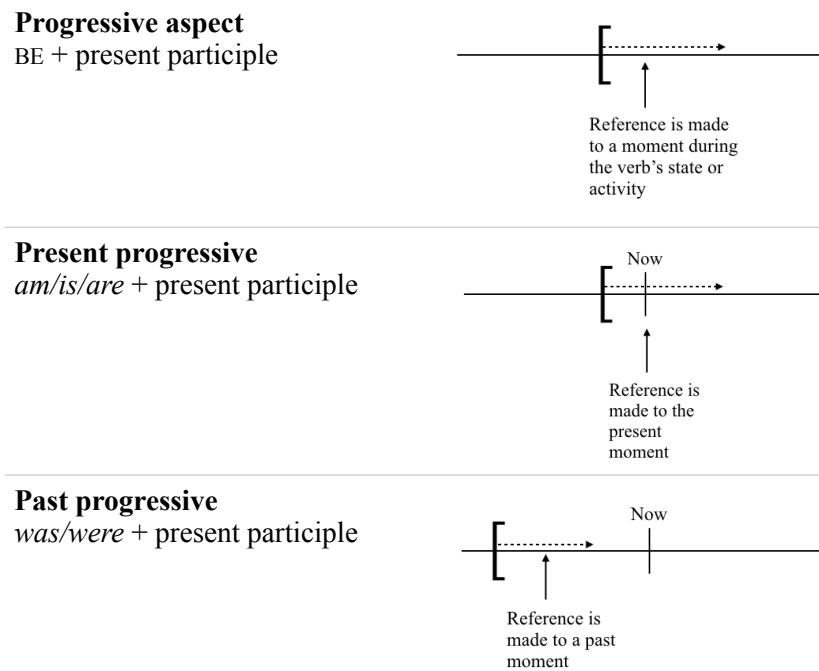


Figure 8.6 Progressive aspect

The following examples, taken from COCA, illustrate the progressive aspect:

- (8.17) a. Perhaps she is seeking revenge against Zeus

|PresProg isPriAux
 : seeking
 |

- b. She was playing him like a fiddle.

|PastProg wasPriAux
 : playing
 |

- c. on one block of a city, the Marines can be running a humanitarian operation

|ModProg can^{ModAux}
: be^{PriAux}
: running
|

- d. She patted him on the cheek, still angry that he was playing games with her interview.

|Past patted|

|PastProg was^{PriAux}
: playing
|

Sometimes, as in (a) through (c), no overt referential moment is provided, leaving the reader to interpret the referential moment through context. Present progressive, as in (a), typically implies the verb is ongoing as of right now, and past progressive, as in (b), often indicates it was ongoing during some past time frame. Because (c) carries mood rather than tense, the running could take place under the right conditions, which would need to be provided in the larger context of the discourse. In (d), a second overt point of reference is made: *was playing* is the ongoing event that began before and overlaps with the action from the verb *patted*:

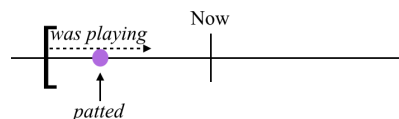


Figure 8.7 Visual representation of (8.17d)

As Figure 8.7 demonstrates, grammatical aspect often provides a relationship or connection among different SVPs.

In all the figures for the progressive aspect, notice that there is an opening square bracket to show the verb's activity or state has begun, but there is no closing bracket: the progressive aspect—even in the past—doesn't imply completion. Consider the following examples, which are modified versions of earlier examples:

- (8.18) a. She was playing him like a fiddle and still is.
b. She was playing him like a fiddle but no longer is.
c. *She has read the book and still is.

The examples in (a) and (b) demonstrate that the past progressive form *was playing* allows for ambiguity as to whether it has continued all the way through the present moment. In (a), the action indicated by the head verb has continued through the present while, in (b), it has not and, thus, was completed at some point. The progressive aspect allows for that ambiguity but the perfect aspect does not, as seen in (c). If a verb is completed, its meaning cannot be stretched to be interpreted as ongoing.

The two grammatical aspects can come together for a third variation: the **perfect progressive** provides a way to emphasize that during a particular time frame an activity or state persisted (i.e., was ongoing) but is completed as of some reference point, whether that moment is in the past or present. The perfect progressive is always formed in this order: *HAVE + been +* present participle. The beginning two primary auxiliaries mark perfect aspect, with *have* followed by the past participle *been*. The progressive, then, is marked by a form of *be* followed by a present participle form.

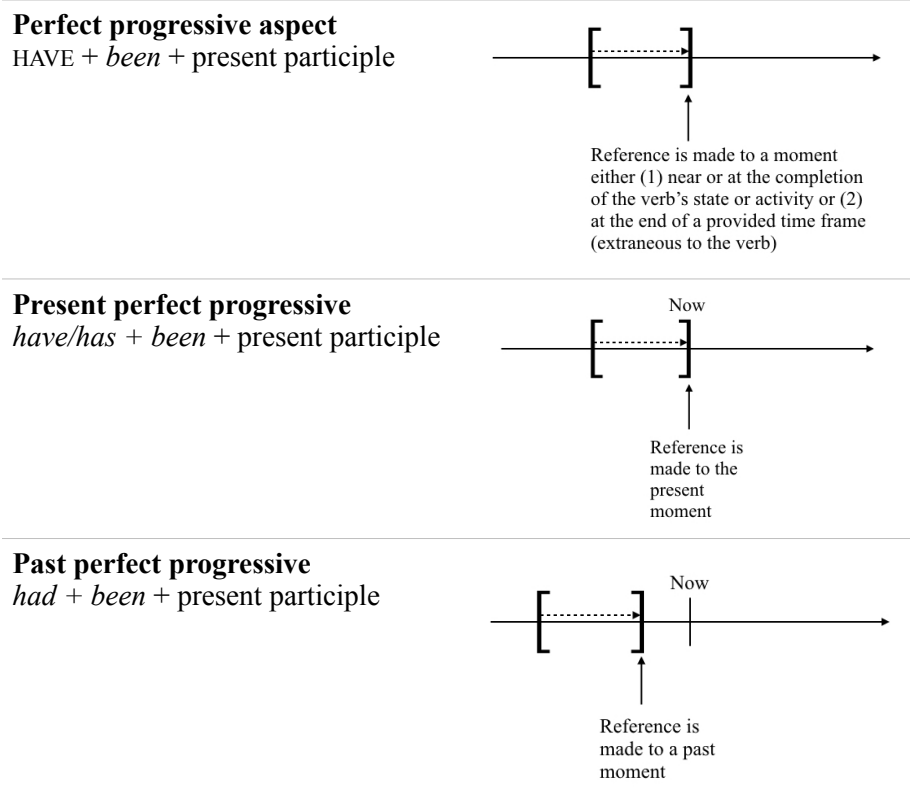


Figure 8.8 Perfect progressive aspect

The COCA examples below exemplify the past perfect progressive and modals paired with perfect progressive.

- (8.19) a. She had been reading *A Tale of Two Cities* and stopped to hear the story.

	PastPerfProg	had ^{PriAux}
:		been ^{PriAux}
:		<u>reading</u>

	Past	<u>stopped</u>

- b. You have been reading my diary.

	PresPerfProg	have ^{PriAux}
:		been ^{PriAux}
:		<u>reading</u>

- c. And you must've been waiting and waiting and waiting.

	ModPerfProg	must ^{ModAux}
:		've ^{PriAux}
:		been ^{PriAux}
:		<u>waiting</u> and ^{CoConj} <u>waiting</u> and ^{CoConj} <u>waiting</u>

- d. He could have been running around the building every half hour sticking the keys in, not rattling anything, for all Captain Goff knew.

	ModPerfProg	could ^{ModAux}
:		have ^{PriAux}
:		been ^{PriAux}
:		<u>running</u>

The perfect progressive allows speakers to efficiently pack different meanings onto a single SVP; in this case, the two meanings are an emphasis on the ongoing activity or state of the verb as well as a signal that the verb's activity/state has concluded. Figure 8.9 below represents a timeline for (a).

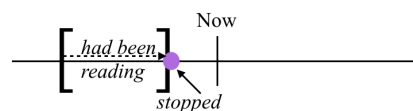


Figure 8.9 Visual representation of (8.19a)

The act of reading halted when she *stopped* to hear a story, and it is unknown if she continued her reading afterward. The use of the progressive also indicates she is not finished reading the book—she was in the midst of an ongoing action when another event halted its progress. Note the difference between saying *She had read the book* and *She had been reading the book*. The first one indicates she finished the book while the second one indicates that though her reading stopped, she did not finish the book.

For the present perfect progressive, the referential time frame is often created by sandwiching an ongoing verb between a past event and the current moment:

(8.20) She has been dawdling since you got here.

PresPerfProg	has ^{PriAux}
:	been ^{PriAux}
:	<u>dawdling</u>
Past	<u>got</u>

The *since you got here* begins the time frame, and the time frame ends with the current moment. The SVP does not indicate whether the dawdling will continue through and past the present moment, but it does tell the reader the dawdling began with one event and has continued up until this moment.

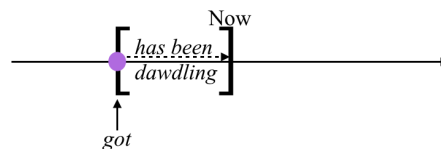


Figure 8.10 Visual representation of (8.20)

As these figures and examples illustrate, tense/mood and aspect are overlaid to provide nuance to the head verb's grammatical meaning.

English has two grammatical voices: active and passive. The most common and basic sentence structure is in the **active voice** and includes an SVP whose grammatical subject is also the semantic subject. For example, in the sentence *The dogs chased the mailman*, *the dogs* is both the grammatical and semantic subject of the verb *chased*. The **passive voice**, however, allows for a different constituent to be placed in the grammatical subject slot, which creates a divide so that the grammatical subject is no longer the semantic subject. The passive form of the previous sentence is *The mailman was chased (by the dogs)*. Here, *the mailman* is the grammatical subject and triggers subject-verb agreement with a singular verb form (*was*), but he is not the semantic subject because *the mailman* is not doing the chasing. The passive voice and its grammatical uses are the focus of Chapter 10; for now, you only need to recognize passive SVPs, which are typically formed with a form of *be* followed by a past participle. The past participle is very important, as it distinguishes passive voice from progressive aspect, both of

which begin the primary auxiliary *be*. While most passive SVPs are formed with *be*, many speakers can also use *get* as the primary auxiliary, which creates a more informal passive structure.

Because the active voice is unmarked and so frequent, the annotation scheme does not explicitly mark SVPs that are in the active voice with a special superscript; instead, it only explicitly marks SVP superscripts for the passive voice. Examples, taken from COCA, of the passive voice are below.

- (8.21) a. Seattle is recognized as an important place to go.

	PresPass	is ^{PriAux}
:		<u>recognized</u>

- b. the economy got wrecked by all this incredible, crazy conduct that went on.

	PastPass	got ^{PriAux}
:		<u>wrecked</u>

- c. Make sure your plot goal can be expressed in specific, tangible ways

	ModPass	can ^{ModAux}
:		be ^{PriAux}
:		<u>expressed</u>

- d. He must've been woken by the mortars

	ModPerfPass	must ^{ModAux}
:		've ^{PriAux}
:		been ^{PriAux}
:		<u>woken</u>

These examples demonstrate that tense and mood can be layered with aspect and/or passive voice. For example, in (d), *must have been woken* carries APP modality (*must*), perfect aspect (*have been*), and passive voice (*been woken*). Notice the chain reaction that occurs in the SVP in (d): the modal auxiliary *must* triggers a bare form of *have*, which occurs in its contracted form. The perfective *have* triggers the past participle of *been*, and the passive *be* triggers the past participle of the head verb *woken*.

8.3 Identifying TMAV

A single SVP can carry tense, mood, aspect, and voice; when it does, the four features appear in the order of the TMAV abbreviation, following the patterns of a chain reaction, as described above. For example, consider the underlined SVPs in the following COCA examples, and annotate the SVPs before moving on.

- (8.22) a. they've been being killed for years.
 b. You know, the worst would have been being charged, potentially being put in jail, being separated from Sean and Amelie.
 c. This is something baseball has just ignored over the last decade while it's been going+on, records have been being set and they've been breaking attendance records.
 d. some very precious samples of the solar wind—and, hence, the origins of our solar system—should have been being handled with tender loving care
 e. whoever was responsible for this directly might have been being used by some other group

As you check over your work, remember that SVPs can be interrupted by adverbs, such as *has just ignored* in (c). The annotated forms are provided below.

- (8.22) a. they've been being killed for years.

PresPerfProgPass	'vePriAux
:	beenPriAux
:	beingPriAux
:	<u>killed</u>

- b. You know, the worst would have been being charged, potentially being put in jail, being separated from Sean and Amelie.

ModPerfProgPass	wouldModAux
:	havePriAux
:	beenPriAux
:	beingPriAux
:	<u>charged</u>

- c. This is something baseball has just ignored over the last decade while it's been going+on, records have been being set and they've been breaking attendance records.

|PresPerf hasPriAux
: /Avl justAv/
: ignored
|

|PresPerfProg ?sPriAux
: beenPriAux
: going on
|

|PresPerfProgPass havePriAux
: beenPriAux
: beingPriAux
: set
|

|PresPerfProg 'vePriAux
: beenPriAux
: breaking
|

- d. some very precious samples of the solar wind—and, hence, the origins of our solar system—should have been being handled with tender loving care

|ModPerfProgPass shouldModAux
: havePriAux
: beenPriAux
: beingPriAux
: handled
|

- e. whoever was responsible for this directly might have been being used by some other group

|Past was|

|ModPerfProgPass mightModAux
: havePriAux
: beenPriAux
: beingPriAux
: used
|

Examples (b), (d), and (e) provide what are typically the longest SVPs in natural English, with four auxiliaries supporting a single head verb. Most SVPs that you come across in daily reading/speaking are much shorter and simpler than those examples. Regardless of how complex they become, notice that they follow the same pattern; tense/mood is marked before aspect, which is marked before the passive voice. Furthermore, if an SVP carries both the perfect and progressive aspects, the aspects always appear in the same order with perfect appearing before progressive.

Not all SVPs carry tense/mood marking; if they do not, they are **nonfinite**, or not fully inflected. Most nonfinite SVPs match at least one of the following features:

- The bare form of a primary auxiliary or head verb follows the word *to*, as in *to sing*, *to have sung*, or *to be singing*.
- The SVP lacks an expressed grammatical subject and, therefore, does not exhibit subject-verb agreement features.
- A participle form, whether present or past participle, is not supported by the required form of *be*, as in *singing a song* or *sung by a diva*.
- The SVP lacks tense/mood marking.

For instance, the following COCA examples include both finite and nonfinite SVPs; for now, only the finite SVPs are annotated:

- (8.23) a. By being prepared in advance, knowing and recording the individual's preferences, the advocate can meet the individual's needs.

|Mod can^{ModAux}
: meet
|

- b. Yet Emily had to cut their chat short, haunted by the somber look in Elam's eyes

|PastMod had to^{SemiAux}
: cut
|

- c. Having exhausted my innate store of neurotic lunacy, I felt like an idiot.

|Past felt|

In (a) and (c), the present participles *being*, *knowing*, *recording*, and *having* are unsupported by the *be* auxiliary, meaning they are nonfinite; furthermore, they lack tense/mood and grammatical subjects. In (b), the head verb *haunted* is in its past participle form but is unsupported by the *be* auxiliary and lacks an expressed grammatical subject. Therefore, it is nonfinite.

The following sentences are taken from Taylor Swift's (2016) Instagram post and feature both finite and nonfinite SVPs. Identify all SVPs and annotate any finite SVPs before moving on.

- (8.24) a. Where is the video of Kanye telling me he was going to call me 'that bitch' in his song?
 b. You don't get to control someone's emotional response to being called 'that bitch' in front of the entire world.
 c. I wanted us to have a friendly relationship.
 d. He promised to play the song for me, but he never did.
 e. Being falsely painted as a liar when I was never given the full story or played any part of the song is character assassination.
 f. I would very much like to be excluded from this narrative, one that I have never asked to be a part of, since 2009.

The sentences are presented again below, this time with the finite SVPs annotated and the nonfinite SVPs italicized in text.

- (8.25) a. Where is the video of Kanye *telling* me he was going to call me 'that bitch' in his song?

|Pres is|

|PastMod was going toSemiAux
 : call
 |

- b. You don't get to control someone's emotional response to *being called* 'that bitch' in front of the entire world.

|PresMod doPriAux n'tNeg
 : get toSemiAux
 : control
 |

- c. I wanted us to *have* a friendly relationship.

|Past wanted|

- d. He promised to *play* the song for me, but he never did.

|Past promised|

|Past did|

- e. *Being falsely painted* as a liar when I was never given the full story or played any part of the song is character assassination.

|PastPass was^{PriAux i}
 : /Avl never^{Av/i}
 : given
 |

|PastPass GAPⁱ PriAux/Av
 : played
 |

- f. I would very much like to *be excluded* from this narrative, one that I have never asked to *be* a part of, since 2009.

|Mod would^{ModAux}
 : /Avl /Deg very^{Av/}
 : : much^{Av}
 : /
 : like
 |

|PresPerf have^{PriAux}
 : /Avl never^{Av/}
 : asked
 |

In (a), (b), and (e), the present participle forms *telling* and *being* are unsupported by a *be* auxiliary, so they are nonfinite. Examples (c), (d), and (f) include SVPs that have a bare form following *to*, as in *to have*, *to play*, *to be*, and *to be excluded*, creating nonfinite SVPs.

Practice Set 8.1 Identifying SVPs and TMAV

The following sentences were taken from Mary Higgins Clark's (1977: 9-10) *A Stranger is Watching*. Annotate all finite SVPs.

1. He sat perfectly still in front of the television set in room 932 of the Biltmore Hotel.
2. The alarm had gone off at six but he was awake long before that.
3. The wind, cold and forbidding, rattled the windowpanes and that had been enough to pull him out of the uneasy sleep.
4. The *Today* show came on but he didn't adjust the barely audible sound.
5. He didn't care about the news or the special reports.

6. He just wanted to see the interview.
7. Shifting in the stiff-backed chair, he crossed and uncrossed his legs.
8. He'd already showered and shaved and put on the green polyester suit he'd worn when he'd checked in the night before.
9. The realization that the day had come at last made his hand tremble and he'd nicked his lip when he shaved.
10. It bled a little and the salty taste of blood in his mouth made him gag.
11. He hated blood.
12. Last night at the desk in the lobby, he'd seen the clerk's eyes sliding over his clothes.
13. He'd carried his coat under his arm because he knew it looked shabby.
14. But the suit was new; he'd saved up for it.
15. Still the clerk looked at him like he was dirt and asked if he had a reservation.

8.4 TMAV in context

By examining TMAV in its discourse context, you can identify how authors use shifts in TMAV to indicate relationships among head verbs in different SVPs. All examples in this section are taken from Sara Ashley O'Brien's (2017) article "The 20-year-old leading the march against revenge porn." Excerpts from the news article have been broken into four smaller chunks to facilitate discussions on shifts in TMAV in context. In each excerpt, I identify the finite SVPs and then provide a discussion for interpreting the shifts in TMAV throughout the article.

The article begins with narrative background on the primary focus of the story, a young lady named Leah Juliett.

- (8.26) a. Leah Juliett ^{|Past} was 15 years old when nude photos of her first ^{|Past} leaked online.
- b. It ^{|Past} was 2012; at the time, there ^{|Past} was n't^{Neg} a name for what ^{|Past} happened to her.
- c. It ^{|Past} was revenge porn, a new phenomenon where non-consensual pornography ^{|PresPass} is^{PriAux} distributed online to shame, exploit or extort its victims.

In this introduction, all but one finite SVP are in the simple past tense, with the exception being the SVP *is distributed* in (c). When an author shifts TMAV, readers (often implicitly) note that shift and pick up clues about focus, topic, and relevance. The shift to passive voice is necessary for O'Brien to focus on the non-consensual pornography and its victims rather than on the distributors. She shifts to present tense because, while revenge porn was getting started in 2012, it is still currently being distributed. This tense shift is necessary for O'Brien to convey the current situation. The contrast between the simple past tense of Juliett's background story and the present passive SVP *is distributed* helps connect past events in Juliett's life to a larger social problem that continues to be problematic now.

O'Brien continues the article with Juliett's story to better describe what revenge porn is and how it affects its victims.

- (8.27) a. When Juliett |^{Past} was| 14, a male classmate |^{Past} asked| her for naked pictures.
- b. She |^{Past} was| interested in him and |^{Past} sent| him four.
- c. A few months later, a high school lab partner |^{Past} took out| his phone and |^{Past} showed| Juliett the same nude photos she |^{PastPerf} 'd^{PriAux} sent|.
- d. He |^{PastPerf} had^{PriAux} found| them on an obscure internet site.
- e. "Every guy on the football team |^{Pres} has| them," she |^{Past} recalled| him saying.
- f. "They |^{Pres} have| them of a bunch of girls."

The majority of the SVPs are in simple past tense as O'Brien expands on Juliett's story. The exceptions include *(ha)d sent* in (c) and *had found* in (d), both of which are past perfect, and *has* in (e) and *have* in (f), both of which are present tense. The shift to past perfect helps the reader understand the relationship between Juliett's lab partner showing her the photos and her sending the original photos. The simple past tense of *took out* and *showed* provides a reference point in the past; directly after that, the next two finite SVPs 'd *sent* and *had found* indicate that the sending and finding were completed as of the moment that he took his phone out and showed her the pictures.

Then O'Brien quotes Juliett, using the simple present tense inside the direct quotations. Because Juliett is telling the story as she remembers it, she quotes what she remembers her lab partner saying. At the time of its utterance, the lab partner would have used the present tense to talk about the guys currently having those photos. If O'Brien had chosen to summarize Juliett's quotation as an indirect quotation, the tense would have remained in the past tense (e.g., *she recalled them saying that every guy on the football team had them*). With direct quotations, though, the tense needs to match the time frame in which the quotation was originally uttered—not the one in which it is being retold. Using direct quotations brings more immediacy and impact to the content of the quotation, and the shift in tense helps support that feeling of immediacy, allowing it to still feel relevant even though the story is being reported years later.

After setting up Juliett's story, O'Brien shifts to a discussion of the legalities of revenge porn:

- (8.28) a. There |^{Pres} is| currently no federal revenge-porn law.
- b. Thirty-five states and Washington, D.C., |^{PresPerf} have^{PriAux} enacted| state laws against it, but online-harassment laws (which |^{Pres} exclude| revenge porn) |^{Pres} are| notoriously weak and rarely |^{Pres} match| the damage revenge porn |^{Pres} creates|.
- c. For some victims, the only way to get their pictures off the internet |^{PresPerf} has^{PriAux} been| to copyright their own naked bodies and sue on intellectual-property grounds.

The news article has shifted from Juliett's story, which is told primarily in past tense, to the current state of affairs, so most of the verbs in (8.28) are in simple present tense with the exception of *have enacted* in (b) and *has been* in (c), both of which are present perfect. The SVP *have enacted* indicates that the enacting was begun and completed prior to the writing of this article. However, *has been* could be construed a bit differently because the head verb is stative. The use of *has been* indicates that up until now, women have had to copyright their own bodies; the slight semantic difference in the use of this instance of present perfect is that it is unclear whether that state is actually completed. Women may still need to copyright their bodies as a protection against revenge porn. Based on the use of *has been* in this example, readers can only conclude that during the time frame leading up to the writing of the article, copyrighting bodies was the only option.

O'Brien ends the article by expanding the discussion to include current events:

- (8.29) a. The vast majority of revenge porn ^{|Pres} affects private citizens, but the issue ^{|PresPerf hasPriAux} made headlines as celebrities ^{|PresPerf havePriAux} fallen victim to it.
- b. In August, hackers ^{|Past} posted nude photos of comedian Leslie Jones on her web page, prompting federal authorities to investigate.
- c. Earlier this month, news ^{|Past} surfaced that an ex-boyfriend of actress Mischa Barton ^{|PastProg wasPriAux} shopping around sexually explicit photos of her.

The excerpt begins with the simple present tense *affects*, which provides a stative-like habitual reading of an otherwise dynamic verb; the current state is that private citizens are more likely to be affected by revenge porn. The stative reading clusters together many small dynamic instances of people being affected into a larger state that began before the writing of this article, is occurring during the time the article was written, and will likely persist until someone is able to put a stop to it.

O'Brien shifts to present perfect for the SVPs *has made* and *have fallen*, which indicates that the headlines and celebrity cases she discusses are completed activities as of the writing of the article. O'Brien could have written that same statement in the simple past tense: ...*the issue made headlines as celebrities fell victim to it*. By choosing to use the present perfect instead, she provides a connection between those past events and current moment, which makes them feel more current, and a reading that requires a larger time frame for the verb's activity, which makes them feel more important. Making headlines didn't just occur in one single, isolated event but occurred over a period of time, leading up to this very moment.

She then shifts to using the simple past tense for *posted* in (b) and *surfaced* in (c) to indicate that the verbs' activities were isolated and discrete events that occurred in the past, so they could be represented as dots on a timeline. She ends with the past progressive SVP *was shopping around* in (c), which is an especially interesting shift. Matlock et al. (2012) argue that the progressive aspect asks readers to put themselves into the action (i.e., readers are more likely to have "an internal perspective" (714)) and indicates "criminal intent or emphasize[s] the

magnitude of immoral acts” (714). Using the progressive in this case could serve to emphasize the immorality of Barton’s ex. Readers tend to interpret the simple past as less offensive or immediate: *Barton’s ex-boyfriend shopped around photos of her* indicates that the event happened—perhaps only once and for a very short time—but is now over and done with. Using the past progressive, though, indicates that the event happened over a larger period of time and is, thus, more offensive and might even still be ongoing. The SVP doesn’t indicate if the shopping around has ended. O’Brien’s choice to use the past progressive provides a more sinister reading than a simple past tense would have. Throughout the article O’Brien uses TMAV shifts to effectively and efficiently provide relationships among SVPs and their head verbs.

If you look back to the beginning of this chapter, you’ll see the lyrics to the classic Nancy Sinatra song “These Boots are Made for Walkin’.” I chose that song to accompany this chapter because it incorporates so many SVPs with complex TMAV shifts. The song is easy for native English speakers to hear and understand, but if you start analyzing the song, you’ll realize that it’s grammatically complex. It turns words that don’t typically appear as verbs into head verbs (e.g., *samin’*), and it shifts between modalities and aspects to create a variety of meanings, including the use of the progressive aspect in SVPs where Sinatra lists the crimes that have angered her. Being able to identify a short verb phrase’s TMAV information provides a glimpse into the layered, multifaceted nuances a single SVP can provide.

Practice Set 8.2 Identifying shifts in TMAV

The following sentences were taken from Jennifer Aniston’s (2016) article “For the record,” which appeared on *Huffington Post*. Identify and annotate all finite SVPs. If the SVP is in simple present tense, identify the way in which it is being used, thinking back to discussions on stative/dynamic verbs, historic present, habitual, etc. When TMAV shifts within a sentence, provide a reason for that shift.

1. The objectification and scrutiny we put women through is absurd and disturbing.
2. The way I am portrayed by the media is simply a reflection of how we see and portray women in general, measured against some warped standard of beauty.
3. Sometimes cultural standards just need a different perspective so we can see them for what they really are—a collective acceptance... a subconscious agreement.
4. We are in charge of our agreement.
5. Little girls everywhere are absorbing our agreement, passive or otherwise.
6. We use celebrity “news” to perpetuate this dehumanizing view of females, focused solely on one’s physical appearance, which tabloids turn into a sporting event of speculation.
7. I used+to tell myself that tabloids were like comic books, not to be taken seriously, just a soap opera for people to follow when they need a distraction.
8. But I really can’t tell myself that anymore because the reality is the stalking and objectification I’ve experienced first-hand, going on decades now, reflects the warped way we calculate a woman’s worth.
9. I have grown tired of being part of this narrative.

10. We get to decide how much we buy into what's being served up, and maybe some day the tabloids will be forced to see the world through a different, more humanized lens because consumers have just stopped buying the bullshit.

Over the next two pages, Table 8.3 summarizes the forms presented in this chapter and provides examples for each, all of which are taken from Grady Hendrix's (2016: 9-28, 30, 37, 63, 184) *My Best Friend's Exorcism*.

Tense: marked on lexical verb or first auxiliary		
Present^{Pres} Typical uses of simple present tense: (1) stative verbs: current states (2) dynamic verbs: habitual, sports commentating, historic present, future • The exorcist ^{Pres} <u>is</u> dead. • Abby ^{Pres} <u>sits</u> in her office and ^{Pres} <u>stares</u> at the email	Past^{Past} Typical uses of simple past tense: narratives, past events • it ^{Past} <u>changed</u> its name fifteen years ago. • The exorcist ... ^{Past} <u>stopped</u> on I-95 • He ^{Past} <u>died</u> before the ambulance ^{Past} <u>arrived</u> .	
Mood: modal auxiliary		
Volition, prediction, future^{Mod} • she ^{Mod} <u>would</u> ^{ModAux} <u>become</u> Abby Rivers, Skate Princess. • There ^{Mod} 'll ^{ModAux} <u>be</u> plenty of time.	Advice, obligation, necessity^{Mod} • She ^{Mod} <u>must</u> ^{ModAux} <u>say</u> thank you. • Everyone ^{Mod} <u>should</u> ^{ModAux} <u>be</u> here.	Ability, permission, possibility^{Mod} • But you ^{Mod} <u>can</u> ^{ModAux} <u>move</u> that. • the word “friend” ^{Mod} <u>could</u> ^{ModAux} <u>draw</u> blood. • “I’m friends with the guys in IT,” she ^{Mod} <u>might</u> ^{ModAux} <u>say</u>
Tense/Mood combinations: Semi-modal auxiliary		

Semi-modals straddle the line between tense and modality:

- You ^{PresMod} need_to^{SemiAux} thank this little girl right now
- I ^{PresMod} 'm going_to^{SemiAux} die!
- Gretchen needed her if she ^{PastMod} was ever going_to^{i SemiAux} see a PG movie
- But your parents ^{Mod} will^{ModAux} have_to^{SemiAux} take me.

Aspect		
Perfect^{Perf} HAVE + past participle (-ed/en) Typical meaning: completed action/state by time of some specified or understood point of reference - I PresPerf have^{PriAux} n'tNeg <u>seen</u> <i>E.T.</i> - She PastPerf 'd^{PriAux} <u>seen</u> <i>Roller Boogie</i> with Linda Blair - Gretchen ModPerf may^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} <u>had</u> criminals for parents	Progressive^{Prog} BE + present participle (-ing) Typical meaning: continuing action/state through some specified or understood point of reference - she PresProg 's^{PriAux} <u>bombing</u> over the old bridge in a crapped-out Volkswagen Rabbit - The exorcist PastProg was^{PriAux} <u>driving</u> some lumber up to Lakewood - She PastModProg had_to^{SemiAux} be^{PriAux} <u>kidding</u> - you two ModProg should^{ModAux} n'tNeg be^{PriAux} <u>spending</u> time together.	Perfect progressive^{PerfProg} HAVE + <i>been</i> + present participle (-ing) Typical meaning: an action/state that continued for some time but was completed before a specified or understood point of reference - We PresPerfProg 've^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} <u>looking</u> for you since you jumped off the dock. - This was what she PastPerfProg had^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} <u>saying</u> .
Voice		
Active (unmarked) Active voice is the most frequent, common voice and, thus, unmarked. All examples above are active.	Passive^{Pass} BE + past participle (-ed/en) GET + past participle (-ed/en) Typical uses: (1) an agent/force/instrument is unknown or unimportant, (2) the focus is on what would be a direct or indirect object in an active clause, (3) the speaker/writer does not want to specify the agent/force/instrument, (4) the agent/force/instrument is obvious from context or not elegantly able to be specified. - For Abby, “friend” is a word whose sharp corners PresPerfPass have^{PriAux} been^{PriAux} <u>worn</u> smooth by overuse. - her best friend PastPass was^{PriAux} <u>possessed</u> by the devil. - If I go to the movies, I ModPass might^{ModAux} get^{PriAux} <u>kidnapped</u> . - They made endless lists: ... which teachers ModPass should^{ModAux} get^{PriAux} <u>married</u> to each other	

Table 8.3 TMAV descriptions, forms, and examples

Terms introduced in Chapter 8

Phrasal forms

aspect

perfect (Perf)

perfect progressive (PerfProg)

progressive (Prog)

mood/modality (Mod)

ability, permission, possibility (APP)

advice, obligation, necessity (AON)

volition, prediction, future (VPF)

tense

past (Past)

present (Pres)

voice

active

passive (Pass)

Concepts

deontic (intrinsic)

epistemic (extrinsic)

Chapter 8 Exercises

Exercise 8.1

Annotate the following sentences, taken from Lisa Genova's (2007: 10-11) *Still Alice*.

1. She simply couldn't find the word.
2. It wasn't on the tip of her tongue.
3. Lydia had been living in Los Angeles for three years now.
4. She would've graduated this past spring.⁵²
5. Alice would've been so proud.
6. Lydia was probably smarter than both of her older siblings, and they had gone to college.
7. Instead of college, Lydia first went to Europe.
8. She'd done a little acting while in Dublin and had fallen in love.⁵³
9. She was moving to Los Angeles immediately.
10. Alice nearly lost her mind.

Exercise 8.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

⁵² Original: If she'd gone to college right after high school, she would've graduated this past spring.

⁵³ Original: Instead, upon her return, she'd told her parents that she'd done a little acting while in Dublin and had fallen in love.

1. SVP in simple present tense
2. SVP in simple past tense
3. SVP with modality
4. SVP with tense and modality
5. SVP in present progressive
6. SVP in present perfect
7. SVP in past progressive
8. SVP in past perfect
9. SVP in present perfect progressive
10. SVP in past passive

Exercise 8.3

Find a grammar text or style guide that describes tense and aspect in English. Copy the relevant page(s) and, for each definition or feature provided by the text, provide an annotation to compare the definition and description to the information in this chapter. In your annotations, make sure you provide specific examples to clarify what you mean and use terms introduced in this chapter.

You can annotate the text in one of two ways:

- copy/type the text into a Word document and use the insert-comments feature to provide your observations
- copy/scan the pages and pencil in numbers next to information you are going to comment on; in a typed document, number your observations to match the penciled-in numbers on the text

After making your observations, answer the following questions in at least one paragraph:

- What level of student is the text intended for?
- Based on what you've learned in class, evaluate the accuracy of information presented in the text you've chosen. Is it solid information you'd recommend to others? Is it unreliable and/or potentially misleading? How so?
- Based on what you know, evaluate the appropriateness of the information for the level of student it is intended for.
- For every opinion provided (evaluations are opinions), fully clarify, justify, and exemplify the opinion.

Chapter 9: Finite dependent clauses

But there was no harshness in the eyes, which, looking at the world from under their tawny eyebrows, gave the impression of a man ever alert to greet a redeeming instinct in others but often disappointed. He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances. He had an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense. —James Joyce

9.1 Subordinators

Finite independent clauses are grammatically complete sentences with SVPs that are inflected for tense and/or mood, such as the following examples.

- (9.1) a. Anda bit her lip. (Haigh 1982: 52)

S	(Subj	Anda ^{PropN})
	Pred	^{Past} <u>bit</u>
	:	(her ^{Det}
	:	: lip ^{CN}
	:	)

- b. Eventually Christie put her on the beam. (53)

S	/AvI	eventually ^{Av/}
	(Subj	Christie ^{PropN})
	Pred	^{Past} <u>put</u>
	:	(her ^{Pro})
	:	[on ^{Prep}
	:	: (ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	: : beam ^{CN}
	:	:)
	:	]

As an independent clause, sentences do not require another structure for grammatical support. So far, every sentence you have annotated has been a basic sentence structure consisting of one or more independent clause. This chapter introduces finite **dependent clauses**, or subordinate clauses, which grammatically require a larger structure to lean on and are embedded inside another constituent, whether that constituent is a sentence or a phrase within a sentence.

Like independent clauses, finite dependent clauses have a subject and predicate with a fully inflected SVP. In other words, they typically have the same overall grammatical structure as a full sentence, but they are embedded inside a larger structure and cannot operate alone as a complete sentence. They depend on another constituent. Oftentimes, finite dependent clauses are

introduced by a **subordinator** (SubConj), or a subordinating conjunction.⁵⁴ While coordinators hold equal constituents together to work as partners, subordinators embed one structure inside another, making one constituent dependent on the other, and frequently introduce finite dependent clauses.

Many English forms that act as subordinators can belong to multiple lexical categories, depending on grammatical context and use. The lexical categories that coincide most often with subordinator forms are preposition, adverb, and coordinator. For instance, *after* could be a subordinator, preposition, or adverb, and *so* could be a subordinator, coordinator, or adverb, as demonstrated in these COCA examples.

- (9.2) a. After_{SubConj} a moment passed, he looked at me, smiled, and left.
 b. After_{Prep} dinner they listened to Duke Ellington on the reel-to-reel.
 c. I stopped talking to him after_{Av}.
- (9.3) a. To do this, you will need to have students identify their own reading preferences so_{SubConj} you can provide welcome guidance.
 b. Knowledge is power, so_{CoConj} the specific information critical to the well-being of the individual must be communicated.
 c. “We were so_{Av} close to being finished,” she said.

Grammatical context differentiates these uses. When *after* is a subordinator, a full clause structure follows, as in (9.2a), where *a moment passed* is a finite clause structure with a subject, *a moment*, and a finite SVP, *passed*. When it is a preposition, though, a nominal element, such as a noun phrase functioning as its object, follows it, as in (9.2b), where *dinner* is the object of the preposition. Finally, as an adverb, *after* works as its own constituent and provides temporal information without support from any other constituents, as in (9.2c).

In Chapter 3, you were introduced to an *and*-insertion test to determine if *so* is a coordinator because the coordinator use of *so* is synonymous with *and so* while other uses are not. For instance, inserting *and* in (9.3a) creates an awkward sentence structure and changes the meaning: **you will need to have students identify their own reading preferences and so you can provide welcome guidance*. The *so* in that sentence is not a coordinator because it does not pass the *and*-insertion test. In (9.3b), though, the test works: *Knowledge is power, and so the specific information critical to the well-being of the individual must be communicated*. In that sentence, *so* is a coordinator. Finally, the *so* in (9.3c) is an adverb functioning as a degree modifier for the adjective *close*.

These particular lexical categories overlap due to the historical development of English. Bernd Kortmann (1997: 59) studied the development of subordinators in English and other Indo-European languages and found three major shifts that occurred: (1) coordinators began being used as conjunctive adverbs and then later as adverbial subordinators; (2) adverbs began being

⁵⁴ Some teachers use the acronym *AAWWUBBIS* to teach students common subordinators in English: *after, although, as, when/whenever, while, until, because, before, if, since*. As with the coordinator *FANBOYS* acronym, memorizing the list can help beginning students identify subordinators, but it is dangerous to rely on that list alone, as it is not exhaustive, and many of those words can be used as other lexical categories.

used as adverbial subordinators and then later as prepositions; and (3) adverbial subordinators developed in two different ways, becoming used as complementizers and/or relativizers (i.e., relative pronouns, such as *that*, which are discussed in Chapter 14). Kortmann includes a figure, which is reproduced below, to demonstrate these developments.

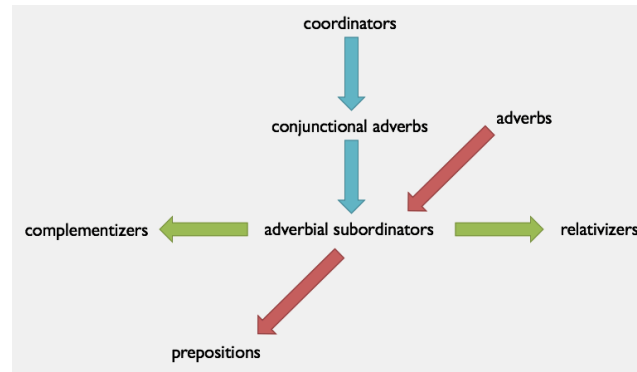


Figure 9.1 Subordinator historical development (reproduced based on Kortmann (1997: 59))

The strong connections between subordinators and prepositions is one reason some scholars group those two categories together, not distinguishing between prepositions and adverbial subordinators but rather lumping them together into a larger prepositions category. Grouping those categories helps to clarify some grey-area instances, where a word is not clearly a preposition or an adverbial subordinator, but it fails to capture grammatical distinctions between preposition phrases and subordinate clauses introduced by subordinators, including restrictions on what functions they can take.

On the other hand, some grammarians do not distinguish between coordinators and subordinators because of the strong connections between those two categories; instead, they group them together into a single conjunction category.⁵⁵ One feature coordinators and subordinators share is that their position is fixed, so you can't move either of those words around in a sentence without affecting the grammaticality of the overall sentence. This fixed position helps to distinguish subordinators from the closely related conjunctive adverb, or linking adverb, as in these COCA examples:

- (9.4) a. Though^{Av}, under the circumstances, that wasn't surprising.
 b. Though^{SubConj} fear now coursed through every vein in Karen's body, an odd smile graced her lips.
 c. And^{CoConj} Jules always drank along.

The reworded examples below demonstrate that the *though* in (a) is different from the *though* in (b) and that the subordinating and coordinating conjunctions share a grammatical feature:

⁵⁵ For reasons outlined in this section, subordinators, coordinators, and prepositions are treated as distinct lexical categories in this textbook. While recognizing those distinctions, complementizers, degree subordinators, complementizers, and adverbial subordinators are grouped into one category of subordinators. Relativizers, also called relative pronouns, relative adverbs, or *wh*-words, will remain a distinct category and will be discussed briefly in this chapter and then in more detail in Chapters 13 and 14.

- (9.5) a. Under the circumstances, though, that wasn't surprising.
 a'. Under the circumstances, that wasn't surprising, though.
- b. *Fear, though, now coursed through every vein in Karen's body, an odd smile graced her lips.
 b'. *Fear now coursed through every vein in Karen's body, an odd smile graced her lips, though.
- c. *Jules, and, always drank along.
 c'. *Jules always drank along and.

Examples (a) and (a') demonstrate that *though* can move more freely around within the sentence, which indicates that it is an adverb operating as its own constituent. Examples (b) and (b') demonstrate that *though* is fixed in its introductory position before a clause structure, which indicates that it is a subordinator. Coordinators share this immobility, as demonstrated in (c) and (c').

In formal writing, a comma sets linking adverbs apart from the clause while a subordinator does not receive commas, as in these COCA examples:

- (9.6) a. Although^{Av}, I usually bring three different outfits, just in case.
 b. Although^{Av}, the space is small so I hope there's some sort of private dining area in the back because that's a lot of very close commoner eyeballs on Jay and Bey.
- c. Although^{SubConj} Aniston had been tagged as the Friend Most Likely to Need a Hanky, Crane says the tears were widespread
 d. Although^{SubConj} the phenomenology of galaxies might be interesting in itself, it would be a poor guide to the dynamics of the universe as a whole.

As an introductory linking adverb, *although* is separated from the rest of the clause by a comma in (a) and (b), but when it is a subordinator, it is not separated from the clause with punctuation, as in (c) and (d).

While subordinators and coordinators share their immobility, they differ in their grammatical contexts. Coordinators can work with any type of grammatical constituent at any level of the grammatical hierarchy and can hold two or more of any type of constituent together as long as they are grammatically equal. Throughout the text so far, you have seen examples of coordinators joining words, phrases, and full clauses. Subordinators, on the other hand, introduce a clause, embedding that clause inside another constituent, often in predictable ways. When a coordinator joins two constituents, it is an “outsider” word in that it does not become a part of either constituent it joins. Simplified annotations follow each sentence to draw attention to the placement of the coordinator relative to the clauses it joins.

- (9.7) a. That made Sydney laugh, but^{CoConj} she didn't say a word. (Allen 2007: 109)

S S that made Sydney laugh
 but^{CoConj}
 S she didn't say a word

- b. An apple hit her leg, and^{CoConj} Bay opened one eye to look up at the tree. (111)

S S an apple hit her leg
 and^{CoConj}
 S Bay opened one eye to look up at the tree

In both examples, the coordinating conjunction appears between the two constituents it joins and does not work directly with either of them. Because it is outside those constituents, it does not fuse with either and cannot be moved around in the sentence, as demonstrated by these rewordings:

- (9.8) a. *But she didn't say a word, that made Sydney laugh.
 b. *And Bay opened one eye to look up at the tree, an apple hit her leg.

These examples demonstrate that coordinators are not attached to the clauses that follow them. Moreover, when coordinating conjunctions join clauses, you can't reorder the clauses without changing the meaning of the larger sentence:

- (9.9) a. She didn't say a word, but that made Sydney laugh.
 b. Bay opened one eye to look up at the tree, and an apple hit her leg.

These reworded examples are grammatical, but the meaning has shifted from its original wording. For instance, in (b), the chronology of events has changed by switching the order of the two clauses: rather than Bay looking at the tree after an apple hit her leg, the rewording shifts the order so that Bay first looked at the tree before the apple hit her leg.

Subordinators, on the other hand, become fused with the clause they introduce, becoming part of the clause's structure, so the subordinator along with its clause can often be moved in the sentence:

- (9.10) a. She sat up suddenly when^{SubConj} she heard Claire call her name. (Allen 2007: 111)
 b. When^{SubConj} she heard Claire call her name, she sat up suddenly.

The subordinator *when* introduces and fuses with the clause *she heard Clair call her name*, and, as a fused constituent, the subordinator with its clause can move around in the sentence without affecting grammaticality or majorly changing the meaning, as demonstrated by (b).

Because they belong to different lexical categories, coordinators can join subordinators, full subordinate clauses, and sentences beginning with a subordinate clause, which means a coordinator can appear before a subordinator, as in these COCA examples.

- (9.11) a. Fans will take note ^{ifSubConj} and^{CoConj} ^{whenSubConj} it fails.
 b. It soon became clear that at least several attorneys were terminated ^{becauseSubConj} they were deemed insufficiently loyal to Bush, ^{becauseSubConj} they were unwilling to pursue highly questionable charges against Democratic politicians, and^{CoConj} ^{becauseSubConj} they could not find voter fraud cases to prosecute.
 c. And^{CoConj} ^{afterSubConj} you stop eating, you get hungrier faster.

Coordinators can appear between subordinators, as in (a), and before subordinators, as in (b) and (c). Subordinating conjunctions cannot appear in those same grammatical environments, nor can they appear directly before a coordinating conjunction.

Before moving on with the discussion, identify any coordinators and subordinators in the following sentence, and consider what grammatical clues you used to differentiate them:

- (9.12) Claire had taken a deep breath before she knocked, and when she saw him she forgot to let it out. (Allen 2007: 112)

In that sentence, the coordinator *and* joins two independent clauses, and each of those independent clauses has an embedded dependent clause introduced by a subordinator. The subordinator *before* introduces the clause *she knocked*, and the subordinator *when* introduces the clause *she saw him*.

As introductory words, subordinators appear within the clause structure but play no grammatical function in the clause they introduce, which distinguishes them from other clause initiators discussed in later chapters, such as relative pronouns and *wh*-words. Three major types of subordinators include the following:

- adverbial: *if, because, since, while*
- degree: *as, than, that*
- complementizer: *that, if, whether*

Multiword subordinators are compound words that behave as any other subordinator does:

- compound subordinators ending in *that*: *provided that, in that, in order that, such that*
- compound subordinators ending in *as*: *as long as, as soon as*
- other compound subordinators: *as if, even though, in case, no matter*

As with other compound function words, some of the forms listed above can be shortened in more informal registers, as in these COCA examples:

- (9.13) a. Provided_{that}^{SubConj} they match the requirements, organizations will not have problems
 b. Provided_{that}^{SubConj} you have the time and technological know-how, you can mod a K-type to your heart's content
 c. As_{soon}_{as}^{SubConj} he said that, the whistle blew
 d. Soon_{as}^{SubConj} I get on my feet everything goes quiet.

Examples (a) and (c) include the full compounds *provided that* and *as soon as*, and examples (b) and (d) feature the shortened versions *provided* and *soon as*.

Along with compound subordinators, English has a class of correlative subordinators, which require two outside constituents, one situated within the subordinator and the other one after the second portion. Most correlative subordinators express degree, as in these COCA examples:

- (9.14) a. *as...as*: You are not **as** dumb **as** you look.
 b. *more...than*: I found myself telling **more** lies **than** I had to.
 c. *so...that*: Confidence is **so** fragile at this stage **that** if recovery were to falter, interest rates would have to be reduced further.

The most frequent constituent that appears in the first slot provided by a correlative subordinator is an adjective, as in examples (a) and (c). In those instances, the first word of the subordinator acts like a degree adverb (e.g., *as dumb* and *so fragile*) while the second word introduces a clause-like structure (e.g., *you look* and *if recovery were to falter...*). Nouns can also appear as the constituent within the subordinator, as in example (b), where the opening word of the subordinator acts like a comparative or superlative determiner (e.g., *more lies*) while the second half introduces a clause-like structure (e.g., *I had to*). While you should begin trying to recognize these forms of correlative subordinators when you see them in a text, you will not learn to annotate them until Chapter 14.

Practice Set 9.1 Coordinator or subordinator?

The following five excerpts are taken from different genres; your goal is to identify the coordinators and subordinators in each excerpt. After identifying them, count the number of coordinators and the number of subordinators in each passage to compare their use across the genres. The word count for each excerpt is provided.

Fiction *Mystic River* by Dennis Lehane (2001: 3)

When Sean Devine and Jimmy Marcus were kids, their fathers worked together at the Coleman Candy plant and carried the stench of warm chocolate back home with them. It became a permanent character of their clothes, the beds they slept in, the vinyl backs of their car seats. Sean's kitchen smelled like a Fudgsicle, his bathroom like a Coleman Chew-Chew bar. By the time they were eleven, Sean and Jimmy had developed a hatred of sweets so total that they took their coffee black for the rest of their lives and never ate dessert. On Saturdays, Jimmy's father would drop by the Devines' to have a beer with Sean's father. [111 words]

Magazine "In search of a green night's sleep" by Laura Fraser (2011)

The good news is that choices once limited to size and firmness now include environmental options as well. If you prefer an innerspring mattress—steel coils surrounded by layers of fluffy padding—you can rest easy on beds made from organic cotton and wool, with steel coils that aren't coated in chemicals. If, like me, you prefer a solid-foam mattress, you can opt for latex made from the milky sap of rubber trees. And though I worried that sleeping on something made from coconut husk fibers or natural rubber would feel like napping in Gilligan's hut, when I test-drove the beds, my back couldn't feel the difference. [109 words]

Newspaper "U.S. Recovery slowly gained speed in late '11, data show" by Catherine Rampell (2012)

The American economy picked up a little steam last quarter, with output growing at an annualized rate of 2.8 percent, the Commerce Department reported Friday. The pace of growth was faster than in the third quarter, when gross domestic product expanded at an annual rate of 1.8 percent. Even so, both figures were below the average speed of economic expansion in the United States since World War II. Above-average growth in the quarter would have helped to make up for the destruction wrought by the Great Recession. "At this rate, we'll never reduce unemployment," said Justin Wolfers, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania. "The recovery has been postponed, again." [111 words]

Academic "Literary communication: Effects of reader-narrator cooperation" by Peter Dixon and Marissa Bortolussi (1996: 408)

A further implication of a communicative reading strategy is that readers construct a mental representation of the narrator. ... We believe a similar representation of the perspective, knowledge, and goals of the narrator is also required when reading a literary text as if it were communication. Such a representation is also likely to include information about the narrator's attitudes and belief about characters and events in the story. In short, processing the text as communication requires a mental representation of the stance of the narrator. Moreover, because this representation is constructed by readers as a natural part of

comprehension, it would be constructed regardless of whether or not it is supported by explicit references to the narrator in the text. [119 words]

Spoken Transcript taken from Sams (2010)

Mary: And— and my dad— it was just him and my dad, and, um, they were walking and my dad— I mean they had walked for a while and my dad’s like, “Well, you ready to turn around?” And he kept asking him over and over because he knew, you know, I mean, he’s a little kid—

Ivy: Right.

Mary: and he would get tired—

Ivy: And like, “I’m not carrying you back, kid.”

Mary: Yeah. And he’d have to walk all the way back. And Jason’s like, “Now you can keep asking me but I’m just going to keep telling you no.”

Ivy: Nice.

Mary: And so my dad thought he would get slick and he made a cut, you know, to start going back, but he thought that Jason wouldn’t notice. [126 words]

9.2 Adverb clauses

Adverb clauses (AvCl) are finite dependent clauses that begin with an adverbial subordinator (e.g., *when*, *after*, *because*, *if*, *even though*, *so that*, *although*) and are often embedded into a full sentence structure, working alongside the subject and predicate of an independent clause. The typical structure of an adverb clause features an adverbial subordinator followed by its subject and predicate, as in the template provided below.

(9.15) //_{Avl} adverbial subordinator_{SubConj}
 : (Subj subject)
 : ||_{Pred} |^{TMAV} finite verb|
 : : rest of predicate
 : ||
 //

Adverb clauses are related to adverbs in that they play a similar function, providing adverb-like information, such as time, manner, place, and reason, so their typical function is adverbial. Furthermore, in the annotation scheme, their bounding markers are double forward slashes (//) to serve a visual reminder of their similarities to adverb phrases.

Adverb clauses appear in three primary locations within an independent clause, and their first possible location is at the beginning of the clause, as in the following examples.

- (9.16) a. As I rose from the chair, my head was still swimming some. (Kidd 2002: 111)

S //Avl as^{SubConj}
 : (Subj I^{Pro})
 : ||Pred |Past rose|
 : : [from^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : : chair^{CN}
 : : :)
 : :]
 : ||
 //
 (Subj my^{Det}
 : head^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |PastProg was^{PriAux}
 : : /Avl still^{Av/}
 : : swimming
 : |
 : /Avl some^{Av/}
 ||

- b. Even when I crouch, the prickly ilex leaves catch at my hair. (Goodman 2006: 153)

S //Avl /Avl even^{Av/}
 : when^{SubConj}
 : (Subj I^{Pro})
 : ||Pred |Pres crouch| ||
 //
 (Subj the^{Det}
 : <Att prickly^{Aj}>
 : (Att ilex^N)
 : leaves^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |Pres catch|
 : [at^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep my^{Det}
 : : : hair^{NN}
 : : :)
 :]
 ||

In these sentences, the adverb clause appears before the subject of the sentence. Because these adverb clauses are finite clauses, they have their own subject and predicate, and their head SVP is inflected for tense and/or mood.

Another common location for adverb clauses is at the end of the independent clause, after the predicate of the main clause:

- (9.17) a. June had gone upstairs to her room and locked the door, while the Daughters huddled in the kitchen. (Kidd 2002: 112)

S	(Subj	June ^{PropN})	
	Pred		PastPerf had ^{PriAux} i
	:	:	<u>gone</u>
	:	:	
	:	:	/ upstairs ^{Av/}
	:	:	[to ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep her ^{Det}
	:	:	: room ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	]
	:		
	:	and ^{CoConj}	
	:		PastPerf GAP ^{i PriAux}
	:	:	<u>locked</u>
	:	:	
	:	:	(the ^{Det}
	:	:	: door ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:		
	//Avl	while ^{SubConj}	
	:	(Subj	the ^{Det}
	:	:	Daughters ^{PropN}
	:	:	)
	:	Pred	Past <u>huddled</u>
	:	:	[in ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	: kitchen ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	]
	:		
	//		

- b. She felt awkward when Julianne got jealous. (Haigh 1982: 52)

```

S      (Subj  shePro)
      ||Pred  |Past  felt|
      :      <      awkwardAj>
      ||
      //Avl  whenSubConj
      :      (Subj  JuliannePropN)
      :      ||Pred  |Past  got|
      :      :      <      jealousAj>
      :      ||
      //

```

Although these adverb clauses appear at the end of these sentences, they can be moved without affecting grammaticality or changing the meaning of the sentence; for instance, (b) could be reworded as *When Julianne got jealous, she felt awkward*. That mobility suggests that the adverb clause works at the S-level rather than at a lower level, such as the long verb phrase.

Adverb clauses can also appear in between the subject and predicate of a larger clause, as in this example, which begins below and continues on to the next page:

- (9.18) The horse, as if it had made up its mind about him, sank suddenly down upon its haunches, and sat there like an oversized dog. (COCA)

```

S      (Subj  theDet
      :      horseCN
      )
      //Avl  as ifSubConj
      :      (Subj  itPro)
      :      ||Pred  |PastPerf hadPriAux
      :      :      :      made up
      :      :      |
      :      :      (      itsDet
      :      :      :      mindCN
      :      :      :      )
      :      :      [      aboutPrep
      :      :      :      (ObjPrep himPro)
      :      :      :      ]
      :      ||
      //

```

Pred		Past	<u>sank</u>
:	:	/AvI	suddenly ^{Av} /
:	:	[	/AvI down ^{Av} /
:	:	:	upon ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep its ^{Det}
:	:	:	: haunches ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	]	
:			
:	and ^{CoConj}		
:		Past	<u>sat</u>
:	:	/AvI	there ^{Av} /
:	:	[	like ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep an ^{Det}
:	:	:	: <Att oversized ^{Aj} >
:	:	:	: dog ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	]	
:			

In this sentence, the AvCl *as if it had made up its mind about him*, appears between the subject and predicate of the main clause.

The primary features of adverb clauses are these: (1) an adverbial subordinator introduces a clause with a complete subject and predicate, and (2) they typically function as adverbial modifiers at the sentence level. These features help to differentiate these dependent clause types from other clause types, including nominal clauses, which are the focus of the next section.

9.3 Nominal clauses

Nominal clauses are another type of finite dependent clause. Two key differences between adverb and nominal clauses are the following: (1) adverb clauses are introduced by an adverbial subordinator while nominal clauses may or may not have an introductory complementizing subordinator, and (2) the two types of clauses function differently within sentences. **Nominal clauses** (NomCl)⁵⁶ can fill the same roles as noun phrases and typically appear where noun phrases can occur. The most frequent types of nominal clauses function as noun phrases do, meaning they could be replaced by a pronoun (e.g., *that*, *it*, *something*)—a feature that can help you identify a nominal clause. Furthermore, in the annotation scheme, their bounding markers are double parentheses to reflect their similarity to noun phrases.

Nominal clauses can begin with complementizing subordinators, which are more limited in selection than adverbial subordinators: *that*, *whether*, *if*, and *how* are the most common subordinators used to introduce nominal clauses. However, many nominal clauses do not have an

⁵⁶ Some people use the term *noun clause* to refer to nominal clauses.

introductory subordinator at all, and when that is the case, the assumed subordinator is *that*. For instance, I could say either of the following:

- (9.19) a. I know that she left.
b. I know she left.

The meaning shifts if the intended subordinator has been *whether*, *if*, or *how* because they convey slightly different information:

- (9.20) a. I know whether/if she left.
b. I know how she left.

In the first example, she may or may not have left, and I am expressing my level of knowledge about the situation. That meaning differs from the examples in (9.19), which only make sense if she has indeed left. In example (b), I know she left, but I know an additional piece of information: I know the manner in which she left. Perhaps she left by car or jet or a backpack rocket. When no subordinator is provided, the assumed subordinator is *that* because *that* does not provide that additional level of information.

The basic structures of a nominal clause are provided below, where (a) represents a nominal clause introduced by a subordinator and (b) represents a nominal clause without an expressed subordinator:

- (9.21) a. ((that, whether, if, how^{SubConj}
: (Subj subject)
: ||Pred |^{TMAV} finite verb|
: : rest of predicate
: ||
))
- b. (((Subj subject)
: ||Pred |^{TMAV} finite verb|
: : rest of predicate
: ||
))

The functions of the clauses are not specified because their functions are much more diverse than adverb clauses.

The most frequent position for a nominal clause is within the predicate of a larger clause, often following a verb of communication (e.g., *say*, *tell*, *promise*) or cognition (e.g., *think*, *feel*, *know*), as in the following examples.

- (9.22) a. We think we can work some transportation out for you, Anda. (Haigh 1982: 51)

S	(Subj	we ^{Pro})		
	Pred	Pres	<u>think</u>	
	:	((	(Subj	we ^{Pro})
	:	:	Pred	Mod
	:	:	:	can ^{ModAux}
	:	:	:	<u>work</u> GAP ⁱ
	:	:		
	:	:	(	some ^{Det}
	:	:	:	transportation ^{NN}
	:	:	)	
	:	:	<u>out</u> ⁱ	
	:	:	[	for ^{Prep}
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep you ^{Pro})
	:	:	]	
	:	:		
	:	))		
	(Voc	Anda ^{PropN})		

- b. She knew that John and Christie thought her talented and expected great things her. (Haigh 1982: 43)

S	(Subj	she ^{Pro})		
	Pred	Past	<u>knew</u>	
	:	((	that ^{SubConj}	
	:	:	(Subj	(
	:	:	:	John ^{PropN})
	:	:	:	and ^{CoConj}
	:	:	:	(
	:	:	:	Christie ^{PropN})
	:	:	)	
	:	:	Pred	
	:	:	:	Past
	:	:	:	<u>thought</u>
	:	:	:	(
	:	:	:	her ^{Pro})
	:	:	:	<
	:	:	:	talented ^{Aj>}
	:	:		
	:	:	and ^{CoConj}	
	:	:		Past
	:	:	:	<u>expected</u>
	:	:	:	<Att
	:	:	:	great ^{Aj>}
	:	:	:	things ^{CN}
	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	[
	:	:	:	of ^{Prep}
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep her ^{Pro})
	:	:	:	]
	:	:		
	:	:		
	:	))		

- c. On the television Mr. Cronkite said they were going to send a rocket ship to the moon. (Kidd 2002: 112)

S [on^{Prep}
: (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
: : television^{CN}
:)
]
(Subj Mr. Cronkite^{PropN})
||Pred |^{Past} said|
: (((Subj they^{Pro})
: : ||Pred |^{PastMod} were going to^{SemiAux}
: : : : send
: : : |
: : : (a^{Det}
: : : : rocket ship^{CN}
: : : :)
: : : : [to^{Prep}
: : : : : (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
: : : : : : moon^{CN}
: : : : : :)
: : : : :]
: : : ||
: :))
||

The nominal clauses in examples (a) and (c) do not have an introductory subordinator and begin with their subject noun phrases, but the nominal clause in (b) is introduced by the subordinator *that*. As finite dependent clauses, the nominal clauses have a complete subject and predicate pairing, so, for instance, the NomCl in (c) includes the subject *they* and finite predicate *were going to send a rocket ship to the moon*. All three of these nominal clauses can be replaced grammatically by pronouns, such as *She knew something* or *On the television Mr. Cronkite said it*, demonstrating that they function in the same way as a noun phrase in these sentences.

Another, less frequent, position for nominal clauses is the beginning of the sentence, where the NomCl functions as the subject. When a NomCl is the subject of a clause, the head verb is often a stative verb, such as *be*, *seem*, or *appear*, as demonstrated by the following COCA examples.

(9.23) a. That they were lovers was an open secret

S ((Subj that^{SubConj}
: (Subj **they**^{Pro})
: ||Pred |Past were|
: : (**lovers**^{CN})
: ||
:))
||Pred |Past was|
: (**an**^{Det}
: : <Att open^{Aj}>
: : **secret**^{CN}
: :)
||

b. That the Blues haven't played deep into May for more than a decade isn't libel against Stillman's ownership group

S ((Subj that^{SubConj}
: (Subj **the**^{Det}
: : **Blues**^{PropN}
: :)
: ||Pred |PresPerf **have**^{PriAux} n't^{Neg}
: : : played
: : : |
: : : [/Avl **deep**^{Av}/
: : : : into^{Prep}
: : : : (ObjPrep **May**^{PropN})
: : : :]
: : : [for^{Prep}
: : : : (ObjPrep **more**^{Pro}
: : : : : [PostM **than**^{Prep}
: : : : : : (ObjPrep **a**^{Det}
: : : : : : : **decade**^{CN}
: : : : : : :)
: : : : : :]
: : : : :)
: : : :]
: : : ||
: :))
||Pred |Pres is n't^{Neg}|
: (**libel**^{NN}
: : [PostM **against**^{Prep}
: : : (ObjPrep (**Stillman**^{PropN})'s^{Det}
: : : : (Att **ownership**^N)
: : : : : **group**^{CN}
: : : : :)
: : : :]
: : :)
||

In both these examples, the nominal clause functions as the subject of a larger clause. When a clause functions as a subject, it requires a third-person singular verb form for its subject-verb agreement, such as *was* in (a) and *is* in (b).

A sentence can have more than one embedded nominal clause, and, in the following example, a nominal clause functions as the subject, but another nominal clause is embedded within the predicate.

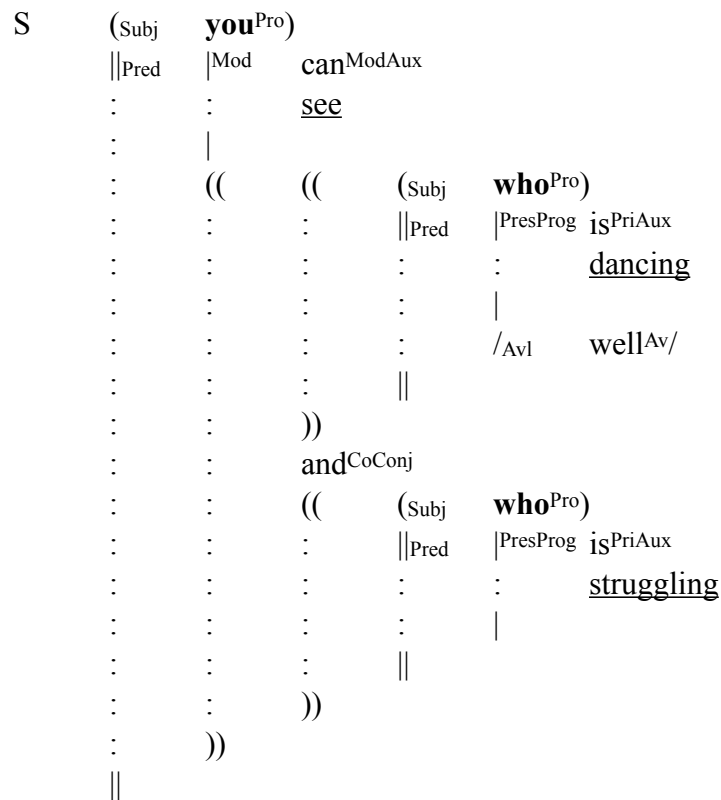
- (9.24) That we had a segregated Million Man March and then a Million Woman March reveals that our community agendas are steadily diverging along the gender line.
(COCA)

S	((Subj	that _{SubConj}		
:	:	(Subj	we ^{Pro})	
:	:	Pred	Past	<u>had</u>
:	:	:	(	a ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	<Att
:	:	:	:	segregated ^{Aj} >
:	:	:	:	Million Man March ^{PropN}
:	:	:	)	
:	:	:	and ^{CoConj}	
:	:	:	/Avl	then ^{Av} /
:	:	:	(	a ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	Million Woman March ^{PropN}
:	:	:	)	
:	:	:	)	
:	:			
:	))			
:	Pred	Pres	<u>reveals</u>	
:	:	((	that _{SubConj}	
:	:	:	(Subj	our ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	(Att
:	:	:	:	community ^N)
:	:	:	:	agendas ^{CN}
:	:	:	)	
:	:	Pred	PresProg	are ^{PriAux}
:	:	:	:	/Avl
:	:	:	:	steadily ^{Av} /
:	:	:	:	<u>diverging</u>
:	:	:		
:	:	:	:	
:	:	:	[	along ^{Prep}
:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep
:	:	:	:	the ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	(Att
:	:	:	:	gender ^N)
:	:	:	:	line ^{CN}
:	:	:	:	
:	:	:	)	
:	:	:	]	
:	:	:		
:	:	:		
:	))			
:				

The head verb *reveals* is inflected to match the third-person singular NomCl subject, and both nominal clauses have their own subjects and predicates with fully inflected SVPs.

Like adverbial subordinators, complementizers do not play a grammatical role in the clause because their job is to introduce the dependent clause, which is why they both belong to the larger category of subordinators. While adverb clauses typically take the structure of Subordinator-Subject-Predicate, nominal clauses can take many more grammatical forms. The examples above demonstrate that nominal clauses can simply appear as Subject-Predicate structure without an introductory subordinator, but they can also take an additional form, where they are introduced by a *wh*-word that plays a grammatical role in the clause itself (i.e., it is not a subordinator). The following example includes two nominal clauses with this structure.

(9.25) You can see who is dancing well and who is struggling. (Eblin 2010)



The two nominal clauses *who is dancing well* and *who is struggling* both begin with a *wh*-word (*who*), which plays a grammatical role in the clause. In this example, *who* functions as the subject of both nominal clauses.

When the *wh*-word is the subject, the word order within the nominal clause follows the typical subject-predicate word order of English. However, when the *wh*-word plays any other role, it appears at the beginning of the clause, creating a gap later in the clause. Its position at the front of the clause is called the **pre-nucleus slot**, which indicates that the constituent appears before the rest of the clause and affects the word order throughout the rest of the clause. For instance, consider the following example:

(9.26) What you are's what I made you. (COCA)

S	((Subj	(i	What ^{Pro})
:	:	(Subj	you ^{Pro})
:	:	Pred	^{Pres} <u>are</u>
:	:	(i	GAP)
:	:		
:	)	)	
:	Pred	^{Pres}	' <u>s</u>
:	:	((	(j what ^{Pro})
:	:	:	(Subj I ^{Pro})
:	:	:	Pred ^{Past} <u>made</u>
:	:	:	(you ^{Pro})
:	:	:	(j GAP)
:	:	:	
:	:		
:	:	)	
:			

If you were to un-tease the subject nominal clause (*what you are*), you would have the structure *you are what*, with the subject *you* working alongside the predicate *are what*. In its current form, though, the *what* appears in front of the subject within the pre-nucleus slot because this type of nominal clause an introductory *wh*-word. The second nominal clause also features a *wh*-word in the introductory pre-nucleus slot, which is co-indexed with a GAP in the predicate.

The co-index marker immediately inside the opening bounding marker to indicate that the entire constituent is matched to the GAP later in the clause.⁵⁷ Altogether, then, the co-indexed pair reflects these three features: (1) the constituent in the pre-nucleus slot plays a grammatical function in the clause structure that follows, (2) the GAP acts as its placeholder, and (3) the co-index marker ties the two together. Furthermore, because this sentence has two sets of co-indexed constituents, the second pair takes the co-index marker *j* to distinguish the new pair from the original one.⁵⁸

Sentences can have more than one type of dependent finite clause, and dependent finite clauses can be embedded inside one another, as in the following example, where a nominal clause appears inside an adverb clause.

⁵⁷ In later chapters, you will be introduced to more complex structures that demonstrate why a full phrasal constituent is co-indexed rather than a single grammatical word.

⁵⁸ If you needed another gapped element, you would use *k* for the third one, and so on. That forward movement in the alphabet continues until the entire sentence, including any coordinated sentence structures, is complete. The co-index superscript returns to *i* after the completion of a full sentence even if you are annotating a full passage.

9.4 Reported speech

In spoken conversations, you can use reported speech to incorporate (1) someone else's words from another contextual situation, (2) your own words or thoughts from another situation, or (3) someone else's projected attitude or potential reactions during another situation. In written texts, reported speech can, of course, take those same functions, but it can also be used in fiction to create and build a narrative through characters' dialogue. Whether in spoken or written discourse, English provides two methods for reporting speech: indirect reported speech and direct reported speech.

Indirect reported speech, also called indirect quotation, presents the author's or speaker's summary of what was originally said or written without appearing to provide a direct replication. Indirect speech is grammatically incorporated into the clause, usually in the form of a nominal clause after a verb of communication, such as *say*, *tell*, *shout*, or *promise*.

(9.28) Even so, Mom always said her big break was right around the corner. (Walls 2013: 5)

S	/DiscM	even so ^{Av/}	
	(Subj	Mom ^{PropN})	
	Pred	/AvI	always ^{Av/}
	:	Past	<u>said</u>
	:	((	(Subj
	:	:	her ^{Det}
	:	:	<Att
	:	:	big ^{Aj} >
	:	:	break ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	Pred	Past
	:	:	<u>was</u>
	:	:	[
	:	:	/AvI
	:	:	right ^{Av/}
	:	:	:
	:	:	around ^{Prep}
	:	:	:
	:	:	(ObjPrep
	:	:	the ^{Det}
	:	:	:
	:	:	corner ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	]
	:	:	
	:	:	))
	:	:	

The nominal clause *her big break was right around the corner* represents indirect reported speech and appears within the sentence's predicate. The subject of the full sentence, *Mom*, is the one who is being indirectly quoted.

Two grammatical features help to differentiate whether the reported speech is indirect or direct, and these features are tense shifts and pronoun use. In indirect speech, the tenses used in the mother clause and the nominal clause reflect the current speaking or writing situation. For the example above, the past-tense verb *said* matches the past-tense verb *was* in the nominal clause

representing indirect speech, indicating Mom said this statement in the past when she believed her big break was around the corner. Furthermore, the pronoun use within the indirect speech reflects the current speaker's or writer's point of view, so the possessive determiner *her* in *her big break* refers to *Mom* and reflects the writer's point of view.

Annotate the following examples, all of which incorporate indirect reported speech, before moving on to the discussion below.

- (9.29) a. she said that was a man's job. (Walls 2013: 136)
 b. Mom said Liz and I were always going on about the special trees around Byler (235)
 c. He declared that Liz was essentially a habitual liar with an overactive imagination (230)
 d. she muttered that she was alive but wanted to be left alone. (235)

The indirect speech in examples (a) and (b) appear as a nominal clause without a subordinator while the examples in (c) and (d) utilize the subordinator *that*. All the nominal clauses representing the indirect speech follow communication verbs: *say*, *declare*, and *mutter*.

- (9.30) a. she said that was a man's job. (Walls 2013: 136)

S	(Subj	she^{Pro})			
	Pred	^{Past}	<u>said</u>		
:	((	(Subj	that^{Pro})		
:	:	Pred	^{Past}	<u>was</u>	
:	:	:	(	(	a ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	:	man^{CN}
:	:	:	:	) ^{sDet}	
:	:	:	:	job^{CN}	
:	:	:	)		
:	:				
:	))				

- b. Mom said Liz and I were always going on about the special trees around
Byler (235)

S

(Subj	Mom ^{PropN})		
Pred	Past	<u>said</u>	
:	((	(Subj	(Liz ^{PropN})
:	:	:	and ^{CoConj}
:	:	:	(I ^{Pro})
:	:	)	
:	:	Pred	PastProg were ^{PriAux}
:	:	:	/Avl always ^{Av/}
:	:	:	<u>going on</u>
:	:	:	
:	:	:	
:	:	:	[about ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
:	:	:	: <Att special ^{Aj>}
:	:	:	: trees ^{CN}
:	:	:	: [PostM around ^{Prep}
:	:	:	: : (ObjPrep Byler ^{PropN})
:	:	:	:]
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	
:	:	:	]
:	:		
:	))		

- c. He declared that Liz was essentially a habitual liar with an overactive imagination (230)

S	(Subj	he ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>declared</u>
:	:	((	<u>that</u> _{SubConj}
:	:	(Subj	Liz ^{PropN})
:	:	Pred	Past <u>was</u>
:	:	:	/Av1 essentially ^{Av/}
:	:	:	(a ^{Det}
:	:	:	<Att habitual ^{Aj>}
:	:	:	liar ^{CN}
:	:	:	[^{PostM} with ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(^{ObjPrep} an ^{Det}
:	:	:	: <Att overactive ^{Aj>}
:	:	:	: imagination ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	]
:	:	:	)
:	:		
:	:	))	

- S (Subj she^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past muttered
 : ((that_{SubConj}
 : : (Subj she^{Pro})
 : : || |Past was
 : : : : < alive^{Aj}>
 : : : ||
 : : : but_{CoConj}
 : : : || |PastModPass wanted to^{SemiAux}
 : : : : : be^{PriAux}
 : : : : : left
 : : : : |
 : : : : < alone^{Aj}>
 : : : ||
 : :))
 ||

The tense of the nominal clause does not always have to match its mother clause, as in the following examples.

- Even though the tenses do not match across the clauses, they represent the writer's current point of view. In (a), the mother clause's *says* is present tense, but the nominal clause's *did not play* is past tense, both of which reflect the current writing situation: the speaker, *he*, is currently assessing a past event, stating that, in the past, stress did not affect a particular event. Example

(b) is similar, where history is currently giving us a message that our marginal status existed in the past and continues to exist as of the moment this sentence was written.

Finally, example (c) features three embedded instances of indirect speech with these main verb pairs, two of which do not match for tense: (1) *said* / *do not expire*, (2) *insists* / *don't expire*, and (3) *states* / *may be closed*. In the first pair, the mother clause's past tense indicates that Continental and Aloha provided information in the past, but the information in the indirect reported speech indicates an ongoing state of affairs, so the SVP is in the present tense. In the final pair, the daughter NomCl is not tensed but carries modality to reflect the conditionality of accounts closing.

With indirect speech, if either the mother or daughter clause is marked for grammatical mood, the other clause will likely be tensed or marked with a different mood, as the COCA examples below demonstrate.

- (9.32) a. Schubert |^{Past} said| he |^{Mod} would^{ModAux} deal| with the matter
 b. EPA regional chief Shaun McGrath |^{Past} told| residents the spill |^{Mod} may^{ModAux} be| worse than a one time belch from the mine
 c. And they |^{Pres} remind| us that we |^{Mod} could^{ModAux} not^{Neg} be| where we are today if it were not for the pioneering work of the authors of that exciting year 1968.
 d. she ... |^{Mod} could^{ModAux} promise| that it |^{Mod} would^{ModAux} not^{Neg} interfere| with her ability to be a good juror.
 e. I |^{Mod} would^{ModAux} say| that I |^{Pres} 'm| the jazzy one.
 f. Later he |^{Mod} would^{ModAux} say| that he |^{PastProg} was^{PriAux} listening| to a tape of Mr. Cuspert just before the murders.

Examples (a) through (c) demonstrate a mother clause inflected for a simple tense with a daughter NomCl that is marked for mood. Example (d) demonstrates different modalities across the mother and daughter clauses, where the main clause's SVP carries APP modality and the nominal clause's SVP carries VPF modality, and examples (e) and (f) demonstrate a mother clause that carries modality while the daughter clause is tensed. In all instances, the SVPs reflect the current speaking or writing situation.

Direct reported speech, also called direct quotation, is often set apart from the larger text to indicate its special status. In written discourse, direct speech often appears in quotation marks and serves a variety of functions, depending on the genre. In fiction writing, authors use direct speech to present dialogue while building the storyline, but, in non-fiction writing, such as academic, news, and magazine genres, authors can use direct speech to quote someone else while making an argument about a topic. When authors use direct reported speech in non-fiction genres, readers assume the author is faithfully reproducing the original quotation, copying the original word for word.

In spoken discourse, the speaker often uses different intonation patterns to distinguish the direct quotation from the rest of the utterance. Instances of direct speech in spoken genres differs from instances in written genres because, in speech, the original utterance is never reproduced faithfully. Instead, speakers present their perception of what was said and edit the content so that

only the parts they feel are important to the current context remain. Not only is every event filtered through a speaker's perception, but because memories are limited and faulty, speakers often only reproduce how the original utterance made them feel—not the exact wording. Yet, speakers still present these faulty reproductions as direct speech and, as a society, we've agreed to pretend they're exact reproductions. This misunderstanding of how direct speech works in spoken genres can be harmful. For example, in legal cases, jurors are more likely to take direct reported speech at face value and weigh instances of direct quotation more heavily than indirect quotation in testimonies even though direct speech is just as faulty as indirect speech in spoken communication.

When authors include instances of direct speech, they often provide a **quotative**⁵⁹ to indicate, at minimum, the original speaker, which functions as the subject of the quotative clause, and a verb of communication in a short verb phrase. Quotatives are special clauses that are semantically connected to the DRS but set apart grammatically, and, in the annotation scheme, quotatives are indicated by @ bounding markers with a quotative (Quot) function, as in the template below.

(9.33) @Quot (Subj speaker)
 : ||Pred |TMAV communication verb ||
 @

The predicate of a quotative clause is often a one-word finite short verb phrase, so both the long and short verb phrase begin and end on the same line, as in this template.

In the sentence below, *Mom said* is the quotative that operates more or less independently from the dialogue in the direct reported speech *I don't know*.

(9.34) “I don't know,” Mom said. (Walls 2013: 10)

S (Subj IPro)
 ||Pred |Pres doPriAux n'tNeg
 : : know
 : |
 ||

@Quot (Subj MomPropN)
 : ||Pred |Past said ||
 @

The quotative appears as a sister to the subject and predicate of the direct speech, so it is aligned with the subject and predicate of the main clause.

Unlike indirect speech, the TMAV information of the quotation reflects the original speaking or writing situation rather than the current one. Therefore, in the example above, the present tense of *don't know* reflects that, at the time of speaking, the speaker, *Mom*, didn't know some piece of information. However, the speaker stated that she didn't know in the past, which is

⁵⁹ Quotatives are also referred to as reporting clauses, attributive tags, and dialogue tags.

reflected in the past tense of the quotative. That situation is pragmatically complex: in the present tense of that past narrative moment, Mom doesn't know. The other major key difference between indirect and direct speech is pronoun use. In this example, the pronoun *I* in the direct reported speech refers to the speaker, *Mom*, because pronouns within direct speech are interpreted from the point of view of the attributed speaker.⁶⁰

Quotatives can appear in three positions relative to the direct speech: initial, medial, and final. The most common position is final, which means the quotative occurs after the direct quotation, as in the example below.

(9.35) “Maybe it was the heat,” August said. (Kidd 2002: 112)

S	/Avl	maybe ^{Av/}
	(Subj	it ^{Pro})
	Pred	Past <u>was</u>
	:	(the ^{Det}
	:	heat ^{NN}
	:	)
	@Quot	(Subj August ^{PropN})
	:	Pred Past <u>said</u>
	@	

The majority of quotatives appear in the final position like the example above. However, they can also be in initial and medial positions, as in the examples below.

(9.36) a. He told April, “Nothing’s fair in this world.” (Kidd 2002: 96)

S	@Quot	(Subj he ^{Pro})
	:	Pred Past <u>told</u>
	:	(April ^{PropN})
	:	
	@	
	(Subj	nothing ^{Pro})
	Pred	Pres <u>s</u>
	:	< fair ^{Aj} >
	:	[in ^{Prep}
	:	(ObjPrep this ^{Det}
	:	world ^{CN}
	:	)
	:	]

⁶⁰ Switching from one type to the other requires changes in both pronouns and tense.

a.	“I don’t know,” Mom said.	= direct speech
b.	Mom said she didn’t know.	= indirect speech
c.	Mom always said her big break was right around the corner.	= indirect speech
d.	Mom always said, “My big break is right around the corner.”	= direct speech

- b. “Mr. Gaston,” I said, “those men aren’t coming with us” (35)

S (Voc **Mr. Gaston**^{PropN})

@Quot (Subj **I**^{Pro})
 : ||Pred |Past said ||
 @

(Subj **those**^{Det}
 : **men**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |PresProg **are**^{PriAux} **n’t**^{Neg}
 : : coming
 : |
 : [**with**^{Prep}
 : : (**ObjPrep** **us**^{Pro})
 :]
 ||

Initial quotatives begin the sentence, and the direct speech follows the quotative, as in (a), where the quotative *He told April* appears before the direct quotation *Nothing’s fair in this world*. Medial quotatives interrupt the direct speech, as in (b), where the full direct quotation is *Mr. Gaston, those men aren’t coming with us*, and the quotative appears between the vocative *Mr. Gaston* and the rest of the direct quotation’s clause. Medial quotatives often appear after a vocative, insert, coordinator, introductory phrase or clause, or complete subject of the direct reported speech clause.

In the examples of quotatives so far, the quotative follows a basic subject-predicate clause order, but quotatives can also appear in inverted word order, where the predicate precedes the subject, as in the example below.

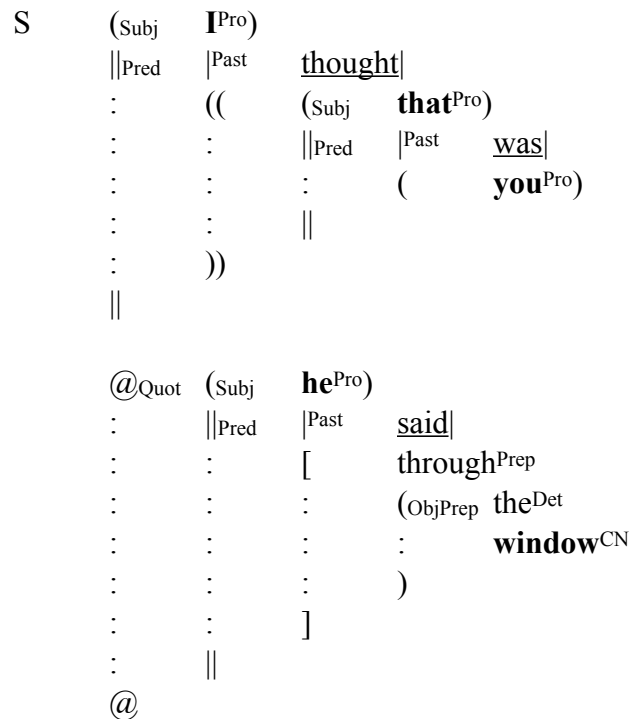
- (9.37) "... we can have a couple of these fans for your birthday present," said Rosaleen.
(Kidd 2002: 30)

S	(Subj	we ^{Pro})		
	Pred	Mod	can ^{ModAux}	
	:	:	<u>have</u>	
	:			
	:	(	a couple of ^{Det}	
	:	:	these ^{Det}	
	:	:	fans ^{CN}	
	:	)		
	:	[	for ^{Prep}	
	:	:	(ObjPrep your ^{Det}	
	:	:	:	(Att birthday ^N)
	:	:	:	present ^{CN}
	:	:	)	
	:	]		
	@Quot	Pred	Past	<u>said</u>
	:	(Subj	Rosaleen ^{PropN})	
	@			

Inverted quotatives flip the order of the predicate and subject so that the predicate appears first, as in *said Rosaleen*. The predicates of inverted quotatives typically consist of a single inflected head verb, such as *said*, *cried*, *shouted*, or *yelled*. For example, "*We can have a couple*," *Rosaleen might say* is grammatical but *"*We can have a couple*," *might say Rosaleen* is not. The frequency of inverted quotatives depends on the author; for instance, J.K. Rowling tends to rely on inverted quotative structures, such as *said Harry*, but Ann Brashares relies on non-inverted quotative structures, such as *Bridget said*.

Quotatives can incorporate additional constituents beyond the subject and short verb phrase, as in the following example:

(9.38) “I thought that was you,” he said through the window. (Kidd 2002: 43)



The quotative above includes the PP *through the window* in its predicate. Like any other clause structure, quotatives can become more complex with the inclusion of more phrases and embedded clauses.

Writers do not have to use a quotative alongside direct speech, and, in the excerpt below, the first direct quotation includes a quotative, but the final two do not.

(9.39) “Come on,” I said, turning into the drive.
 “Where’re you going?”
 “We can rest in the church.” (Kidd 2002: 29)

The choice to use quotative structures depends on the author and genre. Authors writing in non-fiction genres tend to attribute direct quotations to specific speakers with quotatives, but authors writing in fiction genres feature more quotations without quotatives, especially if the context around the quotation makes it clear who is speaking. Even when context is clear, though, some authors tend to use quotatives more frequently, such as Stephenie Meyer, who incorporates quotatives even when the context makes it clear who is speaking.

Another option for authors is to use a mixed presentation of reported speech, where an instance of indirect speech is grammatically structured as direct speech, as in the following examples.

(9.40) a. We were a tribe of three, she said. (Walls 2013: 6)

S (Subj **we**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past were
 : (a^{Det}
 : : **tribe**^{CollN}
 : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep **three**^{Pro})
 : : :]
 : :)
 ||

@Quot (Subj **she**^{Pro})
 : ||Pred |Past said ||
 @

b. Three was a perfect number, she'd go on. (Walls 2013: 6)

S (Subj **three**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past was
 : (a^{Det}
 : : <Att perfect^{Aj}>
 : : **number**^{CN}
 : :)
 ||

@Quot (Subj **she**^{Pro})
 : ||Pred |Mod 'd^{ModAux}
 : : : go on
 : : : |
 : ||
 @

In these examples, indirect speech is presented as if it were direct speech alongside a quotative. The annotation reflects its grammatical structuring as direct speech, where the quotative appears as its own constituent and the semi-quotation is not structurally embedded as a nominal clause. This type of mixed presentation is found most frequently in news writing.

Practice Set 9.2 Annotating finite clauses

Annotate the following sentences, which are taken from William Goldman's *The Princess Bride* (2007[1973]: 148-151).

11. Suddenly, as the Cliffs came ever nearer, Inigo realized the fault in the attack was flashing at him; a simple Thibault maneuver would destroy it entirely, but he didn't want to give it away so soon.⁶¹
 12. The Cliffs were very close behind him now.
 13. Then Inigo countered with the Thibault.
 14. And the man in black blocked it.
 15. "You are most excellent," he said.
 16. The man in black retreated before the slashing of the great sword.
 17. "You are amazing," he cried, as Inigo increased the already blinding speed of the blade.
 18. "You cannot tell it," he said then, "because I wear a cape and mask. But I am smiling now."
 19. They flashed along the open plateau now, and the blades were both invisible, but oh, the earth trembled, and ohhh, the skies shook, and Inigo was losing.
 20. A final burst of energy flew through Inigo's veins and he made every attempt, tried every trick, used every hour of every day of his years of experience.
-

⁶¹ Original: Suddenly, as the Cliffs came ever nearer, Inigo realized the fault in the attack that was flashing at him...

Terms introduced in Chapter 9

Lexical form

subordinator (SubConj)

Clausal forms

independent clause (S)

dependent clause

adverb clause (AvCl)

nominal clause (NomCl)

quotative clause (Quot)

Function

quotative (Quot)

Annotation features

gapped constituent (GAP)

pre-nucleus slot

Concepts

direct reported speech

indirect reported speech

subordinator types

adverbial

complementizer

relativizer

wh-word

Chapter 9 Exercises

Exercise 9.1

Annotate the following sentences, which were taken from Larry McMurtry's (1985: 351-352) *Lonesome Dove*.

1. His name was Willie Montgomery, and he had been a big crony of Augustus's at one time.
2. A young bartender with slick hair and a string tie gave them a look when they stepped to the bar, but seemed as if he could scarcely be troubled.⁶²
3. He was wiping out glasses with a little white towel and setting each one carefully on a shelf.
4. The saloon was mostly empty, just a few cardplayers at a table in the back.
5. The bartender didn't look around.⁶³
6. The young bartender didn't alter his pace, but he did provide two glasses and walked slowly back.⁶⁴
7. "You dern cowboys ought to broom yourselves off before you walk in here," he said with an insolent look.
8. Augustus pitched a ten-dollar gold piece on the bar and as the young man took it, suddenly reached out, grabbed his head and smashed his face into the bar, before the young man could even react.
9. "Besides the liquor, I think we'll require a little respect," he said.
10. "I'm surprised Willie would hire a surly young idler like you."

⁶² Original: A young bartender with slick hair and a string tie gave them a look when they stepped to the bar, but seemed as if he could scarcely be troubled to serve them.

⁶³ Original: The bartender didn't look around until he had finished polishing the glass he had in his hand.

⁶⁴ Original: The young bartender didn't alter his pace, but he did provide two glasses and walked slowly back to get a bottle of whiskey.

Exercise 9.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. *before* as subordinating conjunction
2. *before* as preposition
3. *before* as adverb
4. *so* as subordinating conjunction
5. adverb clause before the subject of the main clause
6. adverb clause after the predicate of the main clause
7. nominal clause with subordinator inside the predicate of the main clause
8. nominal clause without subordinator inside the predicate of the main clause
9. quotative clause before the quotation
10. quotative clause after the quotation

Exercise 9.3

Go online and search for a worksheet intended to help students identify subjects and predicates, making sure the worksheet has at least 10 sentences. Now pick up the book lying closest to you and randomly select 10 sentences from that text.

For both sets of sentences, identify any subjects and predicates, and then answer the following questions in at least one paragraph:

- Which sentences were more difficult to work with? Why?
- Why is it often more difficult to work with natural data (i.e., sentences found in naturally-occurring written texts or spoken conversations) than with constructed data (i.e., sentences made up for a particular exercise)?
- Why would teachers want to use constructed data sets for grammatical analysis?
- Why would teachers want to use natural data sets for grammatical analysis?

Chapter 10: Passive and existential *there*

Some of the worst writing around suffers from inert verbs and the unintended use of the passive voice. Yet the passive voice remains an important arrow in the rhetorical quiver. After all, it exists for a reason. —Constance Hale

10.1 Grammatical function versus semantic role

Noun phrases are the most common phrase type, play the most diverse roles within sentences, and tend to carry the majority of semantic meaning in sentences. For instance, in the following three examples, each taken from a different genre, the head nouns and pronouns are bolded.

- (10.1) a. **Bethy's voice** is rising. **I** am shocked to find **myself** in an **interrogation**, and the **shock** has opened a **door** onto a blank, empty **room** in my **mind**. (Caletti 2013: 169) [Fiction]
- b. **I** echo **Dr. King's sentiments** and agree that while academic **achievement** is an essential **component** of **education**, developing the **self-esteem**, **confidence** and **character** of our **children** is equally important. (Hoffman 2017) [News writing]
- c. The **passage** captures a **scene** on the **verge** of **explosion**, and yet **Dostoevsky** is able, by a **series** of restraining **maneuvers**, to quickly subdue the **clamor** for the **reader**. (Katsma 2014: 15) [Academic]

Roughly a third of each example is either a noun or pronoun. To demonstrate the full scope of noun phrases within each example, all words working within a noun phrase are struck through in the revised versions below:

- (10.2) a. ~~Bethy's voice~~ is rising. ~~I~~ am shocked to find ~~myself~~ in an ~~interrogation~~, and the ~~shock~~ has opened a ~~door~~ onto a blank, empty ~~room~~ in my ~~mind~~.
- b. ~~I~~ echo ~~Dr. King's sentiments~~ and agree that while academic ~~achievement~~ is an essential ~~component~~ of ~~education~~, developing the ~~self-esteem~~, ~~confidence~~ and ~~character~~ of our ~~children~~ is equally important.
- c. The ~~passage~~ captures a ~~scene~~ on the ~~verge~~ of ~~explosion~~, and yet ~~Dostoevsky~~ is able, by a ~~series~~ of restraining ~~maneuvers~~, to quickly subdue the ~~clamor~~ for the ~~reader~~.

For these examples, noun phrases make up over 60% of the content. By the numbers alone, it makes sense to give special attention to noun phrases to better understand what they contribute both grammatically and semantically to the sentence.

Because they tend to comprise so much of the sentence structure, understanding the role of noun phrases is vital to understanding the sentence as a whole. One way to understand the role of NPs is through examining grammatical function, and you have seen that noun phrases can function as subjects, objects of prepositions, attributives, and post-modifiers. Knowing the grammatical function is important because it tells you how the NP grammatically relates to the

other words in the sentence, which helps you identify its grammatical purpose for being included. For instance, consider the noun phrases from the end of example (a) above:

(10.3) the shock has opened a door onto a blank, empty room in my mind

S (Subj the^{Det}
 : **shock**^{NN}
)
||Pred |PresPerf has^{PriAux}
 : : opened
 : |
 : (a^{Det}
 : : **door**^{CN}
 :)
 : [onto^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep a^{Det}
 : : : <Att < blank^{Aj>}
 : : : : < empty^{Aj>}
 : : : >
 : : : **room**^{CN}
 : : : [PostM in^{Prep}
 : : : : (ObjPrep my^{Det}
 : : : : : **mind**^{CN}
 : : : :)
 : : :]
 : :)
 :]
||

Identifying grammatical functions allows you to compare the roles of NPs in similar grammatical contexts, allowing you to, for instance, make the generalization that noun phrases function as the object of a preposition when they follow prepositions and that the purpose of the preposition is to link its object to another constituent. The NP *a blank empty room in my mind* functions as the object of *onto*, which connects the noun phrase to the rest of the predicate to indicate the location of the door's opening. The NP *in my mind* functions as the object of *in*, which connects the NP to the head noun *room* and provides a location for the room.

You can extend that general pattern and identify other noun phrases functioning as objects of prepositions by finding NPs in similar grammatical environments, such as the following:

- (10.4) a. [in^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} an^{Det}
 : : **interrogation**^{CN}
 :)
]
- b. [of^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} **education**^{NN})
]
- c. [for^{Prep}
 : (Obj^{Prep} the^{Det}
 : : **reader**^{CN}
 :)
]

These three phrases are grammatically similar and feature a preposition followed by a noun phrase functioning as its object. In this text, the focus has been on these kinds of grammatical relationships.

Another lens you can use while examining NPs is to look at their **semantic roles**, which are also called thematic or theta roles. Examining the semantic roles of noun phrases adds another layer to grammatical investigation by indicating what semantic meaning each noun phrase provides for the sentence. Semantic roles categorize common types of semantic meanings provided by NPs and provide ways for you to discuss the semantic functions of NPs within sentences. For instance, consider the following set of sentences:

- (10.5) a. June opens the doors with a master key.
 b. The doors are opened with a master key by June.
 c. A master key opens the doors.

Grammatically, the subjects for these three sentences are different: in order, the subjects are *June*, *the doors*, and *a master key*. As subjects, they trigger verb agreement, which is why the singular verb form *opens* matches the two singular subjects *June* and *a master key*, and the plural verb form *are opened* matches the only plural subject, *the doors*. Furthermore, as subjects, they appear before the predicate, which is the typical placement for subjects. A subject is a grammatical function.

Semantically, *June* is the only subject that is actually doing the action of the head verb *open*. By identifying the semantic roles of the NPs in a sentence, you can compare the roles the NPs play in contributing to the meaning of the sentence. The semantic roles provided below are discussed in the following paragraphs:

- (10.6)
- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| | AGENT | PATIENT | INSTRUMENT |
| a. | (June) | opens (the doors) | with (a master key). |
-
	PATIENT	INSTRUMENT	AGENT
b.	(The doors)	are opened with (a master key)	by (June).
-
	INSTRUMENT	PATIENT
c.	(A master key)	opens (the doors).

The labels provided demonstrate that, while grammatical functions would differ with each rewording, semantic roles remain consistent if the meaning remains consistent; therefore, *June*, when mentioned, is the AGENT, *the doors* is the PATIENT, and *a master key* is the INSTRUMENT.⁶⁵ Studies show that speakers respond to the same NP differently in their brains, depending on its semantic role in the sentence. This section discusses ten semantic roles NPs can take, including AGENT, PATIENT, and INSTRUMENT. The roles presented here are not exhaustive⁶⁶ but have been selected because they will be helpful tools for later discussions of grammatical functions in this chapter, as well as the next two chapters.

The AGENT is often an animate, conscious being who purposefully carries out a visible or audible action specified in a head verb, which means AGENTS are often humans or animals, but they can be personified objects, especially in genres like fantasy and science-fiction (e.g., a robot that comes to life, an animate tree person). A less prototypical AGENT is an involuntary cause for the action specified in a head verb, whether the noun represents an animate being who accidentally causes an action (e.g., *Jo dropped the manuscript*) or an inanimate force or object (e.g., *The wind destroyed the bridge, A loud clicking noise annoyed her*). In (10.6), *June* physically and purposefully opens the doors, so she is a typical AGENT in both (a) and (b). While AGENTS are often also the grammatical subject, as in (a), AGENTS can appear in other grammatical functions, such as object of the preposition, as in (b).

When identifying semantic roles, you should begin by identifying the head verbs in the sentence because semantic roles for NPs are defined by determining the NP’s relationship to a head verb. For each of the following COCA examples, first identify the head verb and then identify the AGENT carrying out the action indicated by the head verb.

- (10.7) a. A couple of orcas swam by the boat
 b. Ray had fetched a cup for Bill and was pouring coffee for everyone.

⁶⁵ Traditionally, semantic roles are presented in all-capital letters to further distinguish them from grammatical functions.

⁶⁶ The roles and definitions presented here are meant to be an introduction into thinking about the meaning provided by noun phrases to support grammatical investigations. Because of that, several semantic roles have been condensed or omitted altogether for discussion; however, for any students wishing to study semantic roles at more advanced levels, this introduction will serve as a starting point for thinking about what meaning each head noun contributes to the sentence.

- c. the gorgeous title track was sung by Garfunkel alone, despite his resistance.
- d. More tornados damaged towns in central Indiana

In the answers below, the head verbs are underlined, and the NPs acting as AGENTS are in parentheses with their head nouns bolded and a label placed above the NP.

(10.8)

AGENT

- a. (A couple of **orcas**) swam by the boat

AGENT

- b. (**Ray**) had fetched a cup for Bill and was pouring coffee for everyone.

AGENT

- c. the gorgeous title track was sung by (**Garfunkel**) alone, despite his resistance.

AGENT

- d. (More **tornados**) damaged towns in central Indiana

In (a), the only head verb is *swam*, and the animate beings doing the swimming are *a couple of orcas*. Example (b) demonstrates that one AGENT can perform multiple actions, where *Ray* is the AGENT of the two head verbs *fetch*ed and *pour*ing. In both (a) and (b), the AGENT is also the grammatical subject, but the AGENT in (c), *Garfunkel*, is the object of the preposition *by*. Finally, in (d), *more tornados* is the agent of the head verb *damaged*.

The **PATIENT** is the “undergoer,” the animate being or inanimate object that is visibly affected by an action indicated in the head verb, often undergoing a change in physical state or location, such as the doors being opened in the sentences in (10.6). In the COCA examples below, identify any head verbs and then find the NP that is undergoing the action represented by that head verb.

- (10.9) a. He tore the top page from the yellow tablet
- b. Amy’s tiny house was painted white
- c. Scott kicked the floor with the toe of his shoe
- d. I got hit by one of those birds

Two of the examples above are in the active voice, and two are in the passive voice. Chapter 8 introduced the grammatical features of passive voice, which requires a form of *be* or *get* acting as a primary auxiliary, followed by a past participle. When SVPs are in the active voice, any PATIENTS typically follow the head verb, as in (a) and (c); however, when they are passive, a PATIENT is often the grammatical subject, as in (b) and (d).

- (10.10) PATIENT
- a. He tore (the top **page**) from the yellow tablet
- PATIENT
- b. (Amy's tiny **house**) was painted white
- PATIENT
- c. Scott kicked (the **floor**) with the toe of his shoe
- PATIENT
- d. (**I**) got hit by one of those birds

Some PATIENTS undergo changes that are more permanent, such as *the top page* in (a) that was torn and *Amy's tiny house* in (b) that was painted, but some PATIENTS are only momentarily affected, such as *the floor* in (c) that was affected by the kick but may be left unmarked or may have only a temporary skid mark as a result. It is not clear how permanently affected the PATIENT in (d) is because it depends on how hard *I* was hit by the bird.

The INSTRUMENT helps an AGENT (whether the AGENT is specified or not) carry out the action specified by the head verb, such as *a master key* in (10.6), which is used to open the doors. INSTRUMENTS often appear as objects of prepositions, such as *with a master key* in (10.6a), but they can also function as grammatical subjects, as in (10.6c), which omits an expressed AGENT. Even though *a master key* is the subject in (10.6c), it is understood that some AGENT uses the key to open the doors (i.e., the key isn't walking down the hallway by itself, opening up the doors as it goes). In the following COCA examples, identify the INSTRUMENT and, if expressed, the AGENT.

- (10.11) a. Hertz went to the locker room and jimmied open Peter's old locker with a crowbar.
- b. Somewhere behind them, a knife chopped manically on a cutting board.

While both the sentences above include an INSTRUMENT, only one specifies the AGENT that uses the instrument to carry out the action of a head verb.

- (10.12) AGENT
- a. (**Hertz**) went to the locker room and jimmied open Peter's old locker
- INSTRUMENT
- with (a **crowbar**).
- INSTRUMENT
- b. Somewhere behind them, (a **knife**) chopped manically on a cutting board.

Multiple verbs can support a single semantic role, which is demonstrated in the COCA example below, where the verbs *used* and *drop* indicate the INSTRUMENT used and action accomplished:

INSTRUMENT

(He) set the glass down, used (the **tongs**) to drop another ice cube into it.

The next two semantic roles, EXPERIENCER and STIMULUS, often work together. The EXPERIENCER experiences some change in perception or psychological state but has no control over the action specified by the verb and is not visibly affected, and the verb used with an EXPERIENCER is often a sensory, cognitive, or emotional one (e.g., ***She** heard the ticking of the clock*; ***June** loves Bill*). Some sensory verbs can be ambiguous with multiple semantic interpretations, such as *tasted* in the sentence *Benny tasted the pepper*. In one interpretation, Benny is an EXPERIENCER: perhaps he was eating soup and got a bite with a big piece of pepper in it, and he had no choice but to taste the pepper because his taste buds were overwhelmed with pepper. In another interpretation, Benny is an AGENT: he could be a chef and purposefully taste the pepper to decide if he wants to use it in his soup. For ambiguous cases, you have to depend on context to determine, for instance, whether Benny is best categorized as an AGENT or EXPERIENCER.

Using the information presented above, identify any EXPERIENCERS and STIMULI in the COCA examples below.

- (10.14)a. He saw a papered wall with blue flowers on it
b. Patsy is drawing a portrait of Jessie
c. Jessamine felt a sudden and overwhelming urge to go hug the old man.

Example (b) does not have any EXPERIENCERS or STIMULI because *Patsy* is an AGENT who volitionally carries out the action of drawing, and *a portrait of Jessie* is the PATIENT being affected by the action of the verb *drawing* because the action of drawing is bringing the portrait into existence. However, the other two examples include both an EXPERIENCER and STIMULUS.

- (10.15)
- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|
| | EXP. | STIMULUS |
| a. | (He) <u>saw</u> | (a papered wall with blue flowers on it) |
-
	AGENT	PATIENT
b.	(Patsy) is <u>drawing</u>	(a portrait of Jessie)
-
	EXPERIENCER	STIMULUS
c.	(Jessamine) <u>felt</u>	(a sudden and overwhelming urge to go hug the old man).

In example (a), *he* experiences the sensation of seeing because his eyes happened to look upon a wall, but if the verb were *examined* or *stared at*, *he* would be an AGENT choosing to have his attention devoted to the wall. In any case, the wall is unaffected by his seeing it, so it is the STIMULUS. *Jessamine* in example (c) experiences a sudden emotion, and the urge is the STIMULUS of her experience.

The **RECIPIENT** is the animate destination or intended goal for a moving object or concept or is the intended animate beneficiary of an action, concept, or object. For instance, in the sentence *Benny gave Isa flowers*, *Isa* is the RECIPIENT of *flowers* because *Isa* is the destination for the *flowers*. Even if *flowers* is substituted for a more abstract noun phrase, such as *an idea* (e.g., *Benny gave Isa an idea*), *Isa* is still the RECIPIENT. In these instances, *Isa* received something, but RECIPIENTS could also be an intended beneficiary, which means that while they benefit from some action or object, they do not necessarily receive it. For example, in the sentence *Wayne moved the boxes for Dee*, *Dee* is the RECIPIENT because she is the intended beneficiary and receives some benefit from Wayne moving the boxes. In the COCA examples below, identify the RECIPIENTS.

- (10.16)a. He has also received the Samuel Beckett Prize for his first TV play, Paris.
 b. Luke handed me the ball.
 c. If Charlie bought me flowers and baked me cakes and became someone else, I probably wouldn't like it.
 d. I spent an afternoon coming up with (sometimes super-wild!) pitches and sent seven to my editor.
 e. She had multiple other ways of communicating in a classified manner, including assistants or staff members printing classified documents for her

While RECIPIENTS often occur in the predicate, as they do in examples (b) through (e), they can appear as the subject of a sentence, as in example (a).

(10.17) RECIPIENT

- a. (**He**) has also received the Samuel Beckett Prize for his first TV play, Paris.

RECIPIENT

- b. Luke handed (**me**) the ball.

RECIPIENT

RECIPIENT

- c. If Charlie bought (**me**) flowers and baked (**me**) cakes and became someone else, I probably wouldn't like it.
- d. I spent an afternoon coming up with (sometimes super-wild!) pitches and

RECIPIENT

sent seven to (my **editor**).

- e. She had multiple other ways of communicating in a classified manner, including assistants or staff members printing classified documents for

RECIPIENT

(**her**)

The examples in (a) and (b) are typical RECIPIENTS because they are the known RECIPIENTS of an award and the ball. Sentences (c) and (d) provide examples of intended RECIPIENTS. In (c), you cannot be sure I physically received flowers or cakes since I am only the hypothetical intended RECIPIENT. In (d), while you know I sent the seven pitches, you do not know if my editor received them since they may have gotten lost in interoffice mail or cyberspace on their way to my editor. Finally, (e) provides an example of an intended beneficiary because the assistants and staff members were printing documents on her behalf.

The **THEME** is a noun phrase being described, located, or talked about (e.g., *The **flower** is pretty*; ***Josie** was in the car*). The **THEME** is often the subject of verbs like *be* and *seem*. The rest of the sentence provides more information about the **THEME**, but the **THEME** is not doing an action, being acted upon, experiencing an emotion, stimulating an experience, or receiving anything. For instance, identify the **THEMES** in the following COCA examples:

- (10.18)a. The former president looks pretty cool.
- b. Zinnia appeared puzzled.
- c. A Ruth statue stands just inside the front door to the Hall of Fame and Museum.
- d. The book lay open in my lap

The subject of each sentence is a THEME being described or located without being affected by the descriptions.

- (10.19)
- a. THEME
(The former **president**) looks pretty cool.
- b. THEME
(**Zinnia**) appeared puzzled.
- c. THEME
(A Ruth **statue**) stands just inside the front door to the Hall of Fame and Museum.
- d. THEME
(The **book**) lay open in my lap

In the first two examples, the THEME is described by the adjective phrase that appears within the predicate: *pretty cool* describes *the former president* in (a), and *puzzled* describes Zinnia's appearance in (b). The external descriptions may or may not be indicative of a volitional attempt or an internal emotional experience, so you don't know, for example, if Zinnia is actually experiencing puzzled emotions. You only know that, on the surface, her face and body language portray a puzzled quality. Finally, the THEMES in (c) and (d) are being located by phrases in the predicate, which leads to the next semantic role.

The **LOCATION** provides one of three types of locations for an animate being, inanimate object, or abstract concept: (1) the static location, (2) the point of origin for movement, or (3) the intended endpoint or stopping point of movement. The most obvious applications of these three roles is for physical location, as demonstrated by the following COCA examples.

- (10.20)
- a. Meanwhile, his steak and salmon cool on (the **plate**).
- b. Veronica and Vincent emerged from (the **kitchen**).
- c. Sidney slowly turned toward (**Fisher**).

The NP *the plate* in (a) provides a static LOCATION of his steak and salmon. Examples (b) and (c) include LOCATIONS for movement: *the kitchen* in (b) provides a beginning point for movement, and *Fisher* in (c) provides the intended stopping point for Sidney's turning. LOCATION can also be metaphorical rather than physical, as in the following COCA example:

(10.21)

LOCATION

We often see dinosaur skeletons plucked from (their evolutionary **context**) on

LOCATION LOCATION

LOCATION

LOCATION

(**display** in (a **museum**)), a single page ripped from (a **book**) and taped to (the **wall**).

In this example, *their evolutionary context* is a metaphorical LOCATION because it is not a physical starting point for dinosaur skeletons. Later in the sentence, the LOCATIONS *a book* and *the wall* are, in this particular use, representing a metaphor that compares dinosaur skeletons to a removed page from a book. As with these examples, the LOCATION is often inside a preposition phrase headed by a spatial preposition, such as *on*, *from*, *toward*, *in*, and *to*.

Two other semantic roles are also often included within a preposition phrase: TIME and MANNER. The following COCA examples demonstrate the TIME semantic role, which refers to phrases providing temporal information, such as the time of day, weekday, date, month, season, or year:

(10.22)

TIME

a. “Our main focus is just trying to win on (**Wednesday**),” Benjamin said.

TIME

b. The famous gongs that ring across the River Thames will stop at (**noon**)

TIME

TIME

on (**Aug. 21**) and will only resume regular service in (**2021**).

TIME

c. I got it (last **January**).

Examples (a) and (b) demonstrate that TIME is often indicated in a preposition phrase headed by prepositions such as *at*, *during*, *in*, or *on*, but, as demonstrated by (c), the NP does not need to be within a preposition to indicate TIME, where *last January* indicates a time for me getting it.

While LOCATIONS provide *where* something occurred and TIMES provide *when* something occurred, MANNERS describe *how* it occurred, as demonstrated by the following COCA examples:

(10.23)

MANNER

a. So if I’m tired, I walk with (a **limp**).

MANNER

b. With (a **flourish**), the man produced a sheet of names in a white-gloved hand.

MANNER

c. “Come on,” the strange woman said in (a **rush**).

In examples (a) and (b), the MANNER appears inside a PP headed by *with*, which is a frequent pattern. In (a), *a limp* provides information about how I walk, and, in (b), *a flourish* describes how the man produced the sheet of names. In example (c), *a rush*, which is the object of the preposition *in*, provides the MANNER describing how the woman spoke.

The ten semantic roles discussed in this section are summarized in the table below with definitions and COCA examples for each one.

ROLE	Definition	COCA example
AGENT	is an animate being that volitionally performs an action	(Francis) quickly folded the map
PATIENT	is visibly affected by an action	Francis quickly folded (the map)
INSTRUMENT	is a tool used by an AGENT to perform an action	he took a bottle of wine out of the rack and attacked it with (the corkscrew)
EXPERIENCER	perceives through sensory input or experiences a change in psychological state	(I) heard the doorbell a few minutes later
STIMULUS	causes a perceptive event or emotional change of state	I heard (the doorbell) a few minutes later
RECIPIENT	is an animate destination or intended goal for an object/concept or beneficiary of an event/ action	The gentleman gave (me) two books
THEME	is described, located, or talked about	(the colorful maple leaves) were on the ground
LOCATION	provides a location for an event or action	the colorful maple leaves were on (the ground)
TIME	provides a time for an event or action	Colorado in (winter) is majesty defined.
MANNER	indicates the way in which an action was completed	She dressed with (flair).

Table 10.1 Semantic roles

Based on the information provided above, identify the NPs and their semantic roles in the sentences below, taken from Rick Riordan’s *The Lightning Thief* (2005).

- (10.24)a. Mr. Brunner led the museum tour.
 b. He rode up front in his wheelchair, guiding us through the big echoey galleries, past marble statues and glass cases full of really old black-and-orange pottery.
 c. It blew my mind that this stuff had survived for two thousand, three thousand years.

- d. Mrs. Dodds was this little math teacher from Georgia who always wore a black leather jacket, even though she was fifty years old.
- e. He told me to go outside and eat my lunch.

Identifying semantic roles is often a practice of identifying the best match for the context because there will not always be a clear or obvious answer. After the suggested answers below, I discuss some of the potentially more difficult semantic roles to identify.

In the first sentence, *Mr. Brunner* is an AGENT actively leading the tour:

(10.25) AGENT PATIENT
(**Mr. Brunner**) led (the museum **tour**).

While the role of *Mr. Brunner* is more easily identified, *the museum tour* could be identified as either a PATIENT or THEME, depending on the interpretation. If the tour is interpreted as a group of people physically moving around the museum, PATIENT is the best answer because it reflects the fact that the people on the tour are physically affected by Mr. Brunner's leadership. However, if it is interpreted as an abstract noun, THEME is the best answer since the tour serves as a topic being discussed. Because the following sentences provide information about people being led through a museum, I chose PATIENT as the best fit here.

In the second sentence, *he* is an AGENT who is guiding *us*, the PATIENT, through specified LOCATIONS:

(10.26) AGENT INSTRUMENT PATIENT LOCATION
(**He**) rode up front in (his **wheelchair**), guiding (**us**) through (the big echoey **galleries**),
LOCATION THEME
past (marble **statues** and glass **cases** full of (really old black-and-orange **pottery**)).

I identified *his wheelchair* as an INSTRUMENT because it is the tool he uses to ride as he leads them through the galleries, though you could argue that it serves as a mobile LOCATION. The NP *the big echoey galleries* provides a LOCATION for the guiding, and the long NP headed by *statues* and *cases* provides more information about the LOCATIONS visited on the tour. Finally, the NP *really old black-and-orange pottery* provides information to further describe the glass cases, so that NP is best identified as a THEME.

The third sentence provides a TIME, *two thousand, three thousand years*, to indicate the length of time items had survived.

(10.27) STIMULUS EXPERIENCER THEME TIME
(**It**) blew (my **mind**) that (this **stuff**) had survived for (two thousand, three thousand **years**).

While *my mind* could be viewed as a PATIENT since it is undergoing a change, the change provided in the context is a cognitive experience, so I have labeled *my mind* as an EXPERIENCER with *it* serving as the STIMULUS. The NP *this stuff* is best labeled as THEME because the stuff is

being talked about without providing a volitional interpretation; that is, *this stuff* didn't actively fight to survive, so it does not serve as an AGENT of that action.

The fourth sentence provides two descriptions of *Mrs. Dodds*, and all the NPs used to describe her are THEMES. The NP headed by *teacher*, though, is complex with multiple embedded semantic roles, including the LOCATION *Georgia*, the AGENT *who*, and the PATIENT *a black leather jacket*.

(10.28) THEME THEME LOCATION AGENT
 (**Mrs. Dodds**) was (this little math **teacher** from (**Georgia**) (**who**) always wore
 PATIENT THEME THEME
 (a black leather **jacket**)), even though (**she**) was (fifty **years** old).

At the end of the sentence *fifty years old* is a description of the THEME *she*, and as a description of her age, it is best interpreted as a THEME rather than a timeframe.

The final sentence includes the AGENT *he*, who gives the RECIPIENT *me* a message, and the PATIENT *my lunch*, which is affected by the verb *eat*.

(10.29) AGENT RECIPIENT PATIENT
 (He) told (me) to go outside and eat (my **lunch**).

These roles cover a majority of the noun phrases that you will encounter and will help in identifying grammatical features, such as the passive voice, which is discussed in the next section, and grammatical functions within the predicate, which are described in the next two chapters.

Practice Set 10.1 Identifying semantic roles

For each of the following sentences taken from Donna Tartt's (2004[1992]: 305-306) *The Secret History*, identify the NPs and select the semantic role that best fits each NP's context.

11. Cloke leaned forward, his long, dark hair falling in his face, and knocked the ash off his cigarette.
12. He had a troubled, secretive expression, and after a few moments he looked up.
13. Henry bit his lip.
14. Cloke shifted uncomfortably in his chair.
15. "This is off the record, now," he said.
16. Cloke took a last draw on his cigarette and ground it out with a deliberate, corkscrewing movement.
17. Cloke was one of the biggest drug dealers on campus.
18. Then he shrugged.

19. “So,” he said, “I know this Chinaman down on Mott Street in New York, kind of a scary guy, but he likes me and he’ll pretty much give me however much I can scrape up the cash for.”
20. We had already heard about this excursion to New York.

10.2 Passive voice

For many students, their knowledge of the passive voice is limited to a belief that they should always avoid it because their past writing teachers have strongly objected to its use. Any paper that overuses passive sentences quickly becomes redundant and boring in its wording and style, but the passive voice has a valid place in English grammar and should not be so easily dismissed. In the opening quotation of this chapter, Constance Hale calls the passive voice “an important arrow in the rhetorical quiver” because good writers can use it to their advantage. A writer’s goal should not be to avoid passive constructions altogether but to understand how to best use them, and the goal in this chapter is to help you understand how to identify passive voice through grammatical features and understand its uses in discourse.

Chapter 8 introduced the grammatical features of a passive SVP: the primary auxiliary *be* or *get* followed by a past participle (*-ed/-en*) of a head verb, as in the following COCA examples:

- (10.30) a. Blair Village Elementary teachers |^{PastPass} were^{PriAux} chastised| for lack of creativity in their methodology
- b. it started as a little germ of truth over the weekend and |^{PastPass} got^{PriAux} blown up| by some manipulative people here in New York

A grammatical subject triggers subject-verb agreement, so the plural subject *Blair Village Elementary teachers* in (a) requires the plural primary auxiliary *were*. To some extent, the grammatical subject is also the primary focus of the sentence, so the teachers are the focus in (a), and *it* is the focus in (b), which, when viewed in its original context, refers to a story. That sentence was taken from a televised interview with Geraldo Rivera in 1994, and its context is provided below:

- (10.31) RIVERA: Robin Leach, is Princess Di moving to New York City?
- Mr-LEACH: No, but she’s certainly going to be moving to America, but not immediately and I don’t know that she’s going to be moving into the Trump Tower. That stor—where this story came from—*it started as a little germ of truth over the weekend and got blown up by some manipulative people here in New York*—not with the press, by the way, but people who love to manipulate the press.

The context tells us that *it* in (10.30b) represents the story of Princess Di moving to NYC, and that story is the focus of the sentence.

Subjects of passive verbs fulfill the two typical grammatical functions of subjects because they trigger verb agreement and identify the focus of the sentence. However, subjects of passive

verbs do not fulfill the typical semantic feature of subjects because the typical subject is the semantic AGENT, or the “doer” of the verb’s action. In passive sentences, though, the grammatical subject is often a PATIENT, and the AGENT is either not provided or “demoted” to an object of the preposition *by*. Let’s return to the two previous examples:

- (10.32) PATIENT
- a. (Subj Blair Village Elementary **teachers**) |^{PastPass} were^{PriAux} chastised| for lack of creativity in their methodology
- PATIENT AGENT
- b. (Subj **it**) ... |^{PastPass} got^{PriAux} blown up| by (some manipulative **people** here in New York)

In (a), the teachers are the semantic PATIENT of the verb *chastised* because they are being directly affected by the action of the verb, and the AGENT doing the chastising is not mentioned in the sentence, making this sentence an example of the **short passive**, which means the AGENT is omitted. The basic structure of the short passive is represented in the figure below:

(Subj semantic PATIENT)	^{BE/GET^{PriAux}} <u>past participle</u>

Figure 10.1 Basic short passive structure

Short passives can and often do include more constituents than the two provided in the figure above but include those two elements at a minimum.

In (b), the subject *it*, which refers to the story, is the undergoer of the *blowing up* because its state has been changed by the head verb. The AGENT, *some manipulative people here in New York*, is mentioned in the *by*-PP, which makes it an example of the **long passive**. The basic structure of the long passive is represented in the figure below:

(Subj semantic PATIENT)	^{BE/GET^{PriAux}} <u>past participle</u>	[^{Avl} by (ObjPrep semantic AGENT)]

Figure 10.2 Basic long passive structure

The basic long passive structure requires at least three constituents: a subject that is semantically a PATIENT, a passive SVP, and a *by*-PP with the semantic AGENT as the object of preposition.

While many passive structures have a PATIENT as the grammatical subject, some passives have RECIPIENTS as subjects, as this short passive demonstrates:

- (10.33) RECIPIENT PATIENT
- (**Vanicelli**) |^{PastPass} was^{PriAux} handed| (two empty evidence **boxes**). (COCA)

In this short passive, the AGENT of the handing action is not specified, but the PATIENT is *two empty evidence boxes*, and the RECIPIENT is *Vanicelli*, who is the grammatical subject for the sentence.

Passives can also incorporate EXPERIENCERS and STIMULUS, as demonstrated in the COCA examples below.

- (10.34)
- | | | |
|----|---|----------|
| | EXPERIENCER | STIMULUS |
| a. | (I) ^{PastPass} was ^{PriAux} <u>shocked</u> by (his appearance). | |
| | STIMULUS | |
| b. | (Snickers) ^{PastPass} were ^{PriAux} <u>heard</u> outside the door. | |

These examples demonstrate how both the EXPERIENCER and STIMULUS roles can take the subject function in passive constructions. In the long passive in (a), both roles are included, but the short passive in (b) omits the EXPERIENCER.

Rewording a passive sentence as an active one requires several grammatical changes: (1) the semantic AGENT (or EXPERIENCER/STIMULUS) needs to be expressed and placed in the subject position before the predicate; (2) the SVP changes to active voice, thus deleting the *be/get* primary auxiliary and, if necessary, changing the head verb's participle form to match the active context; and (3) the constituent that was functioning as the grammatical subject of the passive voice moves to a spot within the predicate. The previous five passive sentences are reworded as active sentences below:

- (10.35) a. Someone chastised Blair Village Elementary teachers for lack of creativity in their methodology
- b. some manipulative people here in New York blew the story up
- c. Someone handed Vanicelli two empty evidence boxes.
Someone handed two empty evidence boxes to Vanicelli.
- d. His appearance shocked me.
- e. Someone heard snickers outside the door.

As examples (a), (c), and (e) demonstrate, when the short passive is used, rewording the sentence in the active voice is awkward because you don't know who is doing or experiencing the action of the verb, resulting in a vague pronoun, such as *someone*, making it a weaker sentence. Long passives are more easily shifted to active sentences, as in (b) and (d).

While the discussion so far has focused on *how* passives are formed and are different from instances of active voice, another important factor is to understand *why* passives are used. Generally speaking, authors use the long passive to put focus on a constituent that would otherwise appear in the predicate (e.g., *the bridge was destroyed by floods*), especially when, given the flow of information from one sentence to the next, it makes more sense to have that constituent placed at the beginning of the sentence. Consider the example below:

- (10.36) Just moments ago, I got off the phone with sources close to this investigation. And listen to this—these sources are telling me that Dr. Conrad Murray, the doctor who was right there when Jackson died, was interrogated **by the LAPD** for 3 1/2 hours just two days after Jackson died. (COCA)

In the context of this story, the more important piece of information is the doctor—so much so that you could delete the PP containing the AGENT (i.e., *by the LAPD*) without hurting the overall sentence because that information, while providing more specific details, is not integral to the context. Changing that sentence to active voice places the focus on the LAPD rather than the doctor: *The LAPD interrogated Dr. Conrad Murray, the doctor who was right there when Jackson died, for 3 1/2 hours just two days after Jackson died.* With the sentence worded in active voice, the focus is on the LAPD and its investigation, so readers would expect following sentences to focus on the investigation rather than the doctor's potential role in Jackson's death.

Writers can use short passives for the same reason:

- (10.37) Unfortunately, there are many people like Porter, who have a limited IQ and who have been convicted of murder with very limited evidence. I often think of Juan Rivera, convicted five years ago of the murder of Holly Staker, a 12-year-old baby-sitter in Waukegan. Rivera, a former special-education student, was interrogated for 23 hours before he finally confessed. His confession was the only existing link to the murder. All the concrete evidence left at the scene of the crime pointed to Rivera's innocence; the blood, semen and hair found on the victim did not belong to Rivera. Yet Rivera was convicted and sentenced to life without parole. (COCA)

This particular news story focuses on people currently serving time in jail for crimes they most likely did not commit as a result of questionable interrogations, specifically interrogations of someone with a lower IQ. Because the focus is on the people who were convicted rather than the interrogators, prosecutors, or juries, the grammatical subjects of the passive verbs are people who have been convicted. Changing these forms to active ones would result in an unwieldy paragraph with information that doesn't flow together in a cohesive manner.

Short passives can serve four additional purposes: (1) the semantic subject is predictable by the verb (e.g., in *the tent was blown away*, you do not need to specify that the wind did the blowing); (2) the speaker/writer wants to avoid assigning blame or responsibility (e.g., *mistakes were made* allows you to acknowledge mistakes without stating who caused them); (3) the semantic subject is unknown (e.g., if you walk into a room and see a broken vase without knowing who or what caused it, you can say *the vase was broken*); or (4) the semantic subject is not important for the particular context, has already been mentioned and does not need to be mentioned again, or could not be mentioned because it would be cumbersome to do so.

A COCA example for each of these reasons is provided below:

- (10.38) a. **Predictable agent from verb/context:** Now Las Vegas and some of its best-known casinos are recovering from some rough weather out there as well, seventy-mile-per-hour winds and severe thunderstorms battered the city last night. Thousands of people lost power for a time. Streets were flooded.

- b. **Avoid assigning blame/responsibility:** A solution can't come soon enough for a growing number of frustrated fraud victims, including a 75-year-old Issaquah, Wash., woman who was allegedly swindled out of more than \$1 million, and a cancer patient whose identity was stolen from a Seattle hospital.
- c. **Agent unknown:** Each square, she sees, has been driven into place with a burnished nail. The squares are aligned in spiraling rows that begin fifteen feet above ground and twist down the trunk to its base, like a strand of DNA. The mother thinks there must be a thousand pieces of paper nailed to the trunk. The boy thinks of a giant candy cane. He rips off one of the scraps and sees writing. "Look," he says, handing it to his mother. She turns the scrap over. "I'm sorry" is written in blue ballpoint pen, the cursive delicate, tail on the y rounding up in a scrolled flourish.
- d. **Agent not necessary for context:** Upwards of 35 million industrial workers were laid off in the industrial restructuring that occurred between 1998 and 2001—the single largest wave of layoffs in modern Chinese history.

In (a), the semantic agent of the passive SVP *were flooded* is predictable, especially given the context: the context states the story is about a thunderstorm, so it would be redundant to continue stating "the storm" again and again throughout the text. In (b), the perpetrators of the swindling and identity theft are kept anonymous, most likely for legal reasons. Newspapers cannot print the names of alleged perpetrators if they haven't yet been officially charged, so they can avoid assigning responsibility for the crimes by relying on the short passive. In (c), a mother and son walk up to a tree with an art installation of thousands of little squares of paper nailed into a tree, and they don't know who created it. Any active rewordings would require a repetitive and awkward reliance on vague pronouns like *someone*. Finally, in (d), the companies or people responsible for the lay-offs are not important for the context of the story because the workers are the focus, and it would be cumbersome to list all the semantic agents responsible for the 35 million lay-offs.

Many people associate the passive "Mistakes were made" with a classic avoidance strategy used by the government, which is reflected in this quotation:

(10.39) When little people mishandle important financial documents, the IR nails them. When nobodies run guns to the drug cartels, the ATF is on the case. When a private company creates an "ecological catastrophe" in the Gulf, the EPA levies a \$13.7 billion fine. When government does these things and adds a serving of cover-ups and lies? "Mistakes were made." (COCA)

Saying "Mistakes were made" allows an admission of wrongdoing without accepting responsibility or placing blame on any individual or group. While that particular sentence tends to have a bad connotation, you might use the same strategy in everyday communication to avoid taking responsibility (e.g., when I told my dad, "The water wasn't turned off, and now the garden

is flooded”) or to avoid assigning blame to someone else (e.g., if you tell a professor, “The guidelines weren’t posted”).

Because passive SVPs have a form of *be* or *get* followed by a past participle and past participles can be used as adjectives, the resulting verb phrase can be ambiguous. For example, annotate the following related sentences before moving on:

- (10.40)a. Max grilled the burgers.
 b. The burgers were grilled by Max.
 c. The burgers were grilled.

The annotation for (a) should look like the following:

(10.41)S (Subj **Max**^{PropN})
 ||Pred |^{Past} grilled
 : (**the**^{Det}
 : : **burgers**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

The verb *grilled* is operating alone as the SVP within the predicate. Here, the action of grilling is being emphasized, and, contextually, you understand that the end state of the meat is a grilled state. The focus, though, is on Max doing the activity of grilling.

The annotation for (b) should look like the following:

(10.42)S (Subj **the**^{Det}
 : **burgers**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |^{PastPass} **were**^{PriAux}
 : : grilled
 : |
 : [**by**^{Prep}
 : : (**ObjPrep** **Max**^{PropN})
 :]
 ||

The head verb *grilled* now appears with the primary auxiliary *were*, and the SVP is passive. In this sentence, the meat—and its end state—is now emphasized, more so than the activity, but the passive reading of the verb is forced with the presence of the *by*-PP providing an AGENT in the long passive construction.

The third sentence, though similar in meaning, is slightly more difficult to grammatically annotate because *were grilled* is potentially ambiguous and so has two possible annotations.

- (10.43)a. S (Subj the^{Det}
 :
)
 ||Pred |PastPass were^{PriAux}
 :
 :
 ||
- b. S (Subj the^{Det}
 :
)
 ||Pred |Past were
 :
 < grilled^{Aj}>
 ||

Both these annotations are feasible options for this sentence because it is an example of what is often called a semi-passive. **Semi-passives** can be read with a passive interpretation, as in (a), where the SVP emphasizes the interpretation of the past participle *grilled* as an activity. On the other hand, semi-passives can be analyzed as having an adjectival form of the past participle (i.e., *grilled* as an adjective), where the interpretation of an activity is removed. Instead, the sentence provides a description of the resulting state of the burgers, as in (b).

Sometimes context will help you figure out which interpretation is the best interpretation of a particular sentence, but other times, even with context, the sentence is ambiguous. In cases like those, you need to select the interpretation you feel fits best and then annotate the rest of the sentence to match that interpretation. For instance, if you analyze *grilled* as an adjective in *The burgers were grilled*, you need to make sure that you identify *grilled* as an adjective phrase and label *were* as the head verb with its TMAV information. As you work with sentences, it's good to note where multiple interpretations exist and keep an open mind, especially if you're comparing analyses from one text to another.

Understanding the passive voice can help you identify functions of constituents even in active sentences. For example, turning an active sentence into a passive one can help you identify whether a constituent is a post-modifier or its own constituent within the predicate. Consider the following examples from COCA, focusing on the *with*-PPs in their predicates:

- (10.44)a. He took the tray with the Spode teapot
 b. The Guard took the Russians with the bayonet.

The question is whether the *with*-PP is a post-modifier of the head noun before it or whether the *with*-PP is its own constituent within the predicate. A passivization test can help you figure that out because a post-modifier must move with its head noun while a PP working as its own constituent will not, as demonstrated below:

- (10.45)a. The tray with the Spode teapot was taken.
 a'. ? The tray was taken with the Spode teapot.
- b. ? The Russians with the bayonet were taken.
 b'. The Russians were taken with the bayonet.

The first rewording in (a) represents the same meaning as the original sentence while the second indicates that a teapot was used to take the tray, which doesn't make sense and doesn't match the original meaning. Because the second rewording does not work, the PP *with the Spode teapot* is a post-modifier for that sentence. The rewordings in (b) demonstrate that the *with*-PP is its own constituent because the first rewording changes the meaning and creates an awkward interpretation where the Russians shared a single bayonet, and the guard took those Russians sharing the bayonet. The better interpretation is the second rewording, where a bayonet was used to take the Russians. Therefore, the best annotations for the two original sentences are these:

- (10.46)a. He took the tray with the Spode teapot

S	(Subj	he ^{Pro}	
	Pred	Past	<u>took</u>
	:	(	the ^{Det}
	:	:	tray ^{CN}
	:	[PostM	with ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	(Att Spode ^{PropN})
	:	:	teapot ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	]	
	:	)	

- b. The Guard took the Russians with the bayonet.

S	(Subj	the ^{Det}	
	:	Guard ^{PropN}	
	)		
	Pred	Past	<u>took</u>
	:	(	the ^{Det}
	:	:	Russians ^{PropN}
	:	)	
	:	[	with ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	bayonet ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	]	

b.	S	there ^{Exist}	
		Pred	Pres are
		:	(Subj a lot of ^{Det}
		:	: <Att toxic ^{Aj} >
		:	: products ^{CN}
		:	:)

The existential *there* operates as its own word within the larger sentence without creating a phrase or working within a larger phrase, and it creates a special structure within the rest of the sentence, where the subject appears within the predicate.

In some instances, especially in informal language, the singular form of the verb may be used with a plural subject, as in these COCA examples:

- (10.50)a. There's lots you don't know, Momma says.
 b. there is signs that he's moving his SAMs into the no-fly zone again.

Even though the head word of the subject is plural in both examples (i.e., *lots* and *signs*), the *be*-verb appears in its singular form. This mismatch of number occurs most frequently in speech.

Other constituents can appear within the predicate alongside the grammatical subject, as demonstrated by the COCA examples below:

- (10.51)a. Just then, there is an announcement on the radio.

S	/Avl	/Deg	just ^{Av} /
	:		then ^{Av}
	/		
		there ^{Exist}	
	Pred	Pres	is
	:	(Subj	an ^{Det}
	:	:	announcement ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	[	on ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	: radio ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	]	

- b. there are only 11 players on the field at any given time.

S there^{Exist}
 ||_{Pred} |_{Pres} are|
 : (Subj /Deg only^{Av}/
 : : 11^{Det}
 : : **players**^{CN}
 :)
 : [on^{Prep}
 : : (Obj_{Prep} the^{Det}
 : : : **field**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 : [at^{Prep}
 : : (Obj_{Prep} any^{Det}
 : : : <Att given^{Aj}>
 : : : **time**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 ||

Examples like these can be restructured to remove the existential *there* by substituting the subject for *there*, as in *Just then, an announcement is on the radio*. The addition of *there* shifts the word order and puts more pragmatic attention onto the subject, indicating to readers that the announcement is important to the larger discourse because the author chose to express it within an existential-*there* construction.

The COCA examples below highlight the difference between the adverb *there* and the existential *there*:

- (10.52)a. There^{Exist} is an organization out there^{Av}
 b. There^{Exist} is an authenticity there^{Av}.
 c. There^{Exist} is an obvious mystery here^{Av}

Example (a) uses the adverb *there* to provide a location for *an organization*. Example (b) is taken from an interview that focuses on John Kasich's bid for the President in 2016, and the adverb use of *there* points to the language used by Kasich (i.e., *there* represents an abstract location of Kasich's discourse). Example (c) uses the related adverb *here* to locate *an obvious mystery*.

So far, all the examples have included a *be*-verb in the simple present tense, but the existential-*there* does not require the simple present tense, as demonstrated by these COCA examples:

- (10.53)a. there |^{Past} was| a prize inside
 b. There |^{Past} were| indeed many nuances to the art of making brandy

- c. There |PastPerf had^{PriAux} been| something odd about that hesitation.
- d. There |PresMod 's_going_to^{SemiAux} be| a lot of snow to get off the roads.
- e. I just loved the idea that there |Mod might^{ModAux} be| little things, you know, dwelling in the walls and taking things.
- f. he's up to something, and there |PastMod had_better^{SemiAux} be| an explanation for it.

The only limitation is that the existential-*there* does not tend to work with a progressive SVP. For instance, the three COCA examples below are a selection of the few progressive SVPs with an existential *there*:

- (10.54)a. “Here, there |PresProg is^{PriAux} being| room,” it said.
- b. Our main concern is just that so far there |PresProg are^{PriAux} being| very few people released.
- c. What's happening now in the 1990s is there |PresProg 's^{PriAux} being| a wall put up around the university.

Example (a) sounds unnatural for English and is spoken by an alien character in a sci-fi book. Examples (b) and (c) demonstrate that when the existential *there* appears with a progressive SVP, a passive reading of the predicate is required. For instance, rewording (b) to remove the existential *there* creates the passive sentence *very few people are being released*.

The existential-*there* can appear before other verbs, such as *seem* and *exist* in these COCA examples:

- (10.55)a. There^{Exist} seems to be some mistake.
- b. There^{Exist} exist reasons behind reasons.

When *seem* is the head verb after an existential *there*, the construction *to be* usually follows it, as in example (a).

Practice Set 10.2 Passives and existential *there*

Annotate the sentences below, taken from *Firefly Lane* by Kristin Hannah (2008).

1. Down by the barn, a group of guys were playing touch football. (30)
2. Tully stood there a moment (37)
3. There was an edge to Cloud's voice now (72)
4. Tears stung her eyes; before she knew it, she was crying. (79)
5. ... they went into the building, announced themselves to a shaggy-looking kid at the front desk, and were directed to the editor's office. (95)
6. There were people everywhere on this balmy late September night. (97)
7. Johnny was gone (161)

8. All the way there, through the stop-and-go city traffic, Kate sat in the backseat of the smelly cab (171)
 9. Evenings were taken up by conversation (461)
 10. For a moment, Kate was disoriented by the sight of her own daughter; she'd had a growth spurt again. (464)
-

Terms introduced in Chapter 10

Lexical formexistential *there* (Exist)**Concepts**

grammatical function

passive types

long passive

semi-passive

short passive

semantic role

agent

experiencer

instrument

location

manner

patient

recipient

stimulus

theme

time

Chapter 10 Exercises

Exercise 10.1

Annotate the following sentences, taken from Markus Zusak’s (2005: 87-90) *The Book Thief*.

1. At school during that time, there had been no more reading tests, but as Liesel slowly gathered confidence, she did pick up a stray textbook before class one morning.⁶⁷
2. She only knew that it was there.
3. The second book was called *The Lighthouse* and was written by a woman.⁶⁸
4. They were eating in the kitchen.
5. At first, there was nothing.
6. A short grin was smiled into Papa’s spoon.
7. That was when Mama finished her soup with a clank, suppressed a cardboard burp, and answered for him.
8. Not many people could say that their education had been paid for with cigarettes.⁶⁹
9. She even sang to herself while she cooked those eggs to the brink of burnedom.
10. It appeared that there was great joy in cigarettes, and it was a happy time in the Hubermann household.

Exercise 10.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures

⁶⁷ Original: At school during that time, there had been no more reading tests, but as Liesel slowly gathered confidence, she did pick up a stray textbook before class one morning to see if she could read it without trouble.

⁶⁸ Original: The second book was called *The Lighthouse* and was written by a woman, Ingrid Rippinstein.

⁶⁹ Original: There were not many people who could say that their education had been paid for with cigarettes.

for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. long passive (x2)
2. short passive (x2)
3. semantic PATIENT as subject
4. semantic RECIPIENT as subject
5. semantic EXPERIENCER or STIMULUS as subject
6. existential *there* (x2)
7. *there* as adverb

Exercise 10.3

Using a text you enjoyed reading, whether it is a short story, novel, or essay, select a memorable passage of at least 300 words. Throughout the passage, underline all head verbs, and highlight any instance of the passive voice.

In at least one paragraph, answer the following questions:

- How many instances of the passive voice did you identify in the excerpt?
- Were there any instances of semi-passives, and how did you choose to treat them?
- If there are instances of passive voice, how did they contribute to the flow of the text? If there are not any instances of passive voice, why do you think that is?
- Why do you think some teachers tell students to avoid the passive voice?
- What do you think the passive voice can contribute to texts?

Chapter 11: Intransitive, copular, and monotransitive verbs

The word is the Verb, and the Verb is God. —Victor Hugo

11.1 Argument versus adjunct

Thus far, when labeling functions, you have not assigned functions to the majority of the daughter phrases and clauses within the long verb phrase, or the predicate. To determine a constituent's function within the predicate, the first thing you have to know is whether that constituent is required by the verb. The term **valency** refers to the number and type of constituents that the verb requires for the sentence to be grammatical, and this and the next chapter covers the major verb valency types in English and the associated functions that reflect the verb's valency. The first major distinction needed is between **arguments**, which are the required constituents, and **adjuncts**, which are the optional constituents. Three tests can help you distinguish arguments from adjuncts: the generic verb, deletion, and movement tests. Three different tests are provided here because sometimes one test works better than another for a particular sentence or verb, and sometimes using all three together is the only way to identify the arguments from the adjuncts.

Iren Hartmann, Martin Haspelmath, and Bradley Taylor (2013) use a **generic verb test** to identify arguments and adjuncts, which uses the wording *this happened* to isolate and test the constituents in the predicate. They demonstrate that a generic verb, like *happened*, will not work with required arguments that follow the head verb because arguments are specified by particular verbs, but adjuncts can occur with a generic verb because adjuncts, being optional, can occur with any verb. They provide examples like the following to illustrate that point:

- (11.1) a. I baked cupcakes.
*I baked, and this happened cupcakes.
- b. I baked in the kitchen.
I baked, and this happened in the kitchen.
- c. I baked cupcakes in the kitchen.
*I baked, and this happened cupcakes in the kitchen.
I baked cupcakes, and this happened in the kitchen.
*I baked in the kitchen, and this happened cupcakes.
- d. I put cupcakes in the kitchen.
*I put, and this happened cupcakes in the kitchen.
*I put cupcakes, and this happened in the kitchen.
*I put in the kitchen, and this happened cupcakes.

If the generic *this happened* can be used before the constituent in question without affecting grammaticality, it is not required. If it cannot, the constituent is required.

For instance, in (a), the question is whether *cupcakes* is a required argument of the verb *baked*, and the generic verb test demonstrates that it is indeed a required argument because **I baked, and this happened cupcakes* is not grammatical. In other words, the constituent *cupcakes* cannot follow a generic verb like *happen* so is a required argument of verbs like *bake*. However, in (b), the generic verb test demonstrates that the constituent *in the kitchen* is an optional adjunct because it can follow *happen* in the grammatical sentence *I baked, and this happened in the kitchen*. Comparing the results of (a) and (b) highlights how the same verb form, such as *bake*, can require an argument in some instances but not in others. As with other grammatical features, context is key when determining a verb's valency.

When multiple constituents appear in the predicate, as in (c) and (d), the generic verb test needs to be applied for each constituent. Some verbs have multiple required arguments, as demonstrated by (d), where *put* requires both *cupcakes* and *in the kitchen* as arguments. Throughout the examples, the focus is only on the daughter phrases of the long verb phrase; for instance, in (b), the focus is on the preposition phrase *in the kitchen*, which is a daughter of the LVP, and not on the noun phrase *the kitchen*, which is a daughter of the PP.

Another test to determine whether a constituent is an argument or an adjunct is a **deletion test**. Adjuncts can be deleted without affecting the grammaticality of the clause or the meaning of the verb. Deleting constituents will naturally result in a slight change in meaning because the clause will become less specific, but deleting adjuncts does not change the clause's grammatical status or the semantic meaning of the verb itself. For instance, you can perform the deletion test on the same sentences from above:

- (11.2) a. I baked cupcakes. / I baked.
 b. I baked in the kitchen. / I baked.
 c. I put cupcakes in the kitchen. / *I put cupcakes. / *I put in the kitchen. / *I put.

Deleting *cupcakes* in (a) ever-so-slightly changes the semantic interpretation of the verb while deleting *in the kitchen* in (b) does not; however, the semantic shift is so slight in (a) that it is difficult to justify the semantic distinction between *bake* in *I baked cupcakes* and *I baked*. Example (a) demonstrates why you need more than one test at your disposal when determining arguments and adjuncts.

For verbs like *put*, the deletion test works with less subtle results: if you delete any of the constituents in (c), the result is ungrammatical in English, which means both *cupcakes* and *in the kitchen* are required arguments for *put*. Because some verbs, like *bake*, are so subtle in their semantic differences when deleting arguments, this test is not the best one to use on its own unless the results are clearly ungrammatical, such as the deletions for *put*.

Finally, you can also use a **movement test** to help decide if a constituent is required or not. Oftentimes, you can't move required arguments to a new position in the sentence structure, or, if you do move them, you have to use a special intonation to make the new position work:

- (11.3) a. I baked cupcakes. / *Cupcakes I baked.
 b. I baked in the kitchen. / In the kitchen, I baked.
 c. I put cupcakes in the kitchen.
 *In the kitchen, I put cupcakes.
 *Cupcakes I put in the kitchen.

The only sentence that can have a constituent freely moved is (b), and previous tests have already established that *in the kitchen* in that particular sentence is an optional adjunct. With the right intonation, the rewordings for (a) and (c) could sound grammatical for some speakers, but if they are read out loud with a typical sentence intonation pattern, they sound ungrammatical or, at best, awkward.

When you need to decide whether a constituent is an argument or an adjunct, it's often helpful to start with the test you find easiest and then use the other two tests to check your conclusions or to help if the results are potentially ambiguous. Because verbs can be used in multiple ways and rely on context for interpretation, using all three tests in tandem will provide more reliable results than relying on any one test.

For each underlined verb in the sentences below, use the three tests above to identify the required arguments in the predicate.⁷⁰ When you've identified the test that works best for you, begin with that one and use the others for double-checking your work where necessary.

- (11.4) a. He ^{|Past} took Andrew's bag. (Willis 1994: 322)
 b. We ^{|Mod 'I|ModAux} go straight back to the lab and I ^{|Mod 'I|ModAux} show you the oscillator. (322)
 c. And then I ^{|Mod 'I|ModAux} outline my theory in more detail. (322)
 d. Dr. Simons here ^{|Pres} does^{PriAux} ^{n'tNeg} think it ^{|Pres 's|} addlepatated. (322)

When examining the constituents in (b), keep in mind that *straight back* is an adverb phrase modifying the preposition phrase *to the lab*, which means *straight back* is a daughter to the PP rather than the long verb phrase and needs to be treated as a part of the PP [*straight back to the lab*].

To begin, I will use all three tests on (11.4a) to show how they provide the same grammatical information but in different ways. The only constituent in question in the predicate is the noun phrase *Andrew's bag*, so the question here is whether that NP is required.

- (11.5) He ^{|Past} took Andrew's bag.
 a. Generic verb: *He took, and this happened Andrew's bag.
 b. Deletion: *He took.
 c. Movement: *Andrew's bag he took.

⁷⁰ For complete declarative sentences, all verbs require a subject as an argument; since the subject is a general requirement for all verbs, finding the subject won't help you determine the verb type. Therefore, the focus here remains on required arguments within the predicate.

All three tests come to the same conclusion that, for the verb *took*, the constituent *Andrew's bag* is a required argument. Because the results are ungrammatical for all three tests, the NP is an argument of the verb.

In (11.4b), there are two different complete sentences, each with its own verb and potential required arguments. Therefore, below I split the sentences apart and look at each one on its own. For this set of examples, I have only applied the generic verb test to determine whether these three constituents are required: *straight back to the lab* for the verb *go*, and *you* and *the oscillator* for the verb *show*.

- (11.6) We [_{Mod} 'I][_{ModAux} go] straight back to the lab and I [_{Mod} 'I][_{ModAux} show] you the oscillator.
- a. *We'll go, and this will happen straight back to the lab.
 - b. *I'll show, and this will happen you the oscillator.
 - c. *I'll show you, and this will happen the oscillator.
 - d. *I'll show the oscillator, and this will happen you.

Because every verb has its own potential required arguments, you need to examine each verb on its own merit, which is why the tests for *go* and *show* are separated in the examples above. For the way *go* is being used in this sentence, *straight back to the lab* is a required argument, which is demonstrated in (a). Examples (b) through (d) demonstrate that both *you* and *the oscillator* are required arguments for the verb *show*. When a verb is followed by multiple constituents in the predicate, you need to isolate each one, as I've done above for *show*.

Moving on to the sentence in (11.4c), I applied the deletion test to determine if *my theory* and *in more detail* are required for the verb *outline*.

- (11.7) And then I [_{Mod} 'I][_{ModAux} outline] my theory in more detail
- a. *I'll outline in more detail.
 - b. I'll outline my theory.

For the verb *outline*, the deletion test demonstrates that *my theory* is a required argument while *in more detail* is an optional adjunct. Some speakers may feel that the rewording in (a) is grammatical; if you think it's grammatical, then you could use additional tests to see if *my theory* is required. For example, the generic verb test demonstrates that it is indeed a required argument: **I'll outline, and this will happen my theory*.

Finally, (11.4d) has a subordinate clause with its own verb, which means you need to consider both *think* and *'s* (the contracted form of *is*). In this explanation, I use the movement test to determine if *it's addlepat* is required for *think* and if *addlepat* is required for *is*.

- (11.8) Dr. Simons here [_{Pres} does][_{PriAux} n'tNeg think] it [_{Pres} 's] addlepat
- a. *It's addlepat Dr. Simons here doesn't think.
 - b. *Dr. Simons here doesn't think addlepat it's.

The movement test shows that both constituents are required arguments for their verbs. Through practice, you will be able to determine which test or group of tests works best for you to help you figure out which constituents are required and which are optional. When a constituent is an adjunct, its most likely function is adverbial (Avl) because adjuncts tend to function in ways similar to adverbs, answering those adverb-like questions, such as time, manner, and place, presented at the beginning of Chapter 8.

Practice Set 11.1 Required or not?

In the following sentences, taken from “Time Out” by Connie Willis (1994: 322), identify whether the selected constituents are arguments or adjuncts of the underlined head verbs. For each constituent you need to work with, I’ve indicated the constituent’s grammatical form without including detailed annotations.

8. I |^{Past} told| him I |^{Past} wanted| you as my second in command.
 - a. (him)
 - b. ((I wanted you as my second in command))
 - c. (you)
 - d. [as my second in command]

9. Dr. Lejeune |^{PastProg} was^{PriAux} glancing| around as if she |^{PastProg} were^{PriAux} looking for| a tennis racket to hit Dr. Young over the head with.
 - a. /around/
 - b. //as if she were looking for a tennis racket to hit Dr. Young over the head with//
 - c. (a tennis racket)

10. I |^{AON/Perf} should^{MAux} have^{PAux} had| at least two more Scotches, Andrew thought.
 - a. (at least two more Scotches)
 - b. @Andrew thought@

11. The word that |^{Past} sprang| to mind |^{Past} was| disaster. He |^{AON/Perf} should^{MAux} have^{PAux} had| a lot of clockstoppers. (The subject of *was* is *the word that sprang to mind*, and inside that subject is the embedded clause *that sprang to mind*.)
 - a. (disaster)
 - b. [to mind]
 - c. (a lot of clockstoppers)⁷¹

⁷¹ A *clockstopper* is a cocktail.

12. He ^{|PastModPerf had^{PriAux} had to^{SemiAux} usher|} at Stephanie Forrester's wedding, and when the minister ^{|PastPerf had^{PriAux} read|} that part about, "let him speak now or forever hold his peace," the entire congregation had turned and ^{|Past looked at|} him, but otherwise it ^{|PastPerf had^{PriAux} n't^{Neg} been|} half bad.
- [at Stephanie Forrester's wedding]
 - //when the minister had read that part about, "let him speak now or forever hold his peace"//
 - ((that part about, "let him speak now or forever hold his peace"))
 - (him) from *looked at him*
 - <half bad>

Verbs are grouped into five major grammatical categories, depending on their number and type(s) of required arguments. The five major verb valency types are intransitive/ergative, copular, monotransitive, ditransitive, and complex-transitive. The first three are covered in this chapter while the final two are covered in the next chapter. These verb types only apply to head verbs, and you will annotate verb type as superscripts for the verb. Auxiliaries—whether they are primary, modal, or semi-modal—do not have a valency type. Only head verbs are assigned a verb type based on valency.

11.2 Intransitive and ergative

An **intransitive verb** (ItV) requires only a subject to be grammatical. Because it does not have any required arguments in the predicate, any additional constituents in the predicate are all optional adjuncts (e.g., adverbial elements). Each underlined verb in the COCA examples below is an intransitive verb:

- (11.9) a. Hey, this thing ^{|Pres stinks^{ItV}!}
 b. he ^{|Past yawned^{ItV}|} right in my face.
 c. it struck his sleep-addled mind that Brodie ^{|PastProg was^{PriAux} sleepwalking^{ItV}|} like Forrest sometimes did.
 d. If I ^{|Past laughed^{ItV}|} nine times, she ^{|ModPerf may^{ModAux} have^{PriAux} laughed^{ItV}|} once or twice.

Verbs like *stink*, *yawn*, *sleepwalk*, and *laugh* can be intransitive, and, as they are used in the examples above, they do not require any arguments in the predicate. If another constituent is present in the predicate, one of the three tests from above can be used to determine its adjunct status. For instance, you could reword (b) with a generic verb without affecting grammaticality: *He yawned, and this happened right in my face*. Furthermore, you can delete those adjuncts without affecting the verb's meaning or sentence's grammaticality: *If I laughed, she may have laughed*. Naturally, the meaning of the sentence as a whole has become much less specific, but the meaning of the verb itself has not shifted, nor has it become ungrammatical.

Some grammarians distinguish between intransitive and ergative verbs. Like intransitive verbs, **ergative** verbs require only a subject for grammaticality, but the difference between the two types has to do with how affected the subject is by the verb. In the examples above, the subject is either an AGENT or EXPERIENCER, which are the typical semantic roles for subjects of intransitive verbs. The subject of an ergative verb, though, is a semantic PATIENT because the subject undergoes some change in state as a result of the verb. Consider the following COCA examples:

- (11.10) a. The hero ^{|Pres dies_{ItV}|}.
 b. He probably ^{|ModPerf would_{ModAux} n't_{Neg} have_{PriAux} tripped_{ItV}|} if he was wearing maybe some loafers or something.
 c. After she ^{|Past fell_{ItV}|}, she lay on the street and whimpered and listened to them coming closer.

Verbs like *die*, *trip*, and *fall* have an effect on the subject: the action of the verb happens to the subject, and the subject undergoes some visible change. In (c), the action of falling happened to her, and although she didn't volitionally fall, she is now on the ground as a result. An AGENT is not acting upon the subjects, and the subjects are not AGENTS of the verb's action.

When no distinction between intransitive and ergative verbs is made, 'intransitive' is the larger umbrella category. For this text, ergative verbs are grouped with intransitive ones, which is why all the examples above are labeled as intransitive. However, on the syntactic infographic in the appendix, ergative verbs are mentioned as a separate category as a reminder that while intransitive and ergative verbs are similar grammatically, they differ semantically.

11.3 Copular verbs

Copular verbs (CopV) are also known as linking verbs because they serve to connect the subject to a required subject predicative or subject adverbial in the predicate. The typical semantic role of the subject of a copular verb is THEME because the subject is being described or located. Copular verbs can be broken down into two semantic categories: current and resulting. **Current copular verbs** are semantically similar to an equal sign because they indicate that the subject is equal to the feature, attribute, or state provided in the predicate. Common examples of current copular verbs are *be*, *seem*, and *appear* and verbs relating to the five senses (e.g., *look*, *taste*). The examples of current copular verbs below are all taken from *The Good Daughter*, by Alexandra Burt (2017).

- (11.11) a. He ^{|Past was_{CopV}|} a strong man
 b. You ^{|Pres look_{CopV}|} horrible.
 c. as if I ^{|Pres 'm_{CopV}|} at the bottom of a well
 d. His face ^{|PastPerf had_{PriAux} appeared_{CopV}|} waxen and bloated

In these examples, you could semantically replace the verb with an equal sign to create an abstract representation of what is being said, as in *He = a strong man* and *You = horrible*. The substitution isn't perfect because it is missing the extra information that only a verb could

provide, but the larger meaning is still there: *a strong man* is describing the subject *he*, and *horrible* is describing how the subject *you* looks.

Resulting copular verbs are more similar to arrows than equal signs because they signal that the subject will become the feature, attribute, or state provided in the predicate as a result of some process or change. The following examples, also taken from Burt (2017), have resulting copular verbs:

- (11.12) a. she |^{Mod} 'I|^{ModAux} end up^{CopV} | pregnant
 b. her thoughts |^{Past} became^{CopV} | clearer
 c. she |^{Past} grew^{CopV} | silent around Nolan

Examples like (a) are clearly resulting copular verbs because the subject *she* is not currently pregnant; rather, the speaker is predicting that someday she will be pregnant (i.e., her state will change). In examples like (b) and (c), the verb indicates that some change has occurred so that *her thoughts* in (b) are now clearer than they were, and *she* in (c) is now silent.

Students are often taught to recognize current copular verbs because they are the more frequent copular verb type and are easier to define and identify. Resulting copular verbs can be trickier because those verbs often overlap with intransitive forms:

- (11.13) a. We |^{Past} shrugged^{ItV} |.
 b. we |^{Past} shrugged^{CopV} | into our raincoats. (Meyer 2005: 51)

When a verb like *shrug* is used as a resulting copular verb, its meaning slightly shifts from what it would be if it were intransitive, and so the meaning of *shrug* in (b) is no longer a movement of the shoulders to indicate apathy, indecision, doubt, or lack of knowledge. When it is used as a copular verb, it means a movement of the shoulders was used to change the subject's state or location. In this example, a shrugging motion is used to achieve the resulting state of having raincoats on. These types of examples are not necessarily the most common use of copular verbs, but they do show up regularly enough that you need to learn to recognize them.

As mentioned in the introduction of this section, a copular verb requires either a subject predicative or a subject adverbial. The **subject predicative** (SPred) function indicates that a constituent describes or renames the subject and is often associated with a noun phrase or adjective phrase. In the following two COCA examples, I've annotated the portions with copular verbs.

- (11.14) a. I'm being a bully.
- | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| S | (Subj | I ^{Pro}) |
| | ^{Pred} | ^{PresProg} 'm ^{PriAux} |
| | : | <u>being</u> ^{CopV} |
| | : | |
| | : | (^{SPred} a ^{Det} |
| | : | bully ^{CN} |
| | : |) |
| | | |

- b. For Parisians, you don't just eat because it tastes good, you eat because it's beautiful and healthy.

```
//Avl  becauseSubConj
:      (Subj  itPro)
:      ||Pred |Pres  tastesCopV|
:      :      <SPred  goodAj>
:      ||
//

//Avl  becauseSubConj
:      (Subj  itPro)
:      ||Pred |Pres  'sCopV|
:      :      <SPred  <      beautifulAj>
:      :      :      andCoConj
:      :      :      <      healthyAj>
:      :      >
:      ||
//
```

In the first sentence, the noun phrase *a bully* is a subject predicative, describing the subject *I*, and the copular verb is *being*. The second sentence has two copular verbs, *tastes* and *'s*, both of which are followed by an adjective phrase functioning as a subject predicative. The adjective phrase *good* describes the subject *it* and is linked to the subject by the copular verb *tastes*. The adjective phrase *beautiful and healthy* describes the subject *it* and is linked to the subject with the copular verb *'s*.

In prescriptive grammar, when a pronoun is the head of a noun phrase that functions as the SPred, the pronoun should be in its nominative (i.e., subject) form; however, in actual usage (i.e., in descriptive grammar), the pronoun can be either in its nominal or accusative (i.e., object) form. Example (a) below includes a pronoun in the nominative form, and example (b) includes a pronoun in the accusative form:

- (11.15) a. S (Subj **it**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}|
 : (SPred **I**^{Pro})
 ||
- b. S (Subj **it**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}|
 : (SPred **me**^{Pro})
 ||

In COCA, the phrase *It (i)s I* is found at the beginning of a sentence roughly 26 times while *It (i)s me* begins a sentence roughly 248 times,⁷² which indicates that (b) is the more likely pattern to occur in natural speech and writing even though it is the prescriptively ungrammatical option.

A **subject adverbial** (SAvl) is often a preposition phrase or adverb phrase that locates the subject, though it can also specify a resulting state or modify the subject in other ways.

(11.16) a. They could have stayed home. (COCA)

S	(Subj	they ^{Pro})
	Pred	ModPerf could ^{ModAux}
	:	: have ^{PriAux}
	:	: <u>stayed</u> ^{CopV}
	:	
	:	/SAvl home ^{Av/}

b. he lumbered into the living room (Meyer 2005: 35)

S	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
	Pred	Past <u>lumbered</u> ^{CopV}
	:	[SAvl into ^{Prep}
	:	: (ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	: living room ^{CN}
	:	:)
	:	]

In (a), the adverb phrase *home* functions as a subject adverbial to locate the subject *they*, specifying the location where they could have stayed, and example (b) includes the PP *into the living room*, which functions as a subject adverbial and provides the resulting location of the subject *he* after he lumbered.

A subject adverbial is different from an optional adverbial (Avl). **Optional adverbials** (i.e., adjuncts) are not required but can be added to any clause for additional information, often taking the form of adverb phrases, preposition phrases, noun phrases, or adverb clauses. If it is an optional adverbial, it is most likely mobile and able to occupy a variety of positions in the clause, as demonstrated by the movement test. More than one optional adverbial can appear in any given clause, and, if deleted, the sentence will still work both semantically and grammatically, as demonstrated by the deletion test. Subject adverbials, however, occur with copular verbs and are required (i.e., they are arguments); they provide information such as

⁷² I searched both “. It is I/me” and “. It ’s I/me” to find those numbers. The period in front of *it* isolated examples that began sentences to avoid false matches like *whatever it is I am supposed to do*. Overall, *it is me/it’s me* occurs anywhere within the sentence over 1700 times and is more likely to match the SPred model while *it is I/it’s I* occurs just over 400 times with many of those examples not using *I* as the SPred.

reason, location, or time that relate back to the subject. If the SA_{v1} were taken out of the clause, the clause would no longer sound complete without adequate context, the meaning may change entirely, or it might become ungrammatical. A key difference to remember is that optional adverbials work modify the verb, the entire predicate, or the full clause while subject adverbials provide additional information about the subject.

The following two sentences both feature *waltzed* as the head verb in the predicate; however, in sentence (a), *waltzed* is intransitive with an optional adverbial constituent, and in sentence (b), *waltzed* is copular with both a subject adverbial and an optional adverbial. Both examples are taken from COCA.

- (11.17) a. S (Subj **they**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past waltzed^{ItV}|
 : [Avl across^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : <Att gleaming^{Aj}>
 : : : **parquet floor**^{CN}
 : : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : : (ObjPrep (his^{Det}
 : : : : : **family**^{CollN}
 : : : : :)^{sDet}
 : : : : : <Att crowded^{Aj}>
 : : : : : **ballroom**^{CN}
 : : : : :)
 : : : :]
 : : :)
 : :]
 ||
- b. S (Subj **Wolf Endicott**^{PropN})
 ||Pred |PastPerf had^{PriAux}
 : : waltzed^{CopV}
 : : |
 : : [SA_{v1} /Avl back^{Av}/
 : : : into^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep (**Evelyn**^{PropN})^{sDet}
 : : : : **life**^{CN}
 : : : :)
 : : :]
 : : :
 : : (Avl a^{Det}
 : : : few^{Det}
 : : : **months**^{CN}
 : : : /PostM ago^{Av}/
 : : :)
 : :]
 ||

The PP *across the gleaming parquet floor...* in (a) passes all three tests above for optionality: (1) *They waltzed, and this happened across the floor*; (2) *They waltzed*; and (3) *Across the floor, they waltzed*. The PP *back into Evelyn's life* in (b), though, does not: (1) **Wolf waltzed, and this*

happened back into Evelyn's life; (b) *Wolf waltzed* means something different from its use in the original sentence; and (3) *Back into Evelyn's life Wolf waltzed* sounds awkward at best. The ability to use verbs in different valency patterns is a way speakers and writers can pack more description and information into a concisely worded clause. It also creates grey areas where valency types overlap.

Another grey area of verb valencies is the use of a construction sometimes called the **mediopassive**, which can be identified as falling between copular and ergative readings with a touch of the passive voice. The two examples in (11.18) illustrate the mediopassive. Example (a) came from my son, Will, when he described a new deck of cards he had bought for performing magic tricks; example (b) is taken from an episode of *Top Chef* when Padma Lakshmi was evaluating a contestant's dish.

- (11.18) a. These handle very nicely. [*These* refers to cards.]
 b. It eats salty. [*It* refers to a dish.]

Instances like these are called mediopassive (or 'middle passive') because the subject of the verb is a PATIENT rather than an AGENT (e.g., someone is handling the cards, and someone is eating the dish). Both verbs require an argument in the predicate: **These handle, and this happens very nicely*, and **It eats, and this happens salty*. That required argument means the verb is not ergative or intransitive. The required argument in the predicate refers back to the subject, which makes them similar to copular verbs, especially in instances like (b), where the adjective phrase *salty* describes the subject. Instances like (a) are less perfect matches for copular verbs because the adverb phrase *very nicely* refers to the subject while simultaneously modifying the verb. Because the argument is required and because that required argument refers back to the subject in some way, mediopassive verbs are best marked as copular.

- (11.19) a. S (Subj **these^{Pro}**)
 ||Pred |Pres handle^{CopV}|
 : /SAvI /Deg very^{Av}/
 : : nicely^{Av}
 : /
 ||
- b. S (Subj **it^{Pro}**)
 ||Pred |Pres eats^{CopV}|
 : <SPred salty^{Aj}>
 ||

Again, verbs like these are in a grey area, so the analysis above is a "best match" analysis and not a perfect match.

When a sentence begins with an existential *there*, the head *be* verb that follows is copular. Sometimes the only constituent in the predicate is the grammatical subject, but the grammatical

subject may be followed by a subject adverbial. The following COCA examples demonstrate those different patterns.

(11.20)a. There are reports of sleet high up on the mountain.

S	there ^{Exist}								
	Pred	Pres	<u>are</u> ^{CopV}						
	:	(Subj	reports ^{CN}						
	:	:	[PostM	of ^{Prep}					
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep	sleet ^{NN}				
	:	:	:	:	[	/Avl	/Deg	high ^{Av} /	
	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	up ^{Av}	
	:	:	:	:	:	/			
	:	:	:	:	:	on ^{Prep}			
	:	:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep	the ^{Det}		
	:	:	:	:	:	:	mountain ^{CN}		
	:	:	:	:	:	)			
	:	:	:	:	:	]			
	:	:	:	:	:	)			
	:	:	:	:	:	]			
	:	:	:	:	:	)			

b. There's hope for these girls, too.

S	there ^{Exist}							
	Pred	Pres	<u>'s</u> ^{CopV}					
	:	(Subj	hope ^{NN}					
	:	:	[PostM	for ^{Prep}				
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep	these ^{Det}			
	:	:	:	:	girls ^{CN}			
	:	:	:	:	)			
	:	:	:	:	]			
	:	:	:	:	)			
	:	:	:	:	:			
	:	/Avl	too ^{Av} /					

- c. There are books on a shelf alongside a stack of sewing magazines.

S	there ^{Exist}				
	^{Pred}	^{Pres}	are ^{CopV}		
	:	(Subj	books ^{CN})		
	:	[^{SAvl}	[	on ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep	a ^{Det}
	:	:	:	:	shelf ^{CN}
	:	:	:	)	
	:	:	]		
	:	:			
	:	:	[	alongside ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep	a ^{Det}
	:	:	:	:	stack ^{CN}
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	[^{PostM}	of ^{Prep}
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep (Att
	:	:	:	:	sewing ^N)
	:	:	:	:	:
	:	:	:	:	magazines ^{CN}
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	]	
	:	:	:	)	
	:	:	]		
	:	:	]		

In (a) and (b), the preposition phrase serves to post-modify the head noun, and the sentences could be reworded with an intransitive *exist*: *Reports of sleet high up on the mountain exist* and *Hope for these girls exists, too*. In (c), however, the preposition phrase serves to locate the head noun before it, and the sentence could be reworded as *Books are on a shelf alongside a stack of sewing magazines*. In that sentence, the PPs *on a shelf* and *alongside a stack of sewing magazines* serve together as the subject adverbial, locating the grammatical subject *books*.

11.4 Monotransitive

A **monotransitive verb** (MtV)⁷³ requires a direct object in the predicate. In most cases, a **direct object** (DObj) answers the question “Who or what is/was VERB-*ed*?” The typical semantic role of direct objects is PATIENT because it is directly and physically affected by the verb, usually with no control over the change or effect, and subjects of monotransitive verbs are often semantic AGENTS. For example, the sentence below contains a monotransitive verb:

⁷³ Other scholars refer to monotransitive verbs as ‘transitive verbs.’ However, in this text I use the term *monotransitive* to distinguish between monotransitive verbs that require a single argument (a direct object) in the predicate and the larger category of transitive verb types that require a minimum of a direct object. When I use the term *transitive* in this text, I’m referring to any verb type requiring a direct object, whether it is monotransitive, ditransitive, or complex-transitive; when I use the term *monotransitive*, I’m referring to the transitive-type verb that requires only the direct object.

(11.21) my mama |^{Past} nudged^{MtV}| me. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 7)

You can use the “direct object” question to identify the direct object: *Who was nudged?* The answer is *me*, so *me* is the DObj of the monotransitive verb *nudged*. The AGENT of the nudging, *my mama*, is the subject, and the PATIENT, *me*, is the direct object. If a direct object is deleted, the clause will either be ungrammatical or will result in a new semantic interpretation of the verb. For the example above, deleting the DObj makes the sentence ungrammatical: **my mama nudged*. However, for other verbs, the meaning changes:

- (11.22) a. I |^{Pres} drink^{MtV}| water every day.
 b. I |^{Pres} drink^{ItV}| every day.

By removing the DObj *water*, the result is a new meaning because, without a specified DObj, the sentence is interpreted to mean that I drink alcoholic beverages every day.

Transitive-type verbs require direct objects, and direct objects only occur with transitive-type verbs (i.e., monotransitive, ditransitive, and complex-transitive). The most frequent grammatical form associated with the direct object function is a noun phrase, such as *me* and *water* in the examples above, but other constituents, such as nominal clauses, can also function as direct objects. If the DObj is a noun phrase headed by a pronoun, the pronoun will likely appear in its accusative form (e.g., *me*, *us*, *them*). Finally, the typical position of the direct object within the predicate depends on the specific transitive verb type: for monotransitive verbs, direct objects tend to occur directly after the verb without any intervening constituents.

While the most frequent thematic role for direct objects is PATIENT, direct objects can fulfill other semantic roles, such as STIMULUS or LOCATION.

(11.23) a. I heard some songbirds and an owl. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 183)

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})	
	Pred	^{Past}	<u>heard</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(DObj	(some ^{Det}
	:	:	songbirds ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	and ^{CoConj}
	:	:	(an ^{Det}
	:	:	owl ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	)	

- b. I felt the rope in my hands⁷⁴ (28)

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>felt</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(DObj	the ^{Det}
	:	:	rope ^{CN}
	:	)	
	:	[Avl	in ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep my ^{Det}
	:	:	hands ^{CN}
	:	)	
	:	]	

- c. We were out walking the orchard (91)

S	(Subj	we ^{Pro})	
	Pred	PastProg	were ^{PriAux}
	:	:	/Avl out ^{Av} /
	:	:	<u>walking</u> ^{MtV}
	:		
	:	(DObj	the ^{Det}
	:	:	orchard ^{CN}
	:	)	

Examples (a) and (b) both have a subject that is an EXPERIENCER because *I* experienced the sensory perception of hearing in (a) and feeling in (b) without control over those actions. The direct objects for both those verbs are the STIMULI for the perceptual experiences—*some songbirds and an owl* provided sound for me to hear, and *the rope* stimulated a feeling in my hands. Example (c) has an AGENT subject, *we*, but a LOCATION for a direct object because *the orchard* provides a location for the walking. The verb *walk* can also take a PATIENT for a direct object:

(11.24) I had been walking the mule (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 33)

In this example, the direct object *the mule* is being physically affected by the walking and is a PATIENT.

Regardless of semantic role, the DOBJ question can work for identifying the direct objects in all these sentences:

⁷⁴ The way I've analyzed this sentence, the PP *in my hands* modifies the verb *felt* so that the feeling occurred in my hands. However, it is ambiguous, and another potential analysis is that *in my hands* is a post-modifier for *the rope*, so that it specifies which rope I felt.

- What was heard? *Some songbirds and an owl.*
- What was felt? *The rope.*
- What was walked? *The orchard.*
- What was walked? *The mule.*

Using that DObj question, practice identifying the monotransitive verbs and their direct objects in the sentences below, all taken from Dawson and Glaubman (2001: 8); a compound has been identified for you:

- (11.25) a. Yeah, someone had committed a sin
 b. I let_out a big breath of air.
 c. he had carried a barrel of molasses on his back from the general store down past the saloon.
 d. He kicked the dust and planted his feet.
 e. He had big, shiny-looking boots

Three of these sentences are more difficult to work with because the direct object NP is more complex, as in (b) and (c), or because the sentence contains two LVPs and two distinct direct objects, as in (e). I will start with the simpler two sentences for this discussion.

Sentence (11.25a) has a short NP as the direct object, *a sin*, as demonstrated in the annotated version below.

(11.26) S ^_{DiscM} yeah^{Insert} ^
 (Subj **someone**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PastPerf had^{PriAux}
 : : committed^{MtV}
 : |
 : (DObj a^{Det}
 : : **sin**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

The predicate of this sentence, *had committed a sin*, consists only of the SVP and direct object. Sentence (11.25e) is similar to that, but the direct object NP is modified by attributive adjective phrases:

(11.27) S (Subj **he**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past had^{MtV} |
 : (DObj <Att < big^{Aj}>
 : : : < shiny-looking^{Aj}>
 : : >
 : : **boots**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

Like the sentence before, the predicate consists of the SVP and direct object NP.

Sentences (11.25b) and (11.25c) both feature a direct object NP with a post-modifier. The second sentence also has optional adverbial preposition phrases in the predicate, which need to be kept separate from the direct object.

- (11.28) a. S (Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past let out^{MtV}|
 : (DObj **a**^{Det}
 : : <Att **big**^{Aj}>
 : : **breath**^{CN}
 : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep **air**^{NN})
 : :]
 :)
 ||
- b. S (Subj **he**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PastPerf **had**^{PriAux}
 : : carried^{MtV}
 : |
 : (DObj **a**^{Det}
 : : **barrel**^{CN}
 : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep **molasses**^{NN})
 : :]
 :)
 : :
 : [Avl on^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **his**^{Det}
 : : : **back**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 : :
 : [Avl from^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **the**^{Det}
 : : : **general store**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 : :
 : [Avl /Avl down^{Av}/
 : : past^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **the**^{Det}
 : : : **saloon**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 ||

In the first sentence, the full direct object is *a big breath of air*, and the full DObj in the second sentence is *a barrel of molasses*.

Sentence (11.25d) serves as a reminder that each monotransitive head verb can take its own direct object, so there may be more than one direct object per sentence. The two verbs *kicked* and *planted* are both monotransitive, and each one takes its own direct object.

(11.29) S	(Subj	he ^{Pro})	
	Pred		Past <u>kicked</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	(DObj the ^{Det}
	:	:	dust ^{NN}
	:	:	)
	:		
	:	and ^{CoConj}	
	:		Past <u>planted</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	(DObj his ^{Det}
	:	:	feet ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:		

The direct object of *kicked* is *the dust* while the direct object of *planted* is *his feet*. Though these coordinated LVPs feature a head verb of the same valency type, coordinated LVPs do not need to have the same verb type:

(11.30) The sheriff walked toward us and waved his pistol. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 8)

S	(Subj	the ^{Det}	
	:	sheriff ^{CN}	
	)		
	Pred		Past <u>walked</u> ^{CopV}
	:	:	[SAvl toward ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep us ^{Pro})
	:	:	]
	:		
	:	and ^{CoConj}	
	:		Past <u>waved</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	(DObj his ^{Det}
	:	:	pistol ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:		

In this sentence, the coordinated predicate contains two distinct verb types: *walked*, a copular verb with a subject adverbial PP, and *waved*, a monotransitive verb with a direct object NP.

So far, all the examples of direct objects have been NPs, but, as mentioned earlier, other constituents can fill the DObj function, including nominal clauses:

(11.31) I knew he could stop this. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 8)

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})			
	Pred	Past	<u>knew</u> ^{MtV}		
:	((DObj	(Subj	he ^{Pro})		
:	:	Pred	Mod	could ^{ModAux}	
:	:	:	:	<u>stop</u> ^{MtV}	
:	:	:			
:	:	:	(DObj	this ^{Pro})	
:	:				
:	))				

In that sentence, the direct object of *knew* is the nominal clause *he could stop this*, and within that clause is another direct object because the monotransitive verb *stop* takes its own direct object, *this*. Clauses still work with the DObj question: *What was known? He could stop this.*

Any transitive-type verb can be made passive, and only transitive-type verbs can take the passive voice; that is, if a verb is in the passive voice, it must be monotransitive, ditransitive, or complex-transitive. When a short verb phrase is in the passive voice, the valency of the head verb is reduced by one. Therefore, an active monotransitive verb requires one argument in the predicate, but a passive monotransitive verb does not take any arguments in the predicate, thus taking the grammatical argument structure of an intransitive verb while maintaining its identity as a monotransitive verb. While the verb is monotransitive, it does not take a grammatical direct object when it appears in the passive voice, as in the following examples.

(11.32) a. My pay was cut back (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 124)

S	(Subj	my ^{Det}			
:	:	pay ^{NN}			
)					
	Pred	PastPass	was ^{PriAux}		
:	:	:	<u>cut back</u> ^{MtV}		
:	:				

- b. Well, my walk didn't matter since I got nailed at second base in a double play. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 85)

S ^_{DM} well^{Insert} ^
 (Subj my^{Det}
 : walk^{CN}
)
 ||_{Pred} |^{Past} did^{PriAux} n't^{Neg}
 : : matter^{ItV}
 : |
 ||
 //_{Avl} since^{SubConj}
 : (Subj I^{Pro})
 : ||_{Pred} |^{PastPass} got^{PriAux}
 : : : nailed^{MtV}
 : : |
 : : [Avl at^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep second^{Det}
 : : : : base^{CN}
 : : :)
 : :]
 : : [Avl in^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep a^{Det}
 : : : : double play^{CN}
 : : :)
 : :]
 : ||
 //

In the first sentence, *my pay* is the subject, but it also fulfills the semantic role of PATIENT, answering the DObj question: *What was cut back?* *My pay*. In the second sentence, the passive verb is in the adverb clause, where the subject *I* simultaneously plays grammatical subject while fulfilling the semantic role of PATIENT in the sentence: *Who got nailed at second base?* *Me*.

In the same way that passive constructions omit one argument in the predicate without affecting the verb type, the quotative construction omits the DObj for transitive verbs.

- (11.33) a. “I like this one too,” I said. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 156)

S (Subj I^{Pro})
 ||_{Pred} |^{Pres} like^{MtV}
 : (DObj this^{Det}
 : : one^{CN}
 :)
 : /_{Avl} too^{Av/}
 ||
 @_{Quot} (Subj I^{Pro})
 : ||_{Pred} |^{Past} said^{MtV} ||
 @

- b. He waved his arms and said, “The rest of you back off.” (197)

S @_{Quot} (Subj **he**^{Pro}) |Past waved^{MtV} |

 : ||Pred || (DObj **his**^{Det}

 : : : : **arms**^{CN}

 : : : :)

 : : ||

 : : **and**^{Coord}

 : : || |Past said^{MtV} | ||

 : ||

 @

 (Subj **the**^{Det}

 : **rest**^{NN}

 : [PostM **of**^{Prep}

 : : (ObjP **you**^{Pro})

 :]

)

 ||Pred |Pres **back off**^{tV} | ||

Verbs like *say* require an argument in the predicate, but the quotative construction allows a monotransitive verb to appear without its required argument, relying on an interpretation of a contextually understood direct object. For English quotatives, the message being said is the understood direct object, and the quotative appears alongside the direct quotation as its own clause without an expressed direct object. Quotatives like *I said* and *He waved his arms and said* are full clauses but would be ungrammatical if uttered on their own without the accompanying quotation; on the other hand, direct quotations like *I like this one too* and *The rest of you back off* are full clauses that do not grammatically need the quotative to be complete.

Verbs other than *say* can appear in quotatives, as in the following examples:

- (11.34) a. “Nobody panic,” he shouted. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 113)
 b. “What did you go and do that for?” I whispered. (195)
 c. I wasn’t used to hearing such kind of talk and muttered, “Thank you.”⁷⁵ (67)
 d. “Whoa,” the driver yelled and pulled back hard. (116)

⁷⁵ Some scholars treat initial quotatives that occur before the quotation differently from quotatives in medial or final positions and consider (1) initial quotatives as the main clause with a direct quotation as a direct object but (2) medial and final quotatives as additional or parenthetical clauses. Examples like this one seem to support that type of analysis because it can seem odd that “*Thank you*” is the main clause while the majority of the sentence structure is embedded inside a quotative. One problem with this approach is that initial quotatives can introduce a full monologue or paragraph of speech, so the direct object wouldn’t close out until the full quotation is complete—even if that covers dozens of sentences. Moreover, this analysis seems to overlook the fact that many initial quotatives can be reworded as medial or final quotatives.

To treat them the same, you could argue that medial and final quotatives should be treated as main clauses with a co-indexed GAP for a direct object, thus embedding the direct quotation into the quotative. However, of the two clauses, the quotative is the one that can be deleted, and, in general, the main clause isn't a deletable clause.

I annotate all quotatives in the same manner to reflect the fact that they all do the same job: they work with direct quotations to indicate the speaker and potentially a manner of speaking and even a sequence of events. Doing so provides consistency to the annotations.

As with the instances of *say* as a quoting verb, the verbs *shouted*, *whispered*, *muttered*, and *yelled* in these examples are interpreted as monotransitive even though their direct objects are not expressed.

Practice Set 11.2 Practice with verb type

Fully annotate the following sentences, taken from Fannie Flaggs's (2012[1987]: 166-167) *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*.

1. The sun had just come up behind the cafe
 2. His mouth flew open.
 3. Idgie laughed.
 4. 'It's snow.'
 5. Ruth came up behind them in her nightgown and looked out, just as surprised.
 6. All three of them got dressed and were out in the yard five minutes later.⁷⁶
 7. It was only two inches deep, but they rolled in it and made snowballs.
 8. By seven o'clock that morning, Stump and Idgie had already built a short, fat snowman and Ruth made snow ice cream with milk and sugar.⁷⁷
 9. Stump was still so excited, he was jumping around and fell twice.
 10. I guess I won every pot for an hour or so, and Pig Iron was getting madder and madder
-

⁷⁶ Original: All three of them got dressed as fast as they could and were out in the yard five minutes later.

⁷⁷ Original: ... and Ruth made them snow ice cream with milk and sugar.

Terms introduced in Chapter 11

Verb valency types

copular (CopV)
 ergative (CopV)
 intransitive (ItV)
 monotransitive (MtV)

Functions

direct object (DObj)
 optional adverbial (Avl)
 subject adverbial (SAvl)
 subject predicative (SPred)

Concepts

adjunct
 argument
 argument/adjunct tests
 deletion test
 generic verb test
 movement test
 current copular verb
 mediopassive
 resulting copular verb
 valency

Chapter 11 Exercises

Exercise 11.1

The following sentences were taken from *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett (2009: 67-68). Annotate the sentences.

1. My childhood bedroom is the top floor of my parents' house.
2. It has white-frosting chair rails and pink cherubs in the molding.
3. It's papered in mint green rosebuds.
4. It is actually the attic with long, sloping walls, and I cannot stand straight in many places.
5. And yet, it is my sanctuary.
6. The heat swells and gathers like a hot-air balloon up here.⁷⁸
7. Our previous maid used to stare those forward-sloping stairs down every day, like it was a battle between them.⁷⁹
8. All morning, Mother's been following me around with a new hair-straightening thing while Daddy's been growling and goddamning the cotton fields because they're melting like summer snow.⁸⁰
9. It's hardly September but the fall drenches have already begun.
10. No one could argue that I hadn't worked hard at Ole Miss.

⁷⁸ Original: The heat swells and gathers like a hot-air balloon up here, not exactly welcoming others.

⁷⁹ Original: Our previous maid, Constantine, used to stare those forward-sloping stairs down every day, like it was a battle between them.

⁸⁰ Original: All morning, Mother's been following me around with a new hair-straightening thing while Daddy's been on the front porch growling and goddamning the cotton fields because they're melting like summer snow.

Exercise 11.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. PP functioning as adverbial adjunct
2. intransitive verb
3. NP as SPred
4. AjP as SPred
5. PP as SAVl
6. AvP as SAVl
7. NP as DObj of monotransitive verb
8. nominal clause as DObj of monotransitive verb
9. monotransitive verb in passive voice
10. monotransitive verb in quotative

Exercise 11.3

Select an excerpt of at least 150 words from a text of your choice. Underline each head verb you find in the excerpt and highlight any arguments (required constituents) of the verb, leaving all adjuncts (optional constituents) unmarked. Bold the complete subject of the finite verbs.

An example text from John Jakes's *North and South* (1982: 3) is provided below, which incorporates some complex grammatical forms:

Bess Windom had been reading to herself as **she** did every evening. From watching **her lips move**, **the boy** could observe her slow progress. When **Windom** blurted his remark, **Bess** had been savoring her favorite verse in the fifth chapter of Matthew: “Blessed are **they** **which** are persecuted for their righteousness’ sake: for **theirs** is **the kingdom of heaven**.”

One of the more complex examples is the LVP *watching her lips move*, which incorporates a grammatical form you have not yet encountered as an argument: *her lips move*. *Her lips* is the subject of *move*, so the two need to remain together as a constituent, and the full constituent *her lips move* is an argument of *watching*. Near the end of the excerpt, the Bible verse features inverted structures, where *they* is the subject of *are*, yet it appears after the verb, similar to the examples you have seen of existential-*there* structures. The same occurs in the second half of the verse, where the verb *is* agrees with the singular subject *the kingdom of heaven* even though that NP appears after the verb.

After marking up the text, write at least one paragraph to answer these questions:

- Based on your brief analysis, do you think optional adjuncts or required arguments are more frequent in written English?
- Based on your analysis, what verb type do you think you will encounter most in written English: intransitive, copular, or transitive? Note the term *transitive* includes the two verb types not yet covered, but all transitive-type verbs require a direct object at minimum.
- Which of the argument tests did you find most helpful in identifying arguments, and why?

For each answer you provide, justify your response with examples.

Chapter 12: Ditransitive and complex-transitive verbs

If you know how to handle the verbs, you know how to handle the language. Everything else is just vocabulary.
—Michel Thomas

12.1 Ditransitive

This chapter focuses on the final two verb valency types, first investigating ditransitive verbs. The word *ditransitive* breaks into two parts that reflect its definition: *di-* is a Greek prefix that means ‘two’ or ‘double,’ and *transitive* refers to a required object. As a transitive verb type, **ditransitive** (DtV) verbs require a direct object as well as a second type of object in the predicate, an **indirect object** (IObj). In English, the indirect object occurs between the head verb and the direct object, so the long verb phrase for a ditransitive head verb has, at its minimum, three constituents, as in the template below:

(12.1)	Pred	TMAV	<u>ditransitive verb</u> ^{DtV}
	:	(IObj	indirect object)
	:	(DObj	direct object)

The typical grammatical form for an indirect object is a noun phrase, and its semantic role is often RECIPIENT because the indirect object receives the direct object, is the intended benefactor of the direct object, or is the addressee receiving a more abstract indirect object. While other grammatical forms can function in the indirect and direct object roles, the most frequent forms you will find are noun phrases.

The examples below include indirect objects that act as recipients, whether they are recipients of a concrete object or something more abstract. Because the focus is on the verb and its arguments in the predicate, the annotations for these examples only include the predicate.

(12.2) a. Still, every year, she gave Lydia another diary. (Ng 2014: 74)

	Pred	Past	<u>gave</u> ^{DtV}
	:	(IObj	Lydia ^{PropN})
	:	(DObj	another ^{Det}
	:	:	diary ^{CN}
	:	)	

- b. Someone brought her a glass of water. (144)

Pred	Past	<u>brought</u> ^{DtV}
:	(IObj	her ^{Pro})
:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	glass ^{CN}
:	:	[^{PostM} of ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep water ^{NN})
:	:	]
:	)	

- c. At recess the other children whispered and teachers gave them pitying looks (125)

Pred	Past	<u>gave</u> ^{DtV}
:	(IObj	them ^{Pro})
:	(DObj	< ^{Att} pitying ^{Aj} >
:	:	looks ^{CN}
:	)	

- d. I don't owe him anything (214)

Pred	Pres	do ^{PriAux} n't ^{Neg}
:	:	<u>owe</u> ^{DtV}
:		
:	(IObj	him ^{Pro})
:	(DObj	anything ^{Pro})

- e. Without taking his eyes off the road, Jack tossed her his lighter. (189)

Pred	Past	<u>tossed</u> ^{DtV}
:	(IObj	her ^{Pro})
:	(DObj	his ^{Det}
:	:	lighter ^{CN}
:	)	

Throughout these examples, the basic pattern provided in (12.1) is followed, where an indirect object occurs directly after the ditransitive verb and a direct object follows the indirect object.

While indirect and direct objects are not always noun phrases, they do occur in that order (i.e., you can switch out the forms but not the order of the functions).

Examples (12.2a) and (12.2b) demonstrate the basic semantic role for indirect objects since the indirect object in both cases physically receives the direct object. In (a), Lydia receives another diary; in (b), the direct object *her* receives a glass of water. The DObj question can still be applied to examples like these:

- What is given? *Another diary.*
- What is brought? *A glass of water.*

An IObj question might be worded as “Who/what receives [DObj]?”

- Who receives another diary? *Lydia.*
- Who receives a glass of water? *Her.*

Examples (12.2c) and (12.2d) also feature recipient indirect objects, but they are recipients of something more abstract. In (c), they (or *them*) are receiving pitying looks, and in (d), he (or *him*) is receiving anything—or, in this particular case, he is *not* receiving anything since the head verb is negated.

Finally, the example in (12.2e) provides an instance of an intended recipient, as she (or *her*) is the intended recipient of the tossed lighter. This example includes a concrete DObj, *his lighter*, which is physically affected by the tossing action and is, thus, a PATIENT. The indirect object *her* is the intended recipient of the lighter, but you do not know whether she actually received the lighter; he may have tossed it and missed, especially since he wasn’t looking where he tossed it, and the lighter may have flown out the window. However, regardless of whether she physically received the lighter, *her* is the indirect object and the intended recipient in the sentence.

Indirect objects can also be intended benefactors of the action in the verb, or the person who benefits from the verb and its direct object, as in the example below.

(12.3) I’ll cook you some lunch. (Ng 2014: 71)

Pred	Mod	’ ModAux
:	:	<u>cook</u> ^{DtV}
:		
:	(IObj	you ^{Pro})
:	(DObj	some ^{Det}
:	:	lunch ^{NN}
:	)	

In this example, the indirect object *you* is the intended benefactor of the cooking and the lunch: you will benefit from me cooking lunch.

Another type of RECIPIENT is an addressee, or the person a message is addressed to. When the indirect object is an addressee, the direct object is more likely to be a clause though it can still be an NP.

(12.4) a. The police tell them lots of teenagers leave home with no warning. (Ng 2014: 12)

Pred	Pres	<u>tell</u> ^{DtV}	
:	(IObj	them ^{Pro}	)
:	((DObj	(Subj	lots of ^{Det}
:	:	:	teenagers ^{CN}
:	:	)	
:	:	Pred	Pres <u>leave</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	:	(DObj home ^{NN})
:	:	:	[Avl with ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep no ^{Det}
:	:	:	: warning ^{NN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	]
:	:		
:	))		

b. Someone asked her how the past few days had been. (20)

Pred	Past	<u>asked</u> ^{DtV}	
:	(IObj	her ^{Pro}	)
:	((DObj	/i	how ^{Av/}
:	:	(Subj	the ^{Det}
:	:	:	past ^{Det}
:	:	:	few ^{Det}
:	:	:	days ^{CN}
:	:	)	
:	:	Pred	PastPerf had ^{PriAux}
:	:	:	: <u>been</u> ^{CopV}
:	:	:	
:	:	:	/i SAvl GAP/
:	:		
:	))		

- c. ... Stan Hewitt had asked him the difference between a spring roll and an egg roll (158)

Pred	PastPerf	had ^{PriAux}		
:	:	<u>asked</u> ^{DtV}		
:				
:	(IObj	him ^{Pro})		
:	(DObj	the ^{Det}		
:	:	difference ^{CN}		
:	:	[PostM	between	
:	:	:	(ObjPrep (	a ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	spring roll ^{CN}
:	:	:	)	
:	:	:	and ^{CoConj}	
:	:	:	(	an ^{Det}
:	:	:	:	egg roll ^{CN}
:	:	:	)	
:	:	:	)	
:	:	]		
:	:	)		

The indirect objects in these examples serve as addressees for some act of communication (i.e., for the telling and asking of a message). The message is the direct object and, as seen above, is often a nominal clause. For example, the indirect object *them* in (a) is the addressee of the message *lots of teenagers leave home with no warning*. The message is what the police are telling, and they are receiving that message.

As with monotransitive verbs, when a ditransitive verb is the head verb in a quotative construction, the direct object is not expressed, but the indirect object is expressed for ditransitive verbs, as in this example:

- (12.5) “Some of the equipment in the shop would be difficult for you to use,” he told her. (Ng 2014: 27)

@Quot	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
:	Pred	Past <u>told</u> ^{DtV}
:	:	(IObj her ^{Pro})
:		
@		

It is understood that he is telling her a message, and the message is represented by the accompanying direct quotation.

Passivization also reduces the ditransitive's verb structure by one, and passivized LVPs with a head ditransitive verb often mirror the structure of monotransitive verbs because the semantic RECIPIENT is often the subject of a passive ditransitive verb. The COCA examples below demonstrate four passivized ditransitive verbs:

- (12.6) a. The Patriots were fined one million dollars

S	(Subj	the ^{Det}	
	:	Patriots ^{PropN}	
	)		
	Pred	PastPass	were ^{PriAux}
	:	:	<u>fined</u> ^{DtV}
	:		
	:	(DObj	one ^{Det}
	:	:	million ^{Det}
	:	:	dollars ^{CN}
	:	)	

- b. he is offered tea

S	(Subj	he ^{Pro}	
	Pred	PresPass	is ^{PriAux}
	:	:	<u>offered</u> ^{DtV}
	:		
	:	(DObj	tea ^{NN})

- c. Normally when women are given a compliment we demur.

//Avl	when ^{SubConj}		
:	(Subj	women ^{CN}	
:	Pred	PresPass	are ^{PriAux}
:	:	:	<u>given</u> ^{DtV}
:	:		
:	:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	:	compliment ^{CN}
:	:	)	
:			
//			

- d. we're being told a few weeks later that something has to be done.

S	(Subj	we ^{Pro})		
	Pred	PresProgPass	're ^{PriAux}	
	:	:	being ^{PriAux}	
	:	:	<u>told</u> ^{DtV}	
	:			
	:	(Avl	a ^{Det}	
	:	:	few ^{Det}	
	:	:	weeks ^{CN}	
	:	:	<PostM	later ^{Aj} >
	:	)		
	:	((DObj	that ^{SubConj}	
	:	(Subj	something ^{Pro})	
	:	Pred	PresModPass	has to ^{SemiAux}
	:	:	:	be ^{PriAux}
	:	:	:	<u>done</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:		
	:			
	:	))		

In all these examples, the indirect object is not expressed in the passive LVP, so, for example, you don't know who did the offering in (b), but you know the direct object is *tea*, and the tea was offered to him. *He* is both the semantic RECIPIENT of the direct object and the grammatical subject.

Sometimes a passive ditransitive verb will be followed by only its indirect object, with the semantic PATIENT appearing as the subject, as in the example below:

(12.7) This date was given them by the missionaries (COCA)

S	(Subj	this ^{Det}	
	:	date ^{CN}	
	)		
	Pred	PastPass	was ^{PriAux}
	:	:	<u>given</u> ^{DtV}
	:		
	:	(IObj	them ^{Pro})
	:	[Avl	by ^{Prep}
	:	(ObjPrep	the ^{Det}
	:	:	missionaries ^{CN}
	:	)	
	:	]	

In this sentence, the indirect object *them* appears in the predicate, and it is the semantic PATIENT, *this date*, that appears as the grammatical subject. For many speakers of American English,

sentences like this one sound stilted and tend to be reserved, if used at all, for more formal language, such as written academic genres.

Just as some verbs can be both intransitive and monotransitive, depending on its use in context, some verbs can be ditransitive, monotransitive, or intransitive, depending on their use. Above you saw that *ask* can be a ditransitive verb, and the example below demonstrates that it can also be a monotransitive verb.

(12.8) ...Jack asked questions (Ng 2014: 218)

Pred	Past	<u>asked</u> ^{MtV}
:	(DObj	questions ^{CN})

In this example, the verb *asked* only has one required argument in its predicate, the direct object *questions*, so *asked* is a monotransitive verb.

You also saw examples of *tell* as a ditransitive verb, but *tell* can also be intransitive or monotransitive:

(12.9) a. She couldn't tell. (Ng 2014: 165)

Pred	Mod	could ^{ModAux} n't ^{Neg}
:	:	<u>tell</u> ^{ItV}
:		

b. He leaned closer to Nath, as if he were telling a secret. (131)

Pred	PastProg	were ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>telling</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	secret ^{CN}
:	)	

c. because of this James could not tell if he was crying. (91)

Pred	Mod	could ^{ModAux} not ^{Neg}
:	:	<u>tell</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	((DObj	if ^{SubConj}
:	:	(Subj he ^{Pro})
:	:	Pred PastProg was ^{PriAux}
:	:	: : <u>crying</u> ^{ItV}
:	:	:
:	:	
:	)	

As with most verbs that can appear in more than one valency type, verbs like *tell* shift meaning or connotation when their valency types differ. As an intransitive verb, *tell* can be defined as ‘to divulge private or confidential information’ as in (a); as a monotransitive verb, *tell* can mean ‘to reveal information’ as in (b) or ‘to determine based on context’ as in (c). These examples demonstrate that you cannot base your judgements of verb type on the verb alone—you must use the context in which it is used to determine verb type.

Ditransitive constructions can be reworded with a *to/for* preposition phrase, but in rewording the predicate, the indirect object becomes an object of a preposition, and the verb type changes. The COCA examples demonstrate the shift in patterns below.

- (12.10)a. A tiny female paramedic with green eyes threw Decker a tablecloth.

Pred	Past	<u>threw</u> ^{DtV}
:	(IObj	Decker ^{PropN})
:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	tablecloth ^{CN}
:	)	

- b. Parker threw the ball to me.

Pred	Past	<u>threw</u> ^{CtV}
:	(DObj	the ^{Det}
:	:	ball ^{CN}
:	)	
:	[OAvl	to ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep me ^{Pro})
:	]	

- c. The Spaniard's wife had cooked him a spectacular paella.

Pred	Past	<u>cooked</u> ^{DtV}
:	(IObj	him ^{Pro})
:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	<Att spectacular ^{Aj} >
:	:	paella ^{CN}
:	)	

- d. he cooked dinner for his mother and stepfather

Pred	Past	<u>cooked</u> ^{MtV}
:	(DObj	dinner ^{NN})
:	[Avl	for ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep his ^{Det}
:	:	: mother ^{CN} and ^{CoConj} stepfather ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	]	

Examples (a) and (b) demonstrate the different alternations for the verb *throw*: in (a), it is a ditransitive verb with the indirect object *Decker* while, in (b), it is a complex-transitive verb, which is the final verb type discussed in the next section, with the object adverbial *to me*.

The verb type of *cooked* in (d) could potentially be labeled as monotransitive or complex-transitive. The label hinges on whether the PP *for his mother and stepfather* is a required argument or an optional adjunct, which is a grey area for some speakers. I judged *cooked* as a monotransitive verb in (d) because it passed all three tests for optionality in my dialect. The verb *threw*, on the other hand, failed two of those tests:

- (12.11) a. He cooked dinner, and this happened for his mother and father.
 b. For his mother and father, he cooked dinner.
 c. He cooked dinner.
 d. *Parker threw the ball, and this happened to me.
 e. ? To me, Parker threw the ball.

Without the right intonation, sentence (e) sounds awkward, which is why I've marked it with a question mark rather than an asterisk. If you find (a) ungrammatical or awkward, you may have judged *cooked* to be complex-transitive with a required object adverbial PP. These examples demonstrate that verb valency is not always clearly defined and relies on the interpretations and grammatical sensibilities of the grammarian.

12.2 Complex-transitive

A **complex-transitive** (CtV) verb requires two arguments in the predicate. As a transitive verb-type, it requires a direct object, but it also requires either an object predicative or an object adverbial. An **object predicative** (OPred) describes or renames the direct object and often takes the form of an adjective phrase or a noun phrase while an **object adverbial** (OAvl) locates the direct object or provides some other adverb-like information about the direct object and often takes the form of a preposition phrase or an adverb phrase. You should note the connections between these definitions and those of subject predicative and subject adverbial. The OPred and OAvl functions differ from SPred and SAvl functions in only one way: the constituent being modified and/or located. While subject predicatives and subject adverbials work to provide more

information about the subject, objective predicatives and object adverbials work to provide more information about the direct object.

The first set of examples focuses only on object predicatives. The expected order within the predicate of a complex-transitive verb requires the direct object to appear after the verb with the OPred following the direct object, as in the basic templates provided below:

- (12.12) a. ||Pred |TMAV complex-transitive verb^{CtV}|
 : (DObj direct object)
 : (OPred object predicative)
 ||
- b. ||Pred |TMAV complex-transitive verb^{CtV}|
 : (DObj direct object)
 : <OPred object predicative>
 ||

As these templates suggest, the most common forms associated with the OPred function are noun phrases and adjective phrases.

In the examples below, only the predicates are fully annotated to put the focus on the verb and its required arguments in the predicate.

- (12.13) a. They called these whites scalawags, or scoundrels. (Loewen 2007[1995]: 201)

||Pred |Past called^{CtV}|
 : (DObj **these**^{Det}
 : : **whites**^{CN}
 :)
 : (OPred (**scalawags**^{CN})
 : : **or**^{CoConj}
 : : (**scoundrels**^{CN})
 :)
 ||

- b. John Smith had studied the region and named it “New England” (82)

||Pred |Past named^{CtV}|
 : (DObj **it**^{Pro})
 : (OPred **New England**^{PropN})
 ||

- c. On July 9, 1858, in Chicago, Douglas made his position clear (154)

Pred	Past	<u>made</u> ^{CtV}
:	(DObj	his ^{Det}
:	:	position ^{CN}
:	)	
:	<OPred	clear ^{Aj} >

- d. we simply declared the Iraqi military illegal. (276)

Pred	Past	<u>declared</u> ^{CtV}
:	(DObj	the ^{Det}
:	:	<Att Iraqi ^{Aj} >
:	:	military ^{CollN}
:	)	
:	<OPred	illegal ^{Aj} >

Examples (a) and (b) have a noun phrase functioning as an object predicative. In (a), *scalawags* or *scoundrels* renames or describes the direct object, *these whites*, and, in (b), *New England* renames the direct object *it*. Examples (c) and (d) feature an adjective phrase functioning as an object predicative. *Clear* describes the direct object *his position*, and *illegal* describes how the subject *we* views the direct object *the Iraqi military*. Whether the OPred is a noun phrase or adjective phrase, its expected position is after the direct object.

The object adverbial also provides information about the direct object, but it modifies it in adverbial ways, such as providing a location for the DObj. The ordering of constituents matches the patterns above, where the direct object appears between the verb and the object adverbial:

(12.14)a. ||Pred |TMAV complex-transitive verb^{CtV}|
 : (DObj direct object)
 : [OAvl object adverbial]
 ||

b. ||Pred |TMAV complex-transitive verb^{CtV}|
 : (DObj direct object)
 : /OAvl object adverbial/
 ||

As reflected in these templates, the most frequent forms associated with OAvl are preposition phrases and adverb phrases. The following examples focus on instances of preposition phrases as object adverbials.

- (12.15) a. he authorized a naval blockade of the Soviet Union and sent expeditionary forces to Murmanks, Archangel, and Vladivostok (Loewen 2007: 16)

Pred	Past	<u>sent</u> ^{CtV}
:	(DObj	<Att expeditionary ^{Aj} >
:	:	forces ^{CollN}
:	)	
:	[OAvl	to ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep (Murmanks ^{PropN})
:	:	(Archangel ^{PropN})
:	:	and ^{CoConj}
:	:	(Vladivostok ^{PropN})
:	:	)
:	]	

- b. Those of us not in the classroom can play a role in changing how history is taught by supporting teachers who put innovative approaches into practice. (357)

Pred	Past	<u>put</u> ^{CtV}
:	(DObj	<Att innovative ^{Aj} >
:	:	approaches ^{CN}
:	)	
:	[OAvl	into ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep practice ^{NN})
:	]	

- c. They viewed them as “southern renegades, betrayers of their race and country.” (201)

Pred	Past	<u>viewed</u> ^{CtV}
:	(DObj	them ^{Pro})
:	[OAvl	as ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep (<Att southern ^{Aj} >
:	:	renegades ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	:	(betrayers ^{CN}
:	:	[PostM of ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep their ^{Det}
:	:	race ^{CollN} and country ^{CollN}
:	:	)
:	:	]
:	:	)
:	]	

Example (a) features a PP functioning as an OAvI to locate the direct object because the PP *to Murmansk, Archangel, and Vladivostok* locates the area where *expeditionary forces* were sent. The second example is more metaphorical with *into practice* conceptually locating where the *innovative approaches* are put. The PP functioning as an OAvI in the final example modifies the direct object in another way since it describes the direct object while also providing the manner in which the direct object is viewed. The PP *as southern renegades, betrayers of their race and country* provides information about *how* they were viewed rather than *where* they were viewed or located.

Adverb phrases can also function as object adverbials, as in the sentences below.

- (12.16) a. “We can put the TV there,” Rajinder said softly, standing before the window and pointing to the right corner of the living room. (COCA)

Pred	Mod	can ^{ModAux}
:	:	<u>put</u> ^{CtV}
:		
:	(DObj	the ^{Det}
:	:	TV ^{CN}
:	)	
:	/OAvI	there ^{Av/}

- b. And now, in the middle of an ordinary Wednesday afternoon, unthinkably, of her own volition, she was sending me away. (COCA)

Pred	PastProg	was ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>sending</u> ^{CtV}
:		
:	(DObj	me ^{Pro}
:	/OAvI	away ^{Av/}

The AvP *there* provides a potential new location for the direct object *the TV* in (a), and the AvP *away* locates where the direct object *me* is being sent in (b). Adverb phrases functioning as OAvI are likely to be adverbs of location like *here*, *there*, *nowhere*, and *away*.

As a final reminder of the importance of context when determining verb type, the following COCA examples all have the same head verb, *calls*, but its verb type, semantic meaning, and required arguments shift from example to example.

- (12.17)a. it confirmed that his girlfriend never calls anymore.

Pred	/AvI	never ^{Av/}
:	Pres	<u>calls</u> ^{ItV}
:	/AvI	anymore ^{Av/}

- b. He keeps track of the flight, and when he figures that it's twenty minutes away, he calls me, pulls up in front of my house in Alexandria, picks me up, and drives here.

|| |Pres calls^{MtV}|
 : (DObj **me**^{Pro})
 ||

- c. Already the Trans Am's engine has been rebuilt and cold days the spark plugs don't take, and C.R. calls us a cab.

||Pred |Pres calls^{DtV}|
 : (IObj **us**^{Pro})
 : (DObj **a**^{Det}
 : : **cab**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

- d. And then I watch this Lindsey Graham on television today and he calls me a jackass.

||Pred |Pres calls^{CtV}|
 : (DObj **me**^{Pro})
 : (OPred **a**^{Det}
 : : **jackass**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

- e. Well, six weeks after he arrives he calls me into his office and he's not smiling.

||Pred |Pres calls^{CtV}|
 : (DObj **me**^{Pro})
 : [OAvl **into**^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **his**^{Det}
 : : : **office**^{CN}
 : :)
 :]
 ||

When faced with identifying the verb type of a diverse verb like *call*, you can use a dictionary as a tool. For example, in *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, each use of *call* from the

sentences above has its own definition. As the meaning of *call* shifts, so do the verb type and requirements for the predicate.

When complex-transitive verbs are passivized, they take the grammatical argument structure of a copular verb, as demonstrated in these examples:

- (12.18) a. Pitches right over the knees were called balls and Johnny led off the ninth with two walks. (Dawson and Glaubman 2001: 86)

S	(Subj	pitches ^{CN}
:	[PostM	/AvI right ^{Av/}
:	:	over ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
:	:	: knees ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	]	
)		
Pred	PastPass	were ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>called</u> ^{CtV}
:		
:	(SPred	balls ^{CN})

- b. Seward was considered a compromiser. (Loewen 2007: 183)

S	(Subj	Seward ^{PropN}
Pred	PastPass	was ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>considered</u> ^{CtV}
:		
:	(SPred	a ^{Det}
:	:	compromiser ^{CN}
:	)	

- c. Of course, it had been discovered and named Mississippi by ancestors of the American Indians (Loewen 2007: 46)

S	(Subj	it ^{Pro})		
	Pred		PastPerfPass	had ^{PriAux j}
	:	:	:	been ^{PriAux k}
	:	:	:	<u>discovered</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:		
	:			
	:	and ^{CoConj}		
	:		PastPerfPass	GAP ^{j PriAux}
	:	:	:	GAP ^{k PriAux}
	:	:	:	<u>named</u> ^{CtV}
	:	:		
	:	:	(SPred	Mississippi ^{PropN})
	:			
	:			
	:	[Avl	by ^{Prep}	
	:	:	(ObjPrep	ancestors ^{CN}
	:	:	:	[PostM of ^{Prep}
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	:	American Indians ^{PropN}
	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	]
	:	:	)	
	:	]		

For passive complex-transitive verbs, the semantic PATIENT typically serves as the subject of the sentence, and the predicative/adverbial constituent modifies, describes, or locates the subject. For instance, in (b), *Seward* is the subject, and someone described Seward as *a compromiser*, which is the subject predicative. Example (c) demonstrates how syntactically complex passivized constructions can be, especially when two different head verbs are coordinated and share primary auxiliaries and adverbial elements within the predicate. The head verbs *discovered* and *named* are two different verbs with two different verb types, yet they share a subject and co-indexed primary auxiliaries, and they share the adverbial PP *by ancestors of the American Indians*. The ancestors had discovered the river and had named it Mississippi.

Optional adverbial constituents do not change a verb's type; in example (c) above, you could delete *by ancestors of the American Indians* without changing the verb type of either *discovered* or *named*. When deciding verb type, you need to focus only on the required arguments, relying on the three tests discussed in Chapter 11. Furthermore, make sure you focus only on the use and context in the sentence itself since many verbs can take on more than one

verb type depending on its use in context. The goal is to focus on what is *actually* there and what meaning it conveys rather than what *could* be there.

Practice Set 12.1 Identifying verb type

The following sentences were taken from Constance Hale's (2012: 10-12) *Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch: Let verbs power your writing*. For each underlined head verb, identify its full SVP, TMAV information, and verb type.

1. Verbs put action in scenes, show eccentricity in characters, and convey drama in plots.
 2. They give poetry its urgency.
 3. They make quotes memorable and ads convincing.
 4. Karen Elizabeth Gordon, the author of subversive grammar handbooks, calls them "the heartbeat of a sentence."
 5. Verbs run deep in the DNA of our every sentence, too.
 6. The subject may make like the monarch of the sentence, but the verb actually bosses+ the subject around, and can give a noun many other jobs. [*Bosses around* is a multi-word verb.]
 7. The verb in English enjoys a special primacy.
 8. Linguists tell us that verbs make up one of our four major word classes, along with nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.
 9. It turns a noun into a subject, a subject into the beginning of a sentence, a sentence into the beginning of a story.
 10. The combination of a noun and a verb is the essence of sentencehood: *Mona weeps. The searchlight sweeps. Harvey keeps on keeping on.*
 11. It isn't the same in all languages.
 12. Not only do we depend on verbs, using them in every sentence we utter, but we twist them into myriad tenses and moods that allow us to be precise about time and nuanced about intention.
 13. We can say that today we do the macarena, and that in eighth-grade dancing class we foxtrotted, and that we girls had waltzed with our doting fathers before we dared do it with boys.
 14. The verb pulses not just at the heart of our every memory, plan, and wish, but at the heart of English itself.
 15. We can't verbalize without verbs.
-

The table below summarizes the five verb types presented in this chapter and Chapter 11 with examples taken from Stephenie Meyer's (2005: 35, 37, 46-51) *Twilight*.⁸¹ The constituents within the LVP are ordered in the way they appear (e.g., IObj before DObj when both constituents occur in the predicate), and any box left blank represents a function that does not work with that particular verb type (e.g., a copular verb cannot take a direct object). The darker lines separating columns indicate places where optional adjuncts are more likely to occur (e.g., directly before the subject).

	S subject	LVP: Predicate						
		V verb	Objects		Predicatives		Adverbials	
			IObj	DObj	OPred	SPred	OAvl	SAvl
Intransitive ^{ItV}	I	sighed						
Copular ^{CopV}	His gaze	became				appraising		
	The rain	was				a mist		
	Mike	was						on my team
	I	was						up
Monotransitive ^{MtV}	I	couldn't fathom		his interest				
Ditransitive ^{DtV}	No one	had asked	me	that				
Complex-transitive ^{CtV}	my mother	calls		me	her open book			
	I	kept		my voice	indifferent			
	Mr. Banner	called		the class			to order	
	your mother	sent		you			here	

Table 12.1 Verb types

This table provides common form-function associations in basic sentence structures but is by no means exhaustive; for example, all the direct objects presented in the table are noun phrases, but other constituents can function as a direct object, such as nominal clauses. Chapter 15 presents a chart with more thorough potential form-function associations to complement the ones provided above.

The darker borders in the table represent the most frequent locations where optional adjuncts can appear. They can appear at either clause boundary:

⁸¹ I sighed. (49) / His gaze became appraising. (49) / The rain was just a mist (51) / Mike was on my team today. (51) / ...I was up. (51) / I couldn't fathom his interest (48) / No one had asked me that (48) / my mother always calls me her open book. (50) / I kept my voice indifferent. (45) / Mr. Banner called the class to order then (50) / And your mother sent you here so that she could travel with him. (49)

- (12.19)a. I laughed *without humor*. (Meyer 2005: 49)
 b. He plays ball *for a living*. (48)
 c. My voice was glum *by the time I finished*. (49)
 d. Or *maybe* Forks was making me crazy *in the literal sense of the word*. (46)
 e. *After he left*, I began doodling *on my notebook* again. (47)

Examples (d) and (e) illustrate that multiple adjuncts can occur in the same sentence. In (d), the AvP *maybe* occurs before the clause while the PP *in the literal sense of the word* appears after it. Example (e) has three adjuncts, which are the AvCl *after he left*, the PP *on my notebook*, and the AvP *again*.

Another possible position for adjuncts is between the subject and verb:

- (12.20)a. the bell *finally* rang (Meyer 2005: 51)
 b. I *happily* stayed out of their way. (37)
 c. my mother *always* calls me her open book. (50)

In each of these examples, an adjunct separates the subject and its predicate, which is a frequent location for adjuncts.

Within the predicate, adjuncts can occur between the verb and some required elements, specifically the subject predicative or required adverbials:

- (12.21)a. her experiments weren't *always* edible. (Meyer 2005: 35)
 b. ... I went upstairs *unwillingly* (37) / I went *unwillingly* upstairs.

However, adjuncts do not often occur between the verb and its required objects or object predicative, though there are, of course, exceptions to that broad generalization:

- (12.22)a. my mother *always* calls me her open book. (Meyer 2005: 50)
 b. *my mother calls *always* me her open book.
 c. *my mother calls me *always* her open book.
 d. my mother calls me her open book *always*.
 e. *always* my mother calls me her open book.

Regardless of where the adjunct occurs—or the type of adjunct—it does not alter the head verb's type.

The table below summarizes that same information but adds in the connection between the arguments in the predicate and active versus passive verb types:

Active	Argument structure	Passive
Intransitive	V	Monotransitive
Copular	V + SPred V + SAvl	Complex-transitive
Monotransitive	V + DObj	Ditransitive
—	V + IObj	Ditransitive
Ditransitive	V + IObj + DObj	—
Complex-transitive	V + DObj + OPred V + DObj + OAvl	—

Table 12.2 Verb valency and arguments within the predicate

Monotransitive and ditransitive verbs in quotative constructions follow the expected predicate patterns for passive verbs, so, for instance, a ditransitive verb in a quotative will only have an indirect object appear within the predicate.

Practice Set 12.2 Head verbs and required arguments

The following sentences were taken from *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin (1992[1978]: 1-2). For each sentence, annotate the LVPs functioning as a predicate. Remember that any given sentence can have more than one predicate and more than one verb type.

1. The sun sets in the west (just about everyone knows that), but Sunset Towers faced east.
2. Sunset Towers faced east and had no towers.
3. This glittery, glass apartment house stood alone on Lake Michigan shore five stories high.
4. Then one day (it happened to be the Fourth of July), a most uncommon-looking delivery boy rode around town slipping letters under the doors of the chosen tenants-to-be.
5. The letters were signed *Barney Northrup*.
6. The delivery boy was sixty-two years old, and there was no such person as Barney Northrup.
7. Six letters were delivered, just six.
8. But these unbelievably elegant apartments will be shown by appointment only.
9. Six appointments were made, and one by one, family by family, talk, talk, talk, Barney Northrup led the tours around and about Sunset Towers.
10. “You can see out, nobody can see in.”

12.3 Multi-word verbs

A final area for this unit focusing on verbs is more practice on how to distinguish between a **multi-word verb** (i.e., a compound verb) and a **free combination** (e.g., a verb

followed by a separate adverb phrase). The terms and information presented here are primarily based on Biber et al. (1999: 403-428) and Quirk et al. (2010: 1150-1168), both of which provide four categories of multi-word verbs: phrasal, prepositional, phrasal-prepositional, and other.

A **phrasal verb** is a two-word verb consisting of a verb and an adverbial particle that work together as a compound to create a meaning that could not be derived from the individual parts. Phrasal verbs can be replaced with a synonymous single-word verb.

(12.23)a. they touched down at the airport (COCA)

Pred	Past	<u>touched down</u> ^{ItV}
:	[Avl	at ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
:	:	airport ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	]	

b. She's touched up her makeup (COCA)

Pred	PresPerf	's ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>touched up</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	her ^{Det}
:	:	makeup ^{NN}
:	)	

The phrasal verb *touched down* consists of the verb *touched* and adverbial particle *down*, which work together as a single unit to create a specific meaning that could not be guessed from those pieces. When together as a phrasal verb, they could be replaced with the synonymous *landed*. The phrasal verb *touched up* means something similar to *fixed*.

Phrasal verbs are unique from the other types in that the adverbial particle can move to the other side of the direct object if the verb is monotransitive, and if the direct object consists only of a head pronoun, the particle is required to appear after the DObj.

(12.24)a. And she'd always put a sweater on (COCA)

Pred	Mod	'd ^{ModAux}
:	:	/Avl always ^{Av} /
:	:	<u>put</u> GAP ^{i MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	sweater ^{CN}
:	)	
:	on ⁱ	

- b. Yes. Drew, affluenza, I looked it up. It is Latin for, “You ain’t got no other defense.” (COCA)

Pred	Past	<u>looked</u> GAP ⁱ MtV
:	(DObj	it ^{Pro})
:	<u>up</u> ⁱ	

- c. *... affluenza, I looked up it.

When annotating these examples, the GAP in the SVP holds the place of the particle, and the particle is co-indexed with the GAP to show that, even though it occurs at the end, it is still considered a part of the head verb. The rewording in example (c) demonstrates that a pronoun direct object requires the particle of a phrasal verb to follow it.

The words *look up* do not always comprise a phrasal verb because they could be an example of free combination, where the *up* is either an adverb or a preposition. Examine the next three COCA examples and determine which one has a phrasal verb and which two are examples of free combination.

- (12.25)a. we looked up jailhouse ghosts on the Internet.
 b. he looked up and saw the two big men start to walk down toward the wreck.
 c. He looked up the stairs.

Of those three examples, the *looked up* in (a) is the only one that is an example of a phrasal verb. Its use in that sentence is synonymous with *researched*. The sentence could be reworded with particle movement: *we looked the jailhouse ghosts up on the Internet*. In example (b), *up* is expressing the direction of his looking—he could have looked down, away, or around. Both *look* and *up* retain their semantic meanings and contribute individually to the overall meaning of the sentence. In (c), *up* is a preposition, and the PP *up the stairs* functions as an optional adverbial specifying where he looked. He could have looked *down the stairs* or *around the stairs*. Furthermore, the *up* cannot be moved without changing the meaning entirely: *He looked the stairs up* means something quite different.

A **prepositional verb** consists of a verb and preposition that have melded together into a compound verb requiring a direct object. Like phrasal verbs, the meaning of prepositional verbs is not clear from the two separate parts, and the words come together to create an idiomatic meaning that could be replaced with a single-word synonym. The following sentences from COCA provide examples of prepositional verbs:

(12.26)a. He says someone has broken into his study

Pred	PresPerf	has ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>broken into</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	his ^{Det}
:	:	study ^{CN}
:	)	

b. our adversaries are laughing at us.

Pred	PresProg	are ^{PriAux}
:	:	<u>laughing at</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	us ^{Pro})

c. If you aren't reading these books, you can't talk about them.

Pred	Mod	can ^{ModAux} 't ^{Neg}
:	:	<u>talk about</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	them ^{Pro})

These three examples demonstrate how prepositional verbs mean more than just the sum of their parts. *Break into* means 'to enter' and adds the connotation of entering for ill-intentioned purposes, but it doesn't necessarily mean that anything was broken. A person could break into a room without leaving a trace. *Laugh at* doesn't mean our adversaries are laughing in the direction of us; rather, it means they are ridiculing or mocking us. And *talk about* doesn't mean you can talk around the area books are located but means you can discuss the books. Because prepositional verbs are part verb and part preposition, they always require an object, and so while phrasal verbs can be intransitive, prepositional verbs cannot.

Just like phrasal verbs, instances of the same words in the same order could be prepositional verbs in one context but free combination in another. Consider the following two COCA examples, each of which contains an instance of *decide on*. Determine which is an example of a prepositional verb and which is an example of free combination with *on* beginning a preposition phrase.

(12.27) a. She had decided on the plane that walking down the aisle in a wedding dress of Irish linen was the only way to go.

- b. Did it make more sense for me to get on the freeway and go to another town? Or better to find a dark alley and park there until the coast was clear? I decided on the freeway.

In example (a), *decided* is a single-word head verb followed by the PP *on the plane*, which provides the location of her decision-making. In (b), *decided on* is a prepositional verb that means I selected or chose the freeway. I didn't make my decision while on the freeway but instead chose to take the freeway rather than park in a dark alley. The first example can be reworded by moving the PP (i.e., *On the plane, she had decided that...*) while the second could not without altering meaning (i.e., *On the freeway, I decided* means something different from what the context provides).

Phrasal and prepositional verbs are separated into two grammatical categories because they exhibit different syntactic features. The examples below feature the phrasal verb *look up*, meaning to research or find, and the prepositional verb *look at*, meaning to examine or investigate.

(12.28) *particle movement*

- a. She looked up the case file. / She looked the case file up.
b. She looked at the case file. / *She looked the case file at.

DObj as pronoun

- c. *She looked up it. / She looked it up.
d. She looked at it. / *She looked it at.

intervening Adv

- e. *She looked quickly up the case file.
f. She looked quickly at the case file.

stress in questions

- g. What did she look UP?
h. What did she LOOK at?

Although *look up* and *look at* are quite similar on the surface, they behave differently in four situations: the ability to move the second word, the required position for a pronoun DObj, the ability to place an adverbial constituent between the orthographic words, and where the stress falls in a question.

As its name suggests, a **phrasal-prepositional verb** includes three words: a verb, an adverbial particle, and a required preposition. This type of verb behaves more like prepositional verbs than phrasal verbs because the particle cannot move, and they require direct objects, as demonstrated by these COCA examples.

- (12.29)a. I mean, I've put up with prejudiced people all my life

Pred	PresPerf	've	PriAux
:	:	<u>put up with</u>	MtV
:			
:	(DObj	<Att	prejudiced
:	:	people	CN
:	)		
:	(Avl	all	Det
:	:	my	Det
:	:	life	NN
:	)		

- b. a lot of young women look up to you

Pred	Pres	<u>look up to</u>	MtV
:	(DObj	you	Pro

The phrasal-prepositional verb *put up with* means to tolerate or endure, which is a meaning that couldn't be figured out from the individual parts. Similarly, the verb *look up to* means to respect or admire, not to physically direct the gaze at an upward angle toward someone.

Other multi-word verbs are compounds that don't fit into those three categories, such as *make do*.

- (12.30) People in Penwith actually remember what life was like without oil. People made do, she says.

Verbs like *make do* feature two verbs working together as one while other types of multi-word verbs incorporate different lexical categories. For example, the multi-word verb *try and VERB* incorporates the verb *try*, the coordinator *and*, and a second verb, as demonstrated in the following sentences from COCA:

- (12.31)a. he's goin' to try and shoot the moon
 b. I'll always try and do what is best for all my students.
 c. I'll try and duck out early.
 d. You're not really going to try and stop me?

Any verb can be placed in the second verb-holder position, but the *try and* portion is a fixed part of the construction. The second verb can even be another multi-word verb, as seen in (c), where *duck out* fills the second half of the construction. The more formal way of saying *try and VERB* is *try to VERB* (e.g., *I'll always try to do what is best*).

Because words in English can be used as multiple lexical categories, you can find interesting compounded verbs like *wang chung*, *hula hooping*, and *idiot-proof*:

- (12.32) a. I try and wang chung every night.
 b. In the office, dad, smoking a pipe, is also hula hooping.
 c. Some microwave ovens even idiot-proof the process with a “baked potato” setting.

Writers often hyphenate the verbs *hula-hoop* and *idiot-proof* to show their compound status, but others, like *wang chung*, are usually written with a word-space boundary. In 2012, Jodi Kantor wrote an article about Michelle Obama, using some interesting compounded verbs; the excerpt below includes enough context prior to the sentence with compound verbs to show why she’s using the verbs:

- (12.33) It is hard to remember another first lady who appeared as comfortable in her own body as does Mrs. Obama, who studied dance as a girl and later served on the board of an African dance company. She has shimmied, skipped, hopscotched, hula-hooped, jumping-jacked, and potato-sack-raced her way through her tenure as first lady, using not just her position but her body to push for more exercise and better nutrition for children. (Kantor 2012)

Kantor’s use of compounded verbs illustrates a beautiful aspect of English—the ability to play with words and use them in new and exciting ways.

To determine the difference between a multi-word verb and a free combination, you can use the following information. First, consider the meaning of the units you’re examining. In free combinations, each constituent is working as its own grammatical unit and provides an element of semantic meaning to the overall sentence. In multi-word verbs, the multiple words are working together as a single constituent to provide a single meaning that could not be guessed based on the sum of its parts. You can ask yourself these questions:

- Test for potential free combination: Can the meaning be figured out from the individual parts?
- Test for potential multi-word verb: Can you replace the multiple words with a single verb that has a synonymous meaning?

If each of the words retain their own meaning and help to create meaning as a whole, it is an example of free combination. If they are working together as a single unit with more idiomatic or obscured meaning, it is a multi-word verb. Usually, you can replace those multi-word verbs with single-word verbs that have roughly the same meaning; for example, *think about* could be replaced with *consider*. If you can do this synonymous single-word replacement, you are likely looking at an example of a multi-word verb.

Another way to determine the difference is to focus on syntactic features. If the answers to these questions are “yes,” you are dealing with an example of free combination.

- Can you replace the verb, particle, or prepositional word with another one?
- Can you use *where* or *when* to form a question about the constituent?
- Can you remove the prepositional word and the object following it without affecting the meaning of the verb?

In a free combination, you should be able to replace the verb, particle, or prepositional word with another one without affecting grammaticality. For instance, when *look up* is an example of free combination, you could replace *up* with other words like *down*, *away*, or *around*, or you could replace *look* with *glance*. When *look up* is an example of a phrasal verb, though, you cannot replace either *look* or *up* and retain the same meaning.

Testing whether you can use *where* or *when* to form a question can help when you're trying to decide if a constituent is a direct object of a prepositional verb or an object of a preposition. If you're dealing with an object of a preposition, you can phrase a question using *where* or *when* to form a question that will elicit the entire preposition phrase as a response. If you're dealing with a direct object of a prepositional verb, you cannot use *where* or *when* without changing the meaning.

- (12.34)a. She decided [on the plane].
 Where did she decide? / On the plane.
- b. She decided on (the dress).
 Where did she decide? / On the dress. = different meaning

In example (b), phrasing the question “Where did she decide?” changes the interpretation of the entire sentence to mean she is on the dress as she makes a decision, which is not likely the intended meaning.

Finally, for examples of free combination, you can often delete the PP that follows without changing the meaning of the verb, but for examples of prepositional verbs, you cannot do so:

- (12.35)a. She decided [on the plane].
 She decided.
- b. She decided on (the dress).
 She decided. = different meaning

These examples demonstrate that removing *on the plane* does not affect the meaning of *decided* in (a) because it is an example of free combination; however, removing *on the dress* in (b) changes the meaning because *decided on* is a prepositional verb in that sentence.

Using the six questions presented together can help you distinguish multi-word verbs from free combinations. As with other sets of identification questions presented throughout this text, it is best to use a combination of them rather than trying to rely on only one of them.

Practice Set 12.3 Multi-word verbs or free combination?

The following sentences were taken from “Hong Kong’s leader to protestors: China won’t back down” by Holly Yan and Jethro Mullen (2014). Within each sentence, at least one set of orthographical words has been underlined; for each set, determine if it is an example of a multi-word verb or a free combination of words.

1. As dusk fell on Hong Kong Tuesday evening, the mass of protestors packing the streets grew by the minute.
 2. “Certainly the crowd is swelling as it did last night as sunset approaches and as both sides in this dispute appear to be digging in their heels and unwilling to find a compromise,” CNN’s Ivan Watson said from the middle of the demonstration.
 3. Thousands of protestors clamoring for full democracy in Hong Kong stood their ground even as the head of its government said China won’t give in to their demands.
 4. Protestors camped out with masks, protective goggles and plastic raincoats on the main road leading into the city’s central business district—[they are] bracing for a potential encore to the fierce police crackdown that engulfed the crowd in tear gas two days earlier.
 5. “The main roads are used by fire trucks and ambulances.
 6. They now have to take a detour, so we urge the society to think about this,” Leung said.
 7. “All the candidates will be pre-selected by Beijing. ... It’s more or less like North Korea,” protest organizer Chan Kin-man told CNN.
 8. “But we are an international city. We have a younger generation who have been taught about civil rights, political rights. And we want our words to be heard.”
 9. The protest marks the biggest demonstration in Hong Kong since it was handed back to China by the British in 1997.
 10. Leung said Tuesday that China will not back down from its position on Hong Kong.
-

Terms introduced in Chapter 12

Verb valency types

complex-transitive (CtV)
ditransitive (DtV)

Functions

indirect object (IObj)
object adverbial (OAvl)
object predicative (OPred)

Concepts

free combination
multi-word verb
 phrasal
 phrasal-prepositional
 prepositional

Chapter 12 Exercises

Exercise 12.1

The following sentences were taken from John Grisham's (2005[1989]: 300-301, 303, 310) *A Time to Kill*. Fully annotate the sentences, remembering to incorporate all forms and functions and using the necessary tabbing/embedding conventions when needed.

1. My father gave it to me for my fifteenth birthday.
2. He must be a hell of a guy.
3. He's been shot at several times.
4. His name is Deputy Nesbit, and he couldn't hit the side of a barn with a shotgun.
5. He was assigned to me yesterday.
6. The food arrived.
7. She removed the onions and tomatoes from her Claudeburger, and offered him the french fries.
8. She cut it in half and nibbled around the edges like a bird.
9. Her easy smile belied her ACLU, ERA, burn-the-bra, I-can-outcuss-you bitchiness, but Jake knew it was lurking somewhere near the surface.⁸²
10. There was not a trace of makeup anywhere on the face.
11. With each frequent smile, her lips spread wonderfully and folded her cheeks into neat, transient, hollow dimples.
12. We send our smartest kids up there.
13. My father hates every lawyer with an Ivy League degree.
14. He was dirt poor and scratched his way through law school at night.
15. He's endured the snubs from rich, well-educated, and incompetent lawyers all his life.
16. He told me I could go to law school anywhere in the country, but if I chose an Ivy League school he would not pay for it.
17. I was raised on these enchanting stories of life in the Deep South, and I had to see for myself.

⁸² Original: Her face was gentle and pleasant with an easy smile that belied her ACLU, ERA, burn-the-bra, I-can-outcuss-you bitchiness, but Jake knew it was lurking somewhere near the surface.

18. No, I'm very much in favor of it.
19. So we have no defense and I think you should plead him guilty for a life sentence and avoid the gas chamber.
20. "I might make you wife number five," Harry Rex said.

Exercise 12.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. ditransitive verb in active voice
2. ditransitive verb in passive voice
3. ditransitive verb in quotative
4. complex-transitive verb in active voice
5. complex-transitive verb in passive voice
6. intransitive multi-word verb
7. intransitive verb followed by adverbial PP
8. multi-word verb with DObj
9. multi-word verb exhibiting particle movement
10. compound verb (as in example (12.33))

Exercise 12.3

Pick out a collection of sentences, which you select from random locations in different texts, until you have at least 25 head verbs of predicates. For each sentence, identify the head verbs of the predicates by underlining them, and identify each verb's valency type and TMAV information with superscripts.

After doing that, write at least one paragraph to answer the following questions:

- What is the most common verb type in your sample?
- What is the most commonly recurring TMAV pattern in your sample?
- Consider the sources you used. Were they from different genres, or the same type of genre? Do you feel your sample is representative of written English? Why, or why not?
- Do you think the verb type you've identified as most common in your sample is the most common type in written English as a whole? Why, or why not?

Justify your responses, supporting them with specific examples.

Chapter 13: Illocutionary force

Five exclamation marks, the sure sign of an insane mind. —Terry Pratchett

Cut out all these exclamation points. An exclamation point is like laughing at your own joke. —F. Scott Fitzgerald

13.1 Declarative clauses

With the exception of sentences that begin with an existential-*there*, the majority of the independent clauses presented so far share this basic structural pattern:

(13.1) This shrew had not been tamed. (COCA)

S	(Subj	this ^{Det}	
	:	shrew ^{CN}	
	)		
	Pred	PastPerfPass	had ^{PriAux} not ^{Neg}
	:	:	been ^{PriAux}
	:	:	<u>tamed</u> ^{MtV}
	:		

Whether the subject is a noun phrase or nominal clause, the subject appears before the predicate in basic clause structures, which means you could draw a line between the subject and predicate without any overlap. However, not all clauses take that basic structure, and some require more complex mappings, making it more difficult to draw that line between the subject and predicate. You will encounter several of those clause types in this chapter.

Independent clauses can be grouped into four categories based on their illocutionary force. The **illocutionary force** of an independent clause refers to the intention of the speaker or writer (i.e., the pragmatic purpose for saying or writing the independent clause), which affects both the grammatical content and semantic meaning of the constituents within the sentence. Four basic illocutionary forces are declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory.⁸³ With illocutionary force, you can study how pragmatics and semantics shape grammatical features to reflect specific purposes or meanings. A full sentence carries an illocutionary force, and everything within the sentence supports that single pragmatic purpose or intention.⁸⁴

The previous chapters have provided examples of **declarative** independent clauses, and declarative is the most frequent and basic illocutionary force in typical writing. Declarative clauses state information without commanding, questioning, or exclaiming. Of course, speakers/

⁸³ These four basic illocutionary forces can be further divided into sub-forces to reflect, for example, the difference between a polite question meant as a command and a question eliciting information.

⁸⁴ Embedded dependent clauses will not be marked for illocutionary force. In prescriptive academic writing, dependent clauses should follow declarative structures, but interrogative-based structures appear in speech and informal written genres. Compare the two COCA examples below:

- a. I don't even know who you are talking about.
- b. I don't even know what are we talking about.

In prescriptive writing, example (b) should be worded *what we are talking about*, following the pre-nucleus structure of (a). Regardless, in both cases, the full sentence is a statement rather than a question, so the S remains declarative.

writers can place emphasis or inflections on constituents to reflect a variety of pragmatic purposes, but the overall grammatical structure of a declarative clause is typically the basic structure provided above of a complete subject followed by a complete predicate. Because declarative clauses are so frequent, they are the unmarked form in the annotation scheme, and the *S* that represents a declarative independent clause appears without a superscripted label, as in the annotated COCA examples below.

- (13.2) a. The laughter of Samuel Beckett's characters is frequently strange and unsettling.

S (Subj the^{Det}
: laughter^{NN}
: [PostM of^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep (Samuel Beckett^{PropN})'s^{Det}
: : : characters^{CN}
: : :)
: :]
:)
||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}|
: /Avl frequently^{Av}/
: <SPred < strange^{Aj}>
: : and^{CoConj}
: : < unsettling^{Aj}>
: : >
||

- b. Some of those items would show up at her front door and often those gifts seemed serendipitous.

S S (Subj some of^{Det}
: those^{Det}
: items^{CN}
:)
||Pred |Mod would^{ModAux}
: : show up^{ItV}
: |
: [Avl at^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep her^{Det}
: : : <Att front^{Aj}>
: : : door^{CN}
: : :)
: :]
||
and^{CoConj}
S /Avl often^{Av}/
: (Subj those^{Det}
: : gifts^{CN}
:)
||Pred |Past seemed^{CopV}|
: <SPred serendipitous^{Aj}>
||

The independent clauses in these examples are declarative, so the *S* markers do not carry a superscript; the *S* will carry a superscript denoting the illocutionary force if the sentence is interrogative, imperative, or exclamatory.

13.2 Yes/no interrogative clauses

Interrogative (Int) independent clauses are questions that typically use particular grammatical structures to indicate that the speaker/writer is eliciting information or a response from the hearer/reader. English offers two major grammatical constructions associated with questions: (1) *yes/no* (or *y/n*) questions elicit *yes/no* answers, and (2) *wh*-word questions elicit more content-rich responses. Regardless of question type, all interrogative clauses are marked with an *Int* superscript at the sentence level. For instance, for the interrogative clause *Do you have any Grey Poupon?*, the *S* carries a superscript to mark its illocutionary force: *S*^{Int}.

Because the structures for the two interrogative types differ, their descriptions are split into two sections, with this one focusing on *y/n* questions. The example *Do you have any Grey Poupon?* is a *y/n* question made famous by commercials in the 1980s, and the expected answer is either *yes* or *no*. In that question, the primary auxiliary *do* appears before the subject, which is *you*. The head verb, though, appears after the subject, creating a split short verb phrase. When you annotate these split structures, you will utilize the GAP and co-index feature, with the auxiliary appearing in the pre-nucleus slot.

The two most common structures of *y/n* questions incorporate an auxiliary in the pre-nucleus slot or the head verb *be*, which is the only head verb that typically appears in the pre-nucleus slot in interrogative clauses. If the SVP of the clause has a head verb other than *be* and doesn't otherwise require an auxiliary (e.g., if the clause is simple present tense without negation), the “dummy *do*” becomes the auxiliary placed in the pre-nucleus slot. When that happens, the *do* auxiliary carries the tense for the clause.

In the COCA examples below, the head verbs *remember* and *pine for* are supported by *do* auxiliaries in the pre-nucleus slot. Throughout, you will see that I tend to insert a blank line after the pre-nucleus slot to help visually separate those grammatical constituents from the rest of the clause structure.

(13.3) a. Do you remember your first car?

S ^{Int}	do ^{PriAux i}	
(Subj	you ^{Pro})	
Pred	Pres	GAP ^{i PriAux}
:	:	<u>remember</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	your ^{Det}
:	:	first ^{Det}
:	:	car ^{CN}
:	)	

- b. Does she still pine for him in all his bullwhip-snapping glory? Apparently not.

S^{Int} does^{PriAux i}

(Subj	she ^{Pro})	
Pred	Pres	GAP ^{i PriAux}
:	:	/Avl still ^{Av/}
:	:	<u>pine for</u> ^{MtV}
:		
:	(DObj	him ^{Pro})
:	[Avl	in ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep all ^{Det}
:	:	his ^{Det}
:	:	<Att bullwhip-snapping ^{Aj>}
:	:	glory ^{NN}
:	:	)
:	]	

Both these examples are in the present tense. Changing them to the past tense requires a shift in the tense of the *do* auxiliary only: *Did you remember your first car?* and *Did she still pine for him?* The head verb itself does not carry its own tense in these examples because that is the job of the *do* auxiliary even though it appears before the rest of the clause, outside the normal space of the SVP.

The GAP feature is useful in the annotation scheme for one major reason: it helps to visually remind you that you need to consider another constituent that is not in its typical placement, and in interrogative clauses, it reminds you that you need to consider the auxiliary from the pre-nucleus slot when deciding TMAV information for the SVP. The co-index marker then helps you tie these separated constituents together to better understand what constituents are working together and how the puzzle pieces fit to make one larger grammatical picture. The co-index marker appears at the end of the pre-nucleus slot line, which indicates that anything within that pre-nucleus slot is co-indexed with GAP within the SVP. In this case, only the auxiliary is included in that slot, but in later structures, you will see that more than one word can be co-indexed in this way.

If the SVP of the interrogative clause requires an auxiliary for its negation, modality, aspect, and/or voice, its first auxiliary appears in the pre-nucleus slot, as in the COCA examples below:

- (13.4) a. Has the jury reached a verdict in this case?

S^{Int} has^{PriAux} i

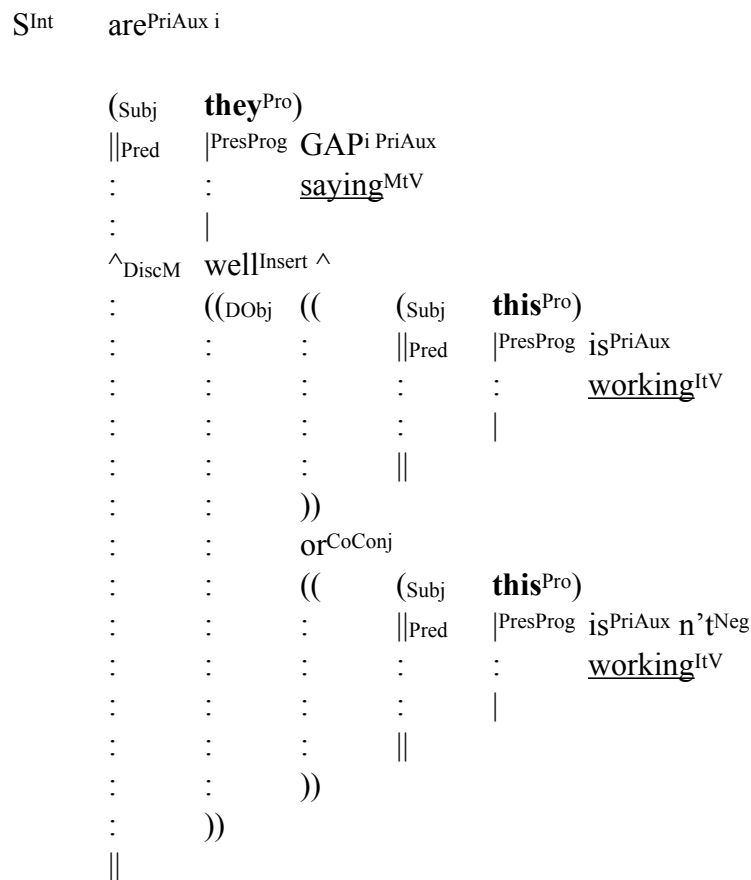
(Subj the^{Det}
: jury^{CollN}
)
||Pred |PresPerf GAP^{i PriAux}
: : reached^{MtV}
: |
: (DObj a^{Det}
: : verdict^{CN}
:)
: [Avl in^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep this^{Det}
: : : case^{CN}
: :)
:]
||

- b. Can I ask you a question about your upbringing?

S^{Int} can^{ModAux} i

(Subj I^{Pro})
||Pred |Mod GAP^{i ModAux}
: : ask^{DtV}
: |
: (IObj you^{Pro})
: (DObj a^{Det}
: : question^{CN}
: : [PostM about^{Prep}
: : : (ObjPrep your^{Det}
: : : : upbringing^{CN}
: : :)
: :]
:)
||

- c. Are they saying, well, this is working or this isn't working?⁸⁵



In these examples, *has reached*, *can ask*, and *are saying* are the full SVPs, and their auxiliary occurs in the pre-nucleus slot rather than inside the predicate because they are interrogative clauses.

If the SVP has a string of two or more auxiliaries, only the first auxiliary appears in the pre-nucleus slot, as in these COCA examples:

⁸⁵ Inserts, parentheticals, and quotatives work at the highest level within the clause and can interrupt other constituents. In this example, the insert *well* interrupts the LVP and is aligned with other constituents at the S-level.

- (13.5) a. “Had Dolly been having trouble at school?” asked the police.

SInt had^{PriAux i}

(Subj **Dolly**^{PropN})
 ||Pred |PastPerfProg GAP^{i PriAux}
 : : been^{PriAux}
 : : having^{MtV}
 : |
 : (DObj **trouble**^{NN})
 : [Avl at^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep **school**^{NN})
 :]
 ||

@Quot ||Pred |Past asked^{MtV} ||
 : (Subj **the**^{Det}
 : : **police**^{CollN}
 :)
 @

- b. Are they being held captive somewhere?

SInt are^{PriAux i}

(Subj **they**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PresProgPass GAP^{i PriAux}
 : : being^{PriAux}
 : : held^{CtV}
 : |
 : <SPred captive^{Aj}>
 : /Avl somewhere^{Av}/
 ||

In these examples, the SVPs have two auxiliaries, the first of which appears in the pre-nucleus slot.

If the head verb is a *be*-verb acting on its own (i.e., it has no supporting auxiliary), the entire SVP is gapped. The following example demonstrates that placement:

- (13.6) Is he crazy? (COCA)

SInt |i Pres is^{CopV}|

(Subj **he**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |i GAP|
 : <SPred crazy^{Aj}>
 ||

In the question *Is he crazy?*, the full SVP, which consists only of the word *is*, appears before the rest of the clause. This pattern only appears when the head verb *be* is in simple present or simple past tense.

Just like any other clause, interrogative clauses can be coordinated with other clauses.⁸⁶ In the following examples, two interrogative independent clauses are coordinated. Both are taken from spoken utterances, and both begin with *so*, which I've analyzed here as the insert rather than the coordinator. Speakers often use *so* to introduce utterances to act like an adverb-like discourse marker to signal that some concluding thought or final consideration is coming up; when written, this use of *so* is often separated from the rest of the clause with commas, as they are in these examples. As a discourse marker, the *so* belongs to both coordinated interrogative clauses, which means it appears at the highest *S*-level, as demonstrated in the annotations.

- (13.7) a. So, when they come here, are they the predator or are they the prey?
(COCA)

SInt	^DiscM	soInsert ^	
	//Avl	whenSubConj	
:	(Subj	theyPro)	
:	Pred	Pres	comeCopV
:	:	/SAvl	hereAv/
:			
//			
SInt	i Pres	areCopV	
	(Subj	theyPro)	
	Pred	i	GAP
:	(SPred	theDet	
:	:	predatorCN	
:	)		
orCoConj			
SInt	j Pres	areCopV	
	(Subj	theyPro)	
	Pred	j	GAP
:	(SPred	theDet	
:	:	preyCN	
:	)		

⁸⁶ In more formal written genres, such as academic writing, the preference is to coordinate clauses with the same illocutionary force. Not all authors abide by that preference, and other genres don't have any such restriction.

(13.8) Is he crazy, or am I? (COCA)

SInt	SInt	i Pres	<u>is</u> CopV
	(Subj	he ^{Pro}	
	Pred	i	GAP
	:	<j SPred	crazy ^{Aj} >
	or ^{CoConj}		
	SInt	k Pres	<u>am</u> CopV
	(Subj	I ^{Pro}	
	Pred	k	GAP
	:	<j SPred	GAP>

The speaker could have said, “Is he crazy, or am I crazy?” However, the repetition of *crazy* is unnecessary because the hearer understands the AjP *crazy* carries over to the second clause in the absence of another phrase.

When *y/n* questions are negated, the negation marker is often contracted with the auxiliary or *be*-verb in the pre-nucleus slot, as in the following COCA examples.

(13.9) a. Don't you remember anything else?

SInt	do ^{PriAux}	n't ^{Neg}	i
	(Subj	you ^{Pro}	
	Pred	Pres	GAP ^{i PriAux/Neg}
	:	:	<u>remember</u> ^{MtV}
	:		
	:	(DObj	anything ^{Pro}
	:	:	/PostM else ^{Av} /
	:	)	

b. Haven't you tried this before?

SInt	have ^{PriAux}	n't ^{Neg}	i
	(Subj	you ^{Pro}	
	Pred	PresPerf	GAP ^{i PriAux/Neg}
	:	:	<u>tried</u> ^{MtV}
	:		
	:	(DObj	this ^{Pro}
	:	/Avl	before ^{Av} /

- c. Shouldn't Russians enjoy themselves, too?

S^{Int} should^{ModAux} n't^{Neg} i

(Subj	Russians ^{CN})
Pred	Mod GAP ⁱ ModAux/Neg
:	: <u>enjoy</u> ^{MtV}
:	
:	(DObj themselves ^{Pro})
:	/Avl too ^{Av} /

Because the pre-nucleus slot contains two grammatical constituents, the co-index marker appears at the end of the line for the pre-nucleus slot, rather than directly next to either individual word. That placement indicates that all elements on that line are co-indexed with the GAP in the SVP.

If the negator occurs in the pre-nucleus slot, it must appear as a contraction. Using the full negator form sounds ungrammatical or, at best, awkward: **Have not you tried this before?* If a speaker wants to use the full negator form without contracting it, it needs to occur within the SVP, a pattern that is less frequent than the one provided above.

- (13.10) Do you not remember that old movie, Attack of the Clones? (COCA)

S^{Int} do^{PriAux} i

(Subj	you ^{Pro})
Pred	Pres GAP ⁱ PriAux
:	: not ^{Neg}
:	: <u>remember</u> ^{MtV}
:	
:	(DObj that ^{Det}
:	: <Att old ^{Aj} >
:	: movie ^{CN}
:	: (PostM Attack of the Clones ^{PropN})
:	:)

Using the full negator form within the SVP provides a more emphatic reading and, in some cases, a more formal one.

When *y/n* questions are asked in the positive (e.g., *Is he crazy? Has the jury reached a verdict in this case?*), the question doesn't hold any expectations for the answer, so the answer could just as easily be 'yes' as it is 'no.' However, when a *y/n* question is negated, it implies that the speaker has an expected answer. For instance, the question *Haven't you tried this before?*

implies that the speaker believes you have tried it before and expects the answer to be ‘yes.’ The question *Do you not remember that old movie?* implies that the speaker believes you *should* remember that movie.

13.3 Wh-word interrogative clauses

The second major type of interrogative clauses in English, *wh*-questions, elicits informative answers and follows a variety of patterns, depending on what’s being questioned. They are called *wh*-questions because they begin with one of the following interrogative words: *who*, *what*, *whose*, *which*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *how*. Although *how* begins with *h* rather than *wh*, it is lumped into the *wh*-words categories because it performs the same functions. The discussion on these question types is divided into *who/what/whose/which*-questions, which typically focus on identifying nominal and potentially adjectival constituents, and *when/where/why/how*-questions, which focus on adverbial elements.

The **interrogative pronouns** (IntPro) *who*, *what*, and *which*, tend to appear as the first word of an independent clause and signal that the full clause is interrogative. When they function as the subject, the independent clause structure appears as it would in a typical declarative clause:

(13.11) a. What drove them apart? (COCA)

SInt	(Subj	what ^{IntPro}
	Pred	Past <u>drove</u> ^{CtV}
	:	(DObj them ^{Pro})
	:	/OAdv <u>apart</u> ^{Adv} /

b. Who didn’t know her name? (COCA)

SInt	(Subj	who ^{IntPro}
	Pred	Past <u>did</u> ^{PriAux} n’t ^{Neg}
	:	<u>know</u> ^{MtV}
	:	
	:	(DObj her ^{Det}
	:	name ^{CN}
	:	)

Even though the structures of these examples look similar to declarative statements (e.g., the subject aligns with the predicate without a pre-nucleus slot or gapped element), the pronouns *what* and *who* are identified as interrogative pronouns with the *IntPro* label, and the sentence carries the interrogative (*Int*) marker.

When *who* or *what* replaces an object or some other predicate constituent (e.g., SPred, OPred), two pre-nucleus slots and two co-indexed gapped elements are required: the first pre-

nucleus slot is for the interrogative pronoun while the second is for the first auxiliary or head *be*-verb.

(13.12)a. Who did they choose? (COCA)

S^{Int} (i **who**^{IntPro})
 did^{PriAux j}

(Subj **they**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past GAP^{j PriAux}
 : : choose^{MtV}
 : |
 : (i DObj GAP)
 ||

b. Who do you tell that this is unacceptable? (COCA)

S^{Int} (i **who**^{IntPro})
 do^{PriAux j}

(Subj **you**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Pres GAP^{j PriAux}
 : : tell^{DtV}
 : |
 : (i IObj GAP)
 : ((DObj that^{SubConj}
 : : (Subj **this**^{Pro})
 : : ||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}
 : : : <SPred unacceptable^{Aj}>
 : : ||
 :))
 ||

c. What did evil smell like? (COCA)

S^{Int} (i **what**^{IntPro})
 did^{PriAux j}

(Subj **evil**^{NN})
 ||Pred |Past GAP^{j PriAux}
 : : smell^{CopV}
 : |
 : [SAvl like^{Prep}
 : : (i ObjPrep GAP)
 : :]
 ||

d. What should President Obama call this enemy? (COCA)

SInt (i **what**^{IntPro})
 should^{ModAux j}

(Subj **President Obama**^{PropN})
 ||Pred |Mod **GAP**^{j ModAux}
 : : call^{CtV}
 : |
 : (DObj **this**^{Det}
 : : **enemy**^{CN}
 :)
 : (i OPred **GAP**)
 ||

In these examples, the first pre-nucleus slot contains the *wh*-word, which is co-indexed with a superscripted *i*, and the co-indexed GAP appears within the predicate where the constituent would in a declarative statement. For example, in (b), the indirect object typically appears between the verb *tell* and the direct object *that this is unacceptable*, so the co-indexed GAP appears in that location. The second pre-nucleus slot for these types of questions contains the first auxiliary or *be*-verb, which is co-indexed with a superscripted *j* because the *i* has already been used for another constituent. For example, in (d), the modal *should* is co-indexed with the GAP that appears in the SVP, showing that *should* works with *call* to create the SVP *should call*.

Along with interrogative pronouns, English also has **interrogative determiners** (IntDet), as in the following COCA examples:

(13.13)a. Whose car did you come in?

SInt (i **whose**^{IntDet}
 : **car**^{CN}
)
 did^{PriAux j}

(Subj **you**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past **GAP**^{j PriAux}
 : : come^{CopV}
 : |
 : [SAvl **in**^{Prep}
 : : (i ObjPrep **GAP**)
 :]
 ||

- b. What day did she go missing?

S^{Int} (Avl what^{IntDet}
 : **day**^{CN}
)
 did^{PriAux i}

(Subj **she**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past GAP^{i PriAux}
 : : go^{CopV}
 : |
 : <SPred missing^{Aj}>
 ||

- c. Which girl should I marry?

S^{Int} (i which^{IntDet}
 : **girl**^{CN}
)
 should^{ModAux j}

(Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Mod GAP^{j ModAux}
 : : marry^{MtV}
 : |
 : (i DObj GAP)
 ||

These types of questions are annotated in the same way as the other questions above with the exception of having an interrogative determiner rather than an interrogative pronoun. While (a) and (c) require two pre-nucleus slots with gapped and co-indexed constituents, (b) only requires one because *what day* is an optional adverbial constituent and does not function as an argument elsewhere in the clause.

Along with interrogative pronouns and interrogative determiners, English has a class of **interrogative adverbs** (IntAv), namely *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how*, that elicit adverb-based information, such as location, time, manner, and reason. As with the other *wh*-questions presented above, two pre-nucleus slots may be needed, as in the COCA examples below, where the interrogative adverb replaces a required adverbial:

(13.14)a. Where are my scissors?

SInt	/i	where ^{IntAv/}
	j Pres	<u>are</u> ^{CopV}
	(Subj	my ^{Det}
	:	scissors ^{CN}
	)	
	Pred	j GAP
	:	/i SAvl GAP/

b. Where should people put their money now?

SInt	/i	where ^{IntAv/}
	should ^{ModAux j}	
	(Subj	people ^{CN})
	Pred	Mod GAP ModAux
	:	<u>put</u> ^{CtV}
	:	
	:	(DObj their ^{Det}
	:	money ^{NN}
	:	)
	:	/i OAvl GAP/
	:	/Avl now ^{Av/}

When the *wh*-word replaces a required adverbial, the interrogative adverb is co-indexed with a corresponding GAP in the predicate. For example, in (a), *where* is co-indexed with the GAP functioning as the subject adverbial.

Questions can also be structured to elicit information that does not correspond to an adverbial argument role but instead represents an optional adverbial, as in the COCA examples below:

(13.15)a. Where did it start?

SInt	/Avl	where ^{IntAv/}
	did ^{PriAux i}	
	(Subj	it ^{Pro})
	Pred	Past GAP PriAux
	:	<u>start</u> ^{ItV}
	:	

- b. When is she going to have the damn baby?

S^{Int} /Avl when^{IntAv/}
 isⁱ

(Subj **she**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PresMod GAPⁱ going to^{SemiAux}
 : : have^{MtV}
 : |
 : (DObj the^{Det}
 : : <Att damn^{Aj}>
 : : **baby**^{CN}
 :)
 ||

- c. Why shouldn't I answer him?

S^{Int} /Avl why^{IntAv/}
 should^{ModAux} n't^{Neg i}

(Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Mod GAPⁱ ModAux/Neg
 : : answer^{MtV}
 : |
 : (DObj **him**^{Pro})
 ||

In these examples, the interrogative adverb does not carry a co-index; instead, it takes the adverbial function in its location, and the only co-indexed constituent is the auxiliary or *be*-verb that appears in a pre-nucleus slot. For instance, in (c), the interrogative adverb *why* takes the adverbial function, indicating its status as an optional adjunct, and the only co-index marker is for the modal auxiliary and negation marker, which are co-indexed with the GAP in the SVP *shouldn't answer*.

Example (b) also demonstrates that when the first auxiliary is a semi-modal auxiliary, only the first word appears in the pre-nucleus slot. It is ungrammatical for the entire semi-modal to appear in that position: **When is going to she have the damn baby?* The ability for the first word of a semi-modal depends on the specific auxiliary, and the semi-modals that can take the negator without the *do* auxiliary can have their first word in the pre-nucleus slot in interrogative clauses. For instance, while *She is not going to leave* is grammatical, **She has not to leave* is ungrammatical because it requires a *do*-auxiliary, as in *She doesn't have to leave*. Because *has to* requires the *do* auxiliary for negation, it also requires the *do* auxiliary for interrogative clauses: *Does she have to leave?* is grammatical while **Has she to leave?* is not.

The interrogative adverb *how* is special among these adverbs because it can be used in two ways: (1) it can follow the pattern for the other interrogative adverbs presented above, or (2) it can provide a degree function within an adjective phrase. In the COCA examples below, the first one follows the pattern demonstrated above, and the second one illustrates the use of *how* as a degree adverb.

- (13.16)a. How might his parents prepare him?

S^{Int} /AvI how^{IntAv/}
might^{ModAux j}

(Subj his^{Det}
:
)
||_{Pred} |_{Mod} GAPⁱ ModAux
:
:
:
:
||
:
(DObj him^{Pro})
||

- b. How long can hair grow by the exhibition season?

S^{Int} <i /Deg how^{IntAv/}
: long^{Aj}
>
can^{ModAux j}

(Subj **hair**^{NN})
||Pred |Mod GAP^{j ModAux}
: : grow^{CopV}
: |
: <i SPred GAP>
: [Avl by^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
: : : (Att **exhibition**^N)
: : : **season**^{CN}
: :)
:]
||

In example (b), the full adjective phrase *how long* is co-indexed with the GAP that functions as the subject predicative, and the modal auxiliary *can* is co-indexed with the GAP within the SVP.

English offers other ways to construct questions, especially in more informal situations, relying on intonation and prosody to communicate the intent of asking a question. For instance, you can frame the question as a statement and simply replace the information with an interrogative word in the position where it would typically occur, as in these COCA examples:

(13.17)a. He said what?

S ^{Int}	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
	Pred	Past <u>said</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(DObj what ^{IntPro})
	:	

b. You're going where?

S ^{Int}	(Subj	you ^{Pro})
	Pred	PresProg 're ^{PriAux}
	:	<u>going</u> ^{CopV}
	:	
	:	/SAvl where ^{IntAv} /
	:	

Vocal inflections for these types of questions usually differ from standard question structures in that a rising intonation only occurs on the question word rather than a rising intonation throughout the entire utterance. For instance, the typical vocal inflection on *What did he say?* is a rising intonation throughout the full question, but the typical inflection on *He said what?* is a rising inflection only on the interrogative pronoun *what*.

Sentences that are structurally declarative statements can be turned into questions through the use of inflection in speech and a question mark in writing:

(13.18)a. You told her that? (COCA)

S ^{Int}	(Subj	you ^{Pro})
	Pred	Past <u>told</u> ^{DtV}
	:	(IObj her ^{Pro})
	:	(DObj that ^{Pro})
	:	

b. These things speak English? (COCA)

S ^{Int}	(Subj	these ^{Det}
	:	things ^{CN}
	:	)
	Pred	Pres <u>speak</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(DObj English ^{PropN})
	:	

To show that these statement-like structures are being used as questions, the sentence carries the *Int* superscript with no other outward question-like marking. The *Int* superscript alerts you to the statement's use as a question in context.

Practice Set 13.1 Annotating interrogative clauses

Annotate the following sentences, taken from *How It Went Down* by Kekla Magoon (2014: 6-10).

1. What's your location, sir?
 2. Where are you calling from?
 3. Can you repeat that?
 4. Are you in danger?
 5. Is the shooter still on the scene?
 6. Which direction is he going?
 7. Has the shooter returned to the scene?
 8. Sir, who are you talking to?
 9. How many people have been shot?
 10. But what good will it ever do me if, when the moment comes, I can't stand up?
-

13.4 Imperative clauses

While interrogative clauses ask questions, **imperative clauses** (Imp) give orders or commands. Imperative clauses typically omit the subject, which is an implied or understood *you*, and begin with the head verb in its bare form. The imperative clauses are italicized in the examples below.

- (13.19)a. Shhhh. *Be QUIET*. This book does not have words. (Higgins 2017: 5)

S^{Imp} (Subj GAP^{you})
 ||Pred |Imp be^{CopV}|
 : <SPred quiet^{Aj}>
 ||

- b. *Stop!* The book already started. You're messing it up! (6)

S^{Imp} (Subj GAP^{you})
 ||Pred |Imp stop^{ItV}||

Because the GAP is not co-indexed with another constituent, the superscript takes a placeholder word to remind you what it stands in for. In this case, the understood subject is *you*, so the

superscript reads *you* as a reminder of that subject. As an imperative clause, the verb is in its bare form, which means the SVP cannot take any additional TMAV information—it takes the imperative superscript (*Imp*) in place of its TMAV information. The head verb of an imperative clause is considered finite even though it is in its bare, uninflected form.

Recipes and instruction manuals are great sources of imperative clauses because the steps provided are written as a series of commands, and the examples below are taken from an online recipe by Isa Chandra Moskowitz (2013). All three examples are imperative clauses of varying complexity, and the first two examples include instances where other understood phrases are shortened or omitted altogether, which is a feature typical for recipes.

(13.20) Fill cupcake liners most of the way.

S ^{Imp}	(Subj	GAP ^{you})
	Pred	Imp fill ^{CtV}
	:	(DObj cupcake liners ^{CN})
	:	(OPred most of ^{Det}
	:	the ^{Det}
	:	way ^{CN}
	:	)

In this example, the direct object, *cupcake liners*, appears as a bare NP with no determiner, but many speakers find it more natural to say *fill the cupcake liners* with a determiner to refer to the specific cupcake liners being filled. Omitting determiners is common to recipes and more obvious in examples where a count noun is singular, as in the example below:

(13.21) Preheat oven to 350 F. (Moskowitz 2013)

The direct object *oven* is a singular count noun, yet it appears without a determiner. Shortening noun phrases by deleting determiners is a feature of informal writing styles where enough context is present to allow speakers to omit information without causing confusion. For example, the determiner in a phrase like *the oven* can be deleted because the pragmatic context is rich for readers of recipes: if you're reading the recipe, there shouldn't be a question as to which oven you're preheating.

Some omitted constituents are full phrases that function within the predicate, as in the example below:

(13.22) Line a cupcake pan with paper liners and spray lightly with cooking spray oil.

S ^{Imp}	(Subj	GAP ^{you})	
	Pred		Imp <u>line</u> ^{CtV}
:	:	(DObj	a ^{Det}
:	:	:	cupcake pan ^{CN}
:	:	)	
:	:	[OAvl	with ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep (Att paper ^N)
:	:	:	liners ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	]	
:			
:	and ^{Coord}		
:		Imp	<u>spray</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	(DObj	GAP)
:	:	/Avl	lightly ^{Av/}
:	:	[Avl	with ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep cooking spray oil ^{NN})
:	:	]	
:			

The verb *spray* is best interpreted as a monotransitive verb with the understanding that some direct object needs to be sprayed, and because no DObj is explicitly mentioned, the DObj is gapped. However, two noun phrases have been recently mentioned, *cupcake liners* and *a cupcake pan*, and it isn't fully clear whether the gap should be understood to mean the liners or the pan or both. Therefore, the GAP carries the direct object function subscript but lacks a co-indexed superscript because the context does not clarify which one of the two recently mentioned NPs belongs there. If the immediate context had made that information clear, you could co-index that GAP with one of the NPs mentioned in the verb phrase before it.

Just like any other sentence structure, imperative clauses can feature embedded finite clauses, as in the following example.

(13.23) If it's too thick, add a tablespoon or so of warm milk, until you get the right consistency.

```

SImp //Avl ifSubConj
:      (Subj  itPro)
:      ||Pred |Pres  sCopV|
:      :      <SPred /Deg  tooAv/
:      :      :      thickAj
:      :      >
:      ||
//
(Subj  GAPyou)
||Pred |Imp  addMtV|
:      (DObj  aDet
:      :      tablespoonCN orCoConj soPro
:      :      [PostM  ofPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep <Att  warmAj>
:      :      :      :      milkNN
:      :      :      )
:      :      ]
:      )
:      //Avl untilSubConj
:      :      (Subj  youPro)
:      :      ||Pred |Pres  getMtV|
:      :      :      (DObj  theDet
:      :      :      :      <Att  rightAj>
:      :      :      :      consistencyCN
:      :      :      )
:      :      ||
:      //
||

```

This example incorporates finite adverb clauses to demonstrate that while the head verb of an imperative clause needs to be imperative, any embedded finite clauses still take the appropriate TMAV marking. In this case, both adverb clauses are in the simple present tense.

The second adverb clause is embedded inside the predicate of the main imperative clause because it works more closely with the head verb *add*, and it would be awkward to move that clause:

- (13.24) a. ? If it's too thick, until you get the right consistency, add a tablespoon or so of warm milk.
 b. ? Until you get the right consistency, if it's too thick, add a tablespoon or so of warm milk.

- c. ? Until you get the right consistency, add a tablespoon or so of warm milk if it's too thick.
- d. Add a tablespoon or so of warm milk until you get the right consistency if it's too thick.

The first three rewordings are awkward for me, indicating that the AvCl *until you get the right consistency* is less mobile and is embedded inside the predicate. The final rewording demonstrates that the initial AvCl *if it's too thick* is more mobile and able to appear at the end of the full sentence.

While imperative clauses typically omit the subject, they can be phrased with an expressed subject, as in the example below:

(13.25) “You stand there,” he shouted, pointing to an open area that afforded no protection from the elements. (COCA)

S ^{Imp}	(Subj	you ^{Pro})
	Pred	Imp <u>stand</u> ^{CopV}
	:	/SAvI there ^{Av} /

When the subject is expressed, the *you* is annotated as it normally would be, and the verb takes the *Imp* superscript for its imperative status. The only difference is that the subject is not a gapped constituent.

Negating imperative clauses generally follows one of two major options. The first is to insert *don't* or *do not* in front of the head verb or expressed *you* subject:

- (13.26)a. Don't give up hope. (COCA)
- b. Don't leave a device vulnerable. (COCA)
- c. Don't you blame me for that. (COCA)
- d. Don't be cruel to a heart that's true. (Presley 1956)

When annotating these examples, the *do* auxiliary and negation marker are placed in a pre-nucleus slot before the gapped subject line or before the expressed *you* subject:

(13.27)a. S^{Imp} do^{PriAux} n't^{Neg} i

	(Subj	GAP ^{you})
	Pred	Imp GAP ⁱ PriAux/Neg
	:	: <u>give up</u> ^{MtV}
	:	
	:	(DObj hope ^{NN})

- b. S_{Imp} do^{PriAux} n't^{Neg i}
- | | |
|-------|--|
| (Subj | you ^{Pro}) |
| Pred | Imp GAP ^{i PriAux/Neg} |
| : | : <u>blame</u> ^{MtV} |
| : | |
| : | (DObj me ^{Pro}) |
| : | [Avl for ^{Prep} |
| : | : (ObjPrep that ^{Pro}) |
| : |] |
| | |

Using the pre-nucleus slot even when *you* is unexpressed creates consistency across annotations. In general, when negating imperatives, speakers and writers typically opt for this construction that places *don't* at the beginning of the clause.

If the subject is expressed and the imperative is negated, the clause is best structured with *don't* in the pre-nucleus slot. If you try to move the *you* to other positions, the illocutionary force can no longer be imperative:

- (13.28)a. Don't you blame me = imperative or interrogative clause
 b. Do not you blame me = awkward wording for an interrogative clause
 c. Do you not blame me = interrogative clause
 d. You don't blame me = declarative statement
 e. You do not blame me = declarative statement
 f. *You blame not me = archaic for some genres, ungrammatical for others

As these examples demonstrate, trying to use any other wording for these types of commands results in a different illocutionary force or an ungrammatical wording.

The other method, which is usually reserved for more formal registers, is to insert the negation marker after the head verb:

(13.29) And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. (Kennedy 1961)

S ^{Imp}	(Subj	GAP ^{you})		
_{Pred}	_{Imp}	<u>ask</u> ^{MtV}		
:	:	not ^{Neg}		
:				
:	/DObj	(i	what ^{Pro})	
:	:	(Subj	your ^{Det}	
:	:	:	country ^{CollN}	
:	:	)		
:	:	_{Pred}	_{Mod}	can ^{ModAux}
:	:	:	:	<u>do</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	:		
:	:	:	(i DObj	GAP)
:	:	:	[Avl	for ^{Prep}
:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep you ^{Pro})
:	:	:	]	
:	:			
:	/			

In everyday life, it would sound a bit awkward or stilted to use this method of negation for commands: *Open not the door! Question not my methods!*

Practice Set 13.2 Annotating imperative and declarative clauses

Annotate the following instructions, which were taken from RNmaster's (2011) guide for making an origami crane. As a warning, some of these sentences are not imperative.

1. For this project, you will need 1 square piece of paper (preferably origami paper), and nimble fingers.
 2. Repeat the same process again so that it looks like an x on your paper.
 3. Turn the square so that one of the corners is pointing at you.
 4. The result of your folds will look a bit like the Superman logo shape.
 5. Once both parts are folded in pull the top part down and press the crease.
-

13.5 Exclamatory clauses

The last basic illocutionary force is exclamatory. **Exclamatory clauses** exclaim information, usually out of strong emotion, such as surprise, disgust, happiness, or anger. In

writing, exclamatory clauses end with an exclamation point, and in speech, the speaker's tone, pitch, volume, and speed mark exclamatory clauses. Because exclamatory clauses are often structured like declarative statements, punctuation or inflection may be the only way to distinguish declarations from exclamations.

In casual writing, English writers tend to use more exclamation points, thus potentially reducing the power of the exclamation point. Sometimes that practice bleeds over into academic writing, where exclamations don't prescriptively belong, and it's becoming more frequent to see student writing with exclamation points, as in the following example:

(13.30) When your organs are oxygen-rich and healthy, you have more energy to get those every day tasks done! This extra energy our body creates through cardiovascular activity even leads us to get better rest at night. Again, the extra snooze time allows us to awake every morning feeling refreshed and full of excitement to start the day with that quick thirty minute walk! The cycle of energy is all a direct source of regular physical activity! Avoid those lethargic mornings and draining days by getting outside! Breaking a sweat might sound like a damper on your day, but it can improve the overall quality of your mood!

While the student's essay provides researched information about the connection between regular workouts and higher energy levels, paragraphs like these read too informally for academic writing and are difficult for readers to take seriously.

Many online writers have noted how Americans in particular face an addiction to exclamation points, often using multiple exclamation points at once. Beth Dunn and Tyler Littwin responded to this overuse by creating a tongue-in-cheek infographic for HubSpot to help writers decide if they need an exclamation point:

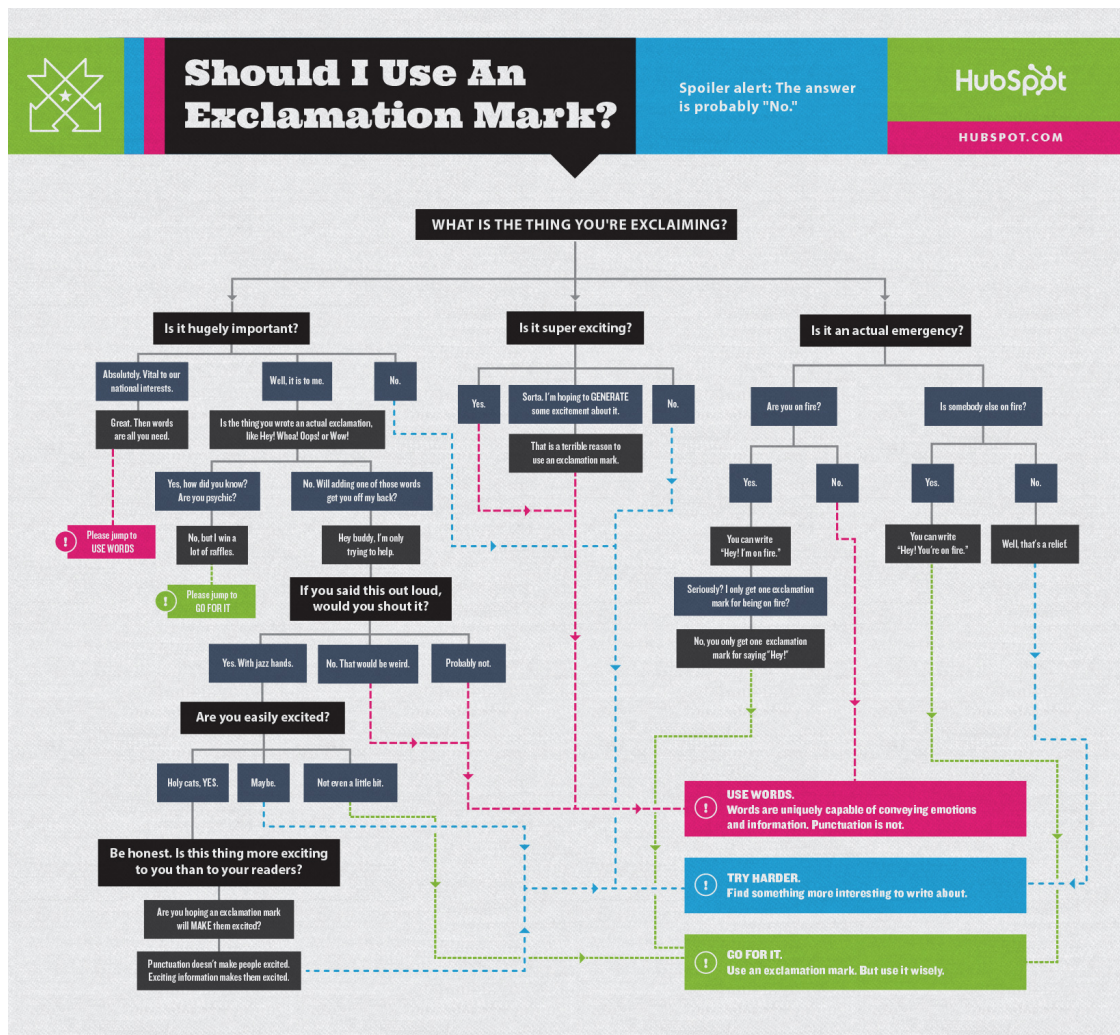


Image 12.1 HubSpot's "Should I use an exclamation mark?" infographic

The overall message of the HubSpot infographic is that, no, you probably should not use the exclamation mark.

Women, especially, are accused of overusing exclamation marks. Katie Morell (2012) wrote a blog post titled "Are we exclamation point addicted?" and included a comment she had received on an earlier blog post from CJ Bordwell:

Katie, I recommend you stop using exclamation points in emails/posted comments. It's an approach overused by women in business (to appear friendly/supportive/non-threatening) and, as with your negotiating tips, adjusting the approach would allow some women to improve their credibility in communications. Confident, thoughtful communications don't require pre-emptive softening via an exclamation point.

Bordwell's comment is fitting for women in most professional settings, and even I am guilty of using exclamation points on student feedback to appear cheerful and supportive, especially in online classes where students don't have verbal cues to read my tone. However, those small pieces of punctuation could reduce overall credibility of the writer or provider of feedback.

Even with those warnings of exclamation overuse, exclamatory clauses have a legitimate place in English and in grammar, especially in spoken language and more informal written registers. Exclamatory clauses express emotion, so they're downright useful for expressing a strong emotion. As mentioned earlier, exclamatory clauses can take a basic declarative-like structure, as in this COCA example:

(13.31) Pope Francis toured the crowd in his open-air popemobile and waved right at me!

The only indication that the clause is exclamatory is the final punctuation, and, if this utterance were spoken aloud, its exclamatory status would be marked through intonation, most likely with increased volume and pitch near the end of the utterance.

Exclamatory clauses can place emphasis on a constituent by fronting it or reducing the overall sentence structure so that it is a fragment:

(13.32)a. How audacious she is! (COCA)

S^{Exc} <_i /_{Deg} how^{Av}/
 : audacious^{Aj}
 >

(Subj **she**^{Pro})
 ||_{Pred} |_{Pres} is^{CopV}|
 : <_i S_{Pred} GAP>
 ||

b. What a mess I have made! (COCA)

S^{Exc} (what^{Det}
 : a^{Det}
 : **mess**^{CN}
)

(Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||_{Pred} |_{PresPerf} have^{PriAux}
 : : made^{MtV}
 : |
 : (_i D_{Obj} GAP)
 ||

- c. God, what a day! (COCA)⁸⁷

S^{fragExc} ^_{DM} God^{Insert} ^
 (what^{Det}
 : a^{Det}
 : **day**^{CN}
)

- d. no way can that be real ?!! (Motuel 2016)

S^{Exc} (Avl no^{Det}
 : **way**^{CN}
)
 can^{MAux i}

(Subj **that**^{Pro})
 ||_{Pred} |_{Mod} GAP^{i ModAux}
 : : be^{CopV}
 : |
 : <SP_{Pred} real^{Aj}>
 ||

As these examples demonstrate, exclamatory clauses can take a variety of structures and, as seen in (d), they can overlap with question-like structures so that the resulting clause is part-question and part-exclamation. Sentences like these are often punctuated with both an exclamation point and a question mark, though people debate the ordering of those marks. Some prefer ?! while others prefer !?⁸⁸ There is even a non-standard punctuation mark, the interrobang (?), for this purpose of exclaiming while questioning. These exclaimed questions tend to more closely follow the speech patterns and pragmatic intentions of exclamations, so examples like (d) above are marked as exclamatory clauses with the *Exc* superscript.

As a final note on exclamation points, they can be used to mark imperative clauses in writing. When an exclamation point is used to mark the end of a command (e.g., *Be quiet!*), its clause type is imperative and not exclamatory.

13.6 Complex word order within declarative clauses

Clauses that seem to be interrogative in spirit can be embedded as subordinate nominal clauses, especially with main clauses that have cognition or speaking verbs (e.g., *hope*, *know*, *believe*, *think*, *say*, *tell*). When this happens, the nominal clause shares one major structural feature with interrogative clauses: the clause begins with a *wh*-word, which often requires a pre-

⁸⁷ The *frag* superscript indicates this is a sentence fragment; without a verb indicated, the NP cannot take a function.

⁸⁸ I am firmly in the ?! camp. How can people accept any other order?!

nucleus slot. However, the auxiliary does not occur before the subject, and no “dummy *do*” is required for head verbs that aren’t supported by an auxiliary. The following COCA examples provide instances of these embedded clauses:

- (13.33) a. Well, I don’t know who killed Lanny Horwitz, but I know it wasn’t Donna.
 b. I don’t know who you’re talking about there.
 c. But they believe what Peggy said
 d. He didn’t say where the kitchen was

Each one of these examples begins with a *wh*-word word, but the introductory word is not an interrogative pronoun or adverb because its purpose is not to request information from a recipient but instead is to provide a statement. Sometimes the *wh*-word represents unknown information: the speaker does not know the name of Lanny’s killer in (a), the name of the person being spoken about in (b), or the location of the kitchen in (c). However, the *wh*-word can represent known information, as in (d), where the speaker is likely aware of the content of Peggy’s statement.

The following examples are annotated to show you how to work with nominal clauses that share some features of interrogative clauses:

- (13.34)a. I asked Peanut what he thought. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 9)

S	(Subj	I^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>asked</u> ^{DtV}
	:	(IObj	Peanut^{PropN})
	:	((DObj	(i what^{Pro})
	:	:	
	:	:	(Subj he^{Pro})
	:	Pred	Past <u>thought</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	(i DObj GAP)
	:		
	:	))	

- b. I found tons on the Internet, but it got really confusing because I didn’t keep track of where I found things. (27)

((ObjPrep	/Avl	where^{Av} /
:		
:	(Subj	I^{Pro})
:	Pred	Past <u>found</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	(DObj things^{CN})
:		
))		

- c. When I wanted to go back and look something up, I couldn't remember where it was. (27)

$$\begin{array}{l} ((\text{DObj} \quad /i \quad \text{where}^{\text{Av}}/ \\ : \\ : \\ : \quad (\text{Subj} \quad \text{it}^{\text{Pro}}) \\ : \quad ||_{\text{Pred}} \quad |_{\text{Past}} \quad \underline{\text{was}}^{\text{CopV}}| \\ : \quad : \quad /i \text{ SA}_{\text{vI}} \quad \text{GAP}/ \\ : \quad || \\)) \end{array}$$

In example (a), *what* is only labeled as a pronoun since it does not introduce an interrogative clause; likewise, in examples (b) and (c), *where* is labeled as an adverb and not an interrogative adverb.

Nominal clauses beginning with *if* or *whether* as a subordinator can also represent unknown information, as demonstrated by these COCA examples.

- (13.35) a. I'm not even sure if Cletus can read.
 b. He found a container labeled "ceylon," but he couldn't be sure if it wasn't cayenne.
 c. I'm not sure if we'll be able to get folks in tonight or not.
 d. She wished she knew whether the man she had met had been Hill's son
 e. No one quite knew whether the war would last a few more months or forever.

In everyday speech and writing, the *if/whether* clause is often followed with the tag *or not*, as in (c). However, in academic writing, that practice is frowned upon because the words *if* and *whether* both inherently express doubt or choice between options, so the *or not* is semantically implied through using the words *if* and *whether*, making *or not* redundant.

Nominal clauses can begin with the pronouns *whatever* and *whoever* or adverbs *wherever* or *whenever*. Example (a) will be discussed in more detail below, so for now focus on the nominal clause annotation.

- (13.36) a. Whatever the animal was, it was big, and it was flying. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 70)

S ((LDis (i **whatever**^{Pro})
:
:
: (Subj **the**^{Det}
: : **animal**^{CN}
:)
: ||Pred |Past was^{CopV}|
: : (i SPred **GAP**)
: ||
))

S (Subj **it**^{Pro})
||Pred |Past was^{CopV}|
: <SPred **big**^{Aj}>
||

and^{CoConj}

S (Subj **it**^{Pro})
||Pred |PastProg **was**^{PriAux}
: : flying^{ItV}
: |
||

- b. Wherever I go, there's a shadow of you. (OneRepublic 2016)

S ((Avl /i **wherever**^{Av/}
:
:
: (Subj **I**^{Pro})
: ||Pred |Pres go^{CopV}|
: : /i SAvl **GAP**/
: ||
))

there^{Exist}

||Pred |Pres 's^{CopV}|
: (Subj **a**^{Det}
: : **shadow**^{CN}
: : [PostM of^{Prep}
: : : (ObjPrep **you**^{Pro})
: :]
:)
||

Both examples incorporate a clause that begins with an *-ever* compound. If the *-ever* compound functions as anything other than the subject of the clause or an optional adjunct, it is co-indexed with a GAP in the predicate. In (a), *whatever* is co-indexed with the GAP, indicating that it is the subject predicative describing the subject *the animal*. In (b), the *wherever* is co-indexed with a GAP in the predicate to indicate that it functions as the subject adverbial in that clause.

Example (a) introduces **left-dislocation**, which puts focus on nominal elements, whether they are nominal clauses or noun phrases, by placing them at the beginning of the sentence. Left-dislocation affects the accompanying clause structure, following one of two patterns: a pronoun is inserted in the clause to refer to the left-dislocated constituent, or a GAP appears in the clause where the constituent would otherwise be situated. In (a), the pronoun *it* refers to the left-dislocated constituent: *whatever it was* was both big and flying.

An example of left-dislocation without a resulting pronoun is provided below:

(13.37) I can't understand a word of the text—Charley said it's written in Latin—but some of the beasts I recognize. Some I've never heard of, like the giant spider and the giant bat. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 13)

S	(i	some of ^{Det}
	:	the ^{Det}
	:	beasts ^{CN}
	)	
	(Subj	I ^{Pro})
	Pred	^{Pres} <u>recognize</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(i ^{DObj} GAP)

In this example, the noun phrase *some of the beasts* occurs at the beginning of the clause, yet it functions as the direct object of the head verb *recognize*. Therefore, it is co-indexed with a gap within the predicate. The next sentence of the example also incorporates left-dislocation: in *some I've never heard of*, *some* functions as the object of the preposition *of*, yet it occurs at the beginning of the clause.

While these two options are available for most left-dislocated constituents, if the fronted constituent refers to the subject of the clause, a pronoun must appear in the subject slot.

(13.38)a. That book, it's good.

S	(LDis	that ^{Det}
	:	book ^{CN}
	)	
	(Subj	it ^{Pro})
	Pred	^{Pres} <u>s</u> ^{CopV}
	:	< ^{SPred} good ^{Aj} >

- b. That book's good. = no left-dislocation

S (Subj **that**^{Det}
 : **book**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |Pres sCopV|
 : <SPred **good**^{Aj}>
 ||

- c. That book, I've read it.

S (LDis **that**^{Det}
 : **book**^{CN}
)

 (Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PresPerf 've^{PriAux}
 : : read^{MtV}
 : |
 : (DObj **it**^{Pro})
 ||

- d. That book, I've read.

S (i **that**^{Det}
 : **book**^{CN}
)

 (Subj **I**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PresPerf 've^{PriAux}
 : : read^{MtV}
 : |
 : (i_{DObj} GAP)
 ||

For example (a) to be interpreted as left-dislocation, a pronoun, such as *it*, is required. In example (d), though, a pronoun is not required because *that book* functions as the direct object of *read*.

Constituents can appear at either the beginning and end of clauses as a method of focusing on them, and **right-dislocation** refers to constituents that appear at the end of the clause. For instance, the example in (13.37) could be reworded with right-dislocation:

(13.39) I recognize them, some of the beasts.

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})
	Pred	Pres <u>recognize</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(DObj them ^{Pro})
	(RDis	some of ^{fDet}
	:	the ^{Det}
	:	beasts ^{CN}
	)	

Right-dislocation requires a reduplicated pronoun in the main clause to be both grammatical and an example of right-dislocation; for example, *I recognize some of the beasts* is typical word order without right dislocation. Example (13.36a) can also be reworded with right-dislocation:

- (13.40) a. It was big, and it was flying, whatever the animal was.
 b. *Was big and was flying, whatever it was.

In this case, omitting the reduplicated pronouns in the main clause results in an ungrammatical sentence, as demonstrated by (b).

Another type of construction that affects typical word order is clefting. A **cleft sentence** begins with a “dummy” pronoun, such *it* or *that*, and places a constituent in focus with the rest of the clause appearing in an embedded subordinate clause, usually a *wh*-word nominal clause.⁸⁹ The opening pronoun is indefinite and empty of semantic meaning because it has no referent. The following COCA examples are cleft sentences.

- (13.41) a. It was Lucy who had opened the door with the key
 b. That was Mechoulam who gave it that name.
 c. It was them who found that blood-stained mattress.

Cleft sentences are often difficult to annotate because the structure’s purpose is to pull focus onto a constituent, creating a word order distinct from general expectations. For instance, in (a), the speaker puts *Lucy* into focus, and a basic rewording of this sentence is *Lucy had opened the door with the key*. By using the cleft sentence construction, the speaker emphasizes that it was Lucy who did it—not someone else. The subject of the full sentence is the dummy pronoun, which can be best seen in (c), where *it* triggers subject-verb agreement with *was* and not the plural pronoun *them*.

⁸⁹ Chapter 14 introduces relative clauses, which look similar to the clefted nominal clauses introduced here; however, the two are grammatically and pragmatically distinct. While relative clauses can be embedded inside NPs and serve to provide more information about a head noun, clefted clauses are not embedded inside NPs and serve to bring constituents into focus.

Annotations of cleft sentences reflect the special nature of this construction, as in the annotated example below:

(13.42) It was Lucy who had opened the door with the key (COCA)

S	(Subj	it ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>was</u> ^{CopV}
	:	(SPred	Lucy ^{PropN})
	:		
	:	((Cleft	(Subj who ^{Pro})
	:	:	Pred PastPerf had ^{PriAux}
	:	:	:
	:	:	<u>opened</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	
	:	:	(DObj the ^{Det}
	:	:	door ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	[Avl with ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	key ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	]
	:	:	
	:	))	
	:		

The function of the nominal clause *who had opened the door with the key* is to provide the “clefted” information. These types of sentences can be truncated, removing the clefted clause, when there is sufficient context to delete the final clefted portion, as in *It was Lucy*.

Regardless of overall clause type, the features described in this chapter rely on the same underlying basic features of English grammar: English allows particular constituents to be gapped in the clause structure (e.g., the understood *you* of imperative clauses), and gapped constituents may be co-indexed with fronted constituents that appear in the pre-nucleus slot (e.g., the *wh*-word in interrogative clauses or nominal clauses).

Practice Set 13.3 Annotating clause structures

Annotate the following sentences, which are taken from *Just So You Know* by Sarah Addison Allen (2010).

1. You have secret favorites, but you say that you could never choose.⁹⁰
 2. But did you know that books fall in love with you, too?
 3. They watch you from the shelf while you sleep.
 4. Are you dreaming of them, they wonder?⁹¹
 5. Remember that pale yellow book from when you were sixteen.⁹²
 6. It changed your world, that book.
 7. You carried it around until it was old and thin and sparkles no longer rose from the pages and filled the air when you opened it, like it did when it was new.
 8. You should know that it still thinks of you.
 9. And the book about the donkey, it's still around.⁹³
 10. It knew you were The One.
-

⁹⁰ Original: You have secret favorites but, when asked, you say that you could never choose.

⁹¹ Original: Are you dreaming of them, they wonder, in that wistful mood books are prone to at night when they're bored and there's nothing left to do but tease the cat.

⁹² Original: Remember that pale yellow book you read when you were sixteen?

⁹³ Original: And the book about the donkey your father read to you every night when you were three, it's still around —older, a little worse for wear.

Terms introduced in Chapter 13

Lexical forms

interrogative adverb (IntAv)
 interrogative determiner (IntDet)
 interrogative pronoun (IntPro)

Illocutionary force

declarative
 exclamatory (Exc)
 imperative (Imp)
 interrogative (Int)

Concepts

cleft sentence
 ellipsis
 left-dislocation
 right-dislocation

Chapter 13 Exercises

Exercise 13.1

Fully annotate the following sentences from Cornelia Funke's (2003: 63-70) *Inkheart*.

1. "Take my advice, Meggie: Never develop an expensive passion."⁹⁴
2. "It'll eat your heart away like a bookworm."
3. "Take this book here, for instance."
4. "What a fine edition—and in such good condition, too!"
5. As Meggie was going through the dark garden behind the house she suddenly heard unexpected music.
6. "Sit down, pretty lady!" he called over the music.
7. Shyly, Meggie sat down on the bench and looked around her.
8. "Do you hear how quiet it is?"
9. He threw the torch high in the air and caught it as it came down.⁹⁵
10. As she jumped up, a burning torch slipped from his hands and fell on the grass.
11. Gravel crunched under her feet as she raced toward the house.
12. "So where's the book?"
13. "What do you know about my daughter?"
14. "Not a bad hiding place!" said the catlike voice.
15. "Wrap it up, Cockerell, and take good care of it."

Exercise 13.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

⁹⁴ Original: Never develop a passion you can't afford.

⁹⁵ Original: He threw the torch high in the air where the fireball had just been blazing, caught it as it came down, lit more, juggled with three, four, five torches.

1. *y/n* question with auxiliary in pre-nucleus slot
2. *y/n* question with *be*-verb in pre-nucleus slot
3. *wh*-word question with auxiliary in pre-nucleus slot
4. *wh*-word question with *be*-verb in pre-nucleus slot
5. *wh*-word question with interrogative determiner
6. *wh*-word question with interrogative adverb
7. imperative clause
8. negated imperative clause
9. exclamatory clause
10. nominal clause with constituent in pre-nucleus slot

Exercise 13.3

Find instructions with at least ten steps to analyze (e.g., recipe, how-to guide). For every clause, identify the illocutionary force. Analyze the flow of information, matching the types of content conveyed to the illocutionary force. In a paragraph, answer the following questions:

- Why does the author shift between illocutionary forces?
- What kinds of information are conveyed in each type of illocutionary force?
- If the overall text had only been written with one illocutionary force, how would it affect the flow of the text?

Find another text written by a different author within the same genre (e.g., if you used a recipe, find a recipe from another source). In a paragraph, answer the following questions.

- Is the text you originally chose representative of its genre (e.g., is the recipe a typical one, or does some feature set it apart from other typical recipes)? If so, how? If not, why not?
- If you were to write your own text to fit into the genre, how could this information help you?

Chapter 14: Relative clauses, non-restrictive modifiers, and complements

*People who have learned even a little about how English works have heard about modifiers. They know that a modifier is something that tells us something about something, and that there are many kinds of modifiers, some with tricky names.... all the seemingly complicated kinds of modification in English are just ways of thinking and seeing how things go with each other or reflect each other. Modifiers in our language are not **aids** to understanding relationships; they are **the ways** to understand relationships. —Richard Mitchell, *Less than Words can Say* (62)*

14.1 Relative clauses

Basic noun phrases include a head noun or pronoun and a potential determiner, and complex noun phrases incorporate at least one of the following four kinds of modifiers:

- attributive modifiers, typically realized as adjective phrases or noun phrases
- post-modifiers, typically realized as preposition phrases, noun phrases, relative clauses, or non-finite clauses acting as restrictive modifiers
- non-restrictive modifiers, typically realized as noun phrases, relative clauses, or non-finite clauses
- complements, typically realized as nominal clauses or non-finite clauses

You can think of the NP as a series of available slots:

<i>non-restrictive modifier(s)</i>	determiner(s)	attributive modifier(s)	noun pronoun	post-modifier(s) non-restrictive modifier(s) complement(s)

Figure 14.1 NP as a series of slots

The two slots for determiner(s) and the head noun or pronoun refer to grammatical forms, but the other slots refer to grammatical functions. The opening *non-restrictive modifier(s)* slot is in italics because that position is less frequently utilized, but, when it is, it generally precedes the rest of the NP constituents. Attributive modifiers and post-modifiers have already been introduced, and this chapter adds non-restrictive modifiers and complements to that repertoire, beginning with a discussion on relative clauses before moving on to the differences between post-modifiers and non-restrictive modifiers.⁹⁶

Relative clauses are subordinate (i.e., dependent) clauses that serve to modify a head noun or pronoun, often embedded inside NPs after the head noun or pronoun they modify. Relative clauses can begin with one of three relative words: a **relative pronoun** (RelPro), such as *that* or *who*; a noun phrase with a **relative determiner** (RelDet), such as *whose*; or a **relative**

⁹⁶ Some grammarians use the term *post-modifier* to cover both restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers, always using the terms *restrictive* and *non-restrictive* to distinguish between them. Because restrictive post-modifiers are more frequent than non-restrictive post-modifiers, I only specify its type if it is non-restrictive. Furthermore, you will see examples where non-restrictive modifiers can occur in positions other than after the head noun being modified. Therefore, in this text, ‘post-modifier’ refers to a restrictive post-modifier while ‘non-restrictive modifier’ refers to any non-restrictive modifier—regardless of whether they are in the post-modifying position.

- (14.2) a. He was a scientist **who** wanted to prove that sea monsters didn't exist.
(Brockway and Masiello 2011: 27)
- b. But some old whaler guys claim to have seen scars **that** were 24 inches around! (34)
- c. ...even though my journal was stolen, the kids **who** saw it apparently liked it. (92)

The antecedent of a relative pronoun is the head noun or pronoun being modified by the relative clause; therefore, *who* in (a) refers to the antecedent *scientist*, and *that* in (b) refers to the antecedent *scars*. The verb inside the relative clause has to agree with the antecedent, so, for instance, the verb *were* within the RelCl in (b) is plural to match the plurality of the antecedent *scars*. If you change the antecedent to *a scar*, the verb form needs to change: ...*a scar that was 24 inches around*.

Some grammarians use the term 'adjective clause' to refer to relative clauses because relative clauses provide the type of modification typically associated with adjectives but in full clause form. The annotation scheme reflects this association, with relative clauses represented by guillemets, as in the example below.⁹⁷

(14.3) the kids who saw it apparently liked it

(Subj	the ^{Det}	
:	kids ^{CN}	
:	«PostM	(Subj who ^{RelPro})
:	:	Pred Past <u>saw</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	(DObj it ^{Pro})
:	:	
:	»	
)		
Pred	/Avl	apparently ^{Av} /
:	Past	<u>liked</u> ^{MtV}
:	(DObj	it ^{Pro})

In that relative clause, the relative pronoun *who* carries the *RelPro* superscript to indicate its status as a relative pronoun, and the relative clause *who saw it* takes the post-modifier function and is fully embedded inside the NP with the head noun it post-modifies (*kids*).

Noun phrases can take more than one post-modifier, as in the example below, where the head noun *parts* takes both a PP and a RelCl as post-modifiers.

⁹⁷ You can also use double angled brackets for relative clauses, which look like guillemets but in larger form: « and » versus << and >>.

- (14.4) If you look at the parts of the elephant that show above the water, they do look suspiciously like the head and humps of a sea monster. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 35)

```

(DObj  theDet
:      partsCN
:      [PostM  ofPrep
:          :      (ObjPrep theDet
:          :          :      elephantCN
:          :          )
:          ]
:      «PostM  (Subj  thatRelPro)
:          :      ||Pred  |Pres  showCopV|
:          :          :      [SAvl  abovePrep
:          :          :          :      (ObjPrep theDet
:          :          :          :          :      waterNN
:          :          :          :          )
:          :          :          ]
:          :          ||
:          »
)

```

When a head noun takes two post-modifiers, the first post-modifying phrase or clause is fully closed out before the second one begins, and both are embedded inside the larger noun phrase. In this case, the full NP is *the parts of the elephant that show above the water*. The head noun *parts* is post-modified by the PP *of the elephant* and the RelCl *that show above the water*. The relative pronoun *that* substitutes for the head noun *parts*, and the verb *show* is in its plural form to agree with a plural subject.

If the relative pronoun plays any role other than the subject, a pre-nucleus slot is required, and the relative pronoun is co-indexed with a gapped constituent within the predicate of the clause. In the next example, the relative pronoun is co-indexed with a gapped direct object.

- (14.5) But he didn't expect that there would be a whole bunch **that** *he couldn't explain!* (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 27)

```

(Subj  aDet
:      <Att  wholeAj>
:      bunchCN
:      «PostM  (i  thatRelPro)
:          :
:          :      (Subj  hePro)
:          :      ||Pred  |Mod  couldModAux n'tNeg
:          :          :      explainMtV
:          :          :      |
:          :          :      (i DObj  GAP)
:          :          ||
:          »
)

```

The direct object of the verb *explain* is gapped and co-indexed with the relative pronoun *that*, whose antecedent is *a whole bunch*, so the relative clause indicates he couldn't explain a whole bunch. This use of the pre-nucleus slot reflects the structures described in Chapter 13, where a co-indexed constituent is placed before the subject but plays a grammatical role later in the clause.

The relative pronoun can be co-indexed with many different roles, including object of preposition. When the relative pronoun functions as the object of a preposition, English has two possible orders: (1) the entire preposition phrase can be placed at the front of the relative clause, or (2) the relative pronoun can be placed at the beginning of the relative clause while the preposition remains *in situ*. The first example below provides the original wording of the sentence and exemplifies the first pattern, and the second example is a rewording to demonstrate how the second pattern works.

- (14.6) a. So it was my chance to go back into The Room (that's what I'm affectionately calling the spare room to which I now have a key) for a little while. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 14)

```

(OPred  theDet
:      <Att  spareAj>
:      roomCN
:      «PostM  [i      toPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep  whichRelPro)
:      :      ]
:      :
:      :      (Subj  IPro)
:      :      ||Pred  /AvI  nowAv/
:      :      :      |Pres  haveMtV|
:      :      :      (DObj  aDet
:      :      :      :      keyCN
:      :      :      :      [i PostM  GAP]
:      :      :      )
:      :      ||
:      »
)
```

- b. the spare room which I now have a key to

(OPred the^{Det}
 : <Att spare^{Aj}>
 : room^{CN}
 : «PMod (i which^{RelPro})
 : :
 : : (Subj I^{Pro})
 : : ||Pred /Avl now^{Av/}
 : : : |Pres have^{MtV}|
 : : : (DObj a^{Det}
 : : : : key^{CN}
 : : : : [PostM to^{Prep}
 : : : : : (i ObjPrep GAP)
 : : : : :]
 : : : :)
 : : ||
 : »
)

In prescriptive grammars, the second example is referred to as a “stranded preposition,” which prescriptivists warn writers should avoid. However, in daily interactions, writers and speakers alike happily strand prepositions, and even in more formal registers, these stranded prepositions are becoming less offensive.⁹⁸

Relative clauses can also begin with relative determiners, such as *whose*, as in the following example:

⁹⁸ As a Germanic language, English historically “stranded” prepositions, but the practice has, within the last 100-200 years, become taboo for prescriptive grammarians. However, it often sounds more natural to end the clause with a preposition (e.g., *With whom am I speaking?* versus *Who am I speaking with?*).

- (14.7) He's the same guy whose palace had the carving of the mer-dude Oannes.
(Brockway and Masiello 2011: 29)

```

(SPred  theDet
:      <Att  sameAj>
:      guyCN
:      <<PostM (Subj  whoseRelDet
:              :      palaceCN
:              :      )
:              ||Pred  |Past  hadMtV|
:              :      (DObj  theDet
:              :      carvingCN
:              :      [PostM  ofPrep
:              :      (ObjPrep theDet
:              :      mer-dudeCN
:              :      (PostM  OannesPropN)
:              :      )
:              :      ]
:              :      )
:      ||
:      »
)

```

In this example, the relative determiner *whose* is part of the NP *whose palace*, which functions as the subject for the relative clause.

Along with relative pronouns and relative determiners, English also has relative adverbs that can introduce relative clauses. The relative adverb *when* works alongside head nouns that refer to time, such as a day of the week, a year, or a season, and the relative adverb *where* works alongside head nouns that refer to location. For example, in the sentences below, *when* introduces relative clauses embedded inside the NPs *the first grade* and *the day last year*, both of which refer to a specific time, and *where* introduces a relative clause embedded inside the NP *the hole*, which refers to a location.

- (14.8) a. It sends me back to the first grade *when I got picked to read a poem at an assembly*. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 44)

```

(ObjPrep theDet
:      firstDet
:      gradeCN
:      <<PostM /Avl  whenRelAv/
:              :      (Subj  IPro)
:              :      ||Pred  |PastPass  gotPriAux
:              :              :      pickedMtV
:              :              :      |
:              :              :      to read a poem at an assembly99
:              :      ||
:      >>
)

```

⁹⁹ You have not yet seen examples of how to annotate these types of clauses, so I've left this portion unannotated.

- b. Hercules discovered that if you burn the hole *where the head was*, no new ones will grow. (47)

```

(DObj  theDet
:      holeCN
:      «PostM  /i      whereRAv/
:      :
:      :      (Subj  theDet
:      :      :      headCN
:      :      :      )
:      :      ||Pred  |Past  wasCopV|
:      :      :      /i SAvl  GAP/
:      :      ||
:      »
)

```

- c. Today ranks a close second to the day last year *when the Britneys wrote "Abigail loves Kane" all over my locker in black Magic Marker*. (58)

```

(ObjPrep theDet
:      dayCN
:      (PostM  lastDet
:      :      yearCN
:      :      )
:      «PostM  /Avl  whenRelAv/
:      :      (Subj  theDet
:      :      :      BritneysPropN
:      :      :      )
:      :      ||Pred  |Past  wroteMtV|
:      :      :      ((DObj  (Subj  AbigailPropN)
:      :      :      :      ||Pred  |Pres  lovesMtV|
:      :      :      :      (DObj  KanePropN)
:      :      :      :      ||
:      :      :      ))
:      :      :      [Avl  /Avl  allAv/
:      :      :      :      overPrep
:      :      :      :      (ObjPrep myDet
:      :      :      :      :      lockerCN
:      :      :      :      :      )
:      :      :      :      ]
:      :      :      [Avl  inPrep
:      :      :      :      (ObjPrep <Att  blackAj>
:      :      :      :      :      Magic MarkerPropN
:      :      :      :      :      )
:      :      :      :      ]
:      :      :      ||
:      :      »
)

```

If the relative adverb does not play a required role in the relative clause, it is not co-indexed with a gapped constituent. In examples (a) and (c), *when* does not need to be co-indexed with a gapped constituent because it functions as an adjunct adverbial, but in example (b), *where* is co-indexed with a gapped subject adverbial in the predicate because it function as an argument within the clause.

A special grammatical feature of English is that if the relative clause begins with a relative pronoun that is co-indexed with a gapped element (i.e., it does not function as the subject of the relative clause), it can be omitted. In other words, if the relative pronoun plays any function but subject, you can delete it. This feature only works for relative pronouns—not relative adverbs or determiners. In the following examples, the relative clause is italicized, and none of them begin with a relative pronoun.

- (14.9) a. The best information came from the book *I mentioned earlier* (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 27)
 b. One entry described a visit *she and Pop made to some sultan guy in Turkey*, to investigate his gryphon claw. (26)
 c. It's all because of that darn calendar *Pop gives her every year*. (44)
 d. I'm in the same spot *I was in before I got this note*—risking safety from some unknown danger to learn about mythical beasts. (69)
 e. They're soaking in brandy before Ninny ships them to faraway relatives *I don't know*. (84)

When annotating these types of relative clauses, the annotation shows that a relative pronoun has been omitted by providing a GAP in its position. The example below provides the annotation for the noun phrase with a relative clause in (14.9a).

(14.10) the book I mentioned earlier

```

(ObjPrep theDet
:      bookCN
:      «PostM (i      GAPRelPro)
:      :
:      :      (Subj IPro)
:      :      ||Pred |Past mentionedMtV|
:      :      :      (i DObj GAP)
:      :      :      /AvI earlierAv/
:      :      ||
:      »
)
```

The GAP that opens the relative clause carries the superscript *RelPro* to serve as a visual reminder of an understood relative pronoun, and that gapped relative pronoun is then co-indexed

with a GAP in the relative clause's predicate, showing that, in this instance, it takes the direct object function.

Relative clauses can occur within any NP, even if that NP is embedded inside another relative clause. For instance, in the example below, a relative clause is embedded inside another relative clause, which is, in turn, embedded inside a nominal clause:

(14.11) My guess is that the bonnacon was just a poor bull who ate something that didn't agree with him. (Brockway and Masiello 2011: 97)

S (Subj my^{Det}
: guess^{CN}
)
||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}|
: ((SPred that^{SubConj}
: : (Subj the^{Det}
: : : bonnacon^{CN}
: : :)
: : ||Pred |Past was^{CopV}|
: : : /Avl just^{Av}/
: : : (SPred a^{Det}
: : : : <Att poor^{Aj}>
: : : : bull^{CN}
: : : : <<PostM (Subj who^{RelPro})
: : : : : ||Pred |Past ate^{MtV}|
: : : : : (DObj something^{Pro}
: : : : : : <<PMod (Subj that^{RelPro})
: : : : : : : ||Pred |Past did^{PriAux} n't^{Neg}
: : : : : : : : agree with^{MtV}
: : : : : : : : |
: : : : : : : : (DObj him^{Pro})
: : : : : : : : ||
: : : : : : : : »
: : : : : : : :)
: : : : : : : : ||
: : : : : : : : »
: : : : : : : :)
: : : : : : : : ||
: : : : : : : :))
||

In this sentence, the relative clause *that didn't agree with him* post-modifies *something*, and the relative clause *who ate something that didn't agree with him* post-modifies *a poor bull*. The full

nominal clause *that the bonnacon was just a poor bull who ate something that didn't agree with him* is the subject predicative, providing more information about the subject, *my guess*.

In Chapter 3, I warned you that words like *that* can be tricky because they can take on so many different parts of speech. In English, *that* can be at least five parts of speech:

- demonstrative pronoun
- relative pronoun
- demonstrative determiner
- subordinator
- adverb

One year, my students challenged me to use all five types of *that* in a single sentence with as many in a row as I could get.¹⁰⁰ I came up with a grammatical sentence with four *thats* in a row, with the fifth and final *that* occurring outside the string:

(14.12) I didn't know that that that that man bought is that blue.

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})			
	_{Pred}	_{Past}	did _{PriAux}	n't _{Neg}	
	:	:	<u>know</u> _{MtV}		
	:				
	:	((DObj	that _{SubConj}		
	:	:	(Subj	that _{Pro}	
	:	:	:	« _{PMod}	(i that _{RelPro})
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	:	(Subj that _{Det}
	:	:	:	:	man _{CN}
	:	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	_{Pred}	_{Past} <u>bought</u> _{MtV}
	:	:	:	:	(i DObj GAP)
	:	:	:		
	:	:	:	»	
	:	:	:	)	
	:	:	_{Pred}	_{Pres} <u>is</u> _{CopV}	
	:	:	:	< _{SPred}	/Deg that _{Av} /
	:	:	:	:	blue _{Aj}
	:	:	:	>	
	:	:			
	:	))			

¹⁰⁰ My students were inspired by sentences like *Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo* and *James, while John had had "had," had had "had had"*: "had had" had had a better effect on the teacher.

To help in understanding this sentence, you can replace the demonstrative pronoun in this sentence with a determiner and noun, such as *the car*, to create a sentence like *I didn't know that the car that that man bought is that blue*.¹⁰¹ You could increase the number of *thats* in a row in the original sentence by adding an emphatic demonstrative determiner in front of the demonstrative pronoun (i.e., *I didn't know that that that that that man bought...*), but it does not add a new form of *that* to the string and is more difficult to understand.

While sentences like these can be fun FYI bizarre grammatical feats, you wouldn't typically create such awkward constructions in natural language use. For instance, although COCA has over 560 million words, it does not have any examples of four *thats* in a row. However, you can easily find two *thats* in a row in natural use; for instance, one COCA result for two *thats* is *You can't lump the two together and say that that works*. By adding a third *that* to the search string, COCA only provided one matching result out of nine that uses *that* in three different ways: *the military seems to have decided in the wake of that that that wouldn't be the case ever again*. The other eight appear to be instances of repetition in spoken interviews, where the second and/or third *that* do not play a new grammatical role in the sentence structure. In its related iWeb Corpus, which contains over 14 billion words, a search for two *thats* provides 134,944 results, but three *thats* in a row does not provide any matches.

Practice Set 14.1 Annotating embedded clauses

Annotate the following sentences, which are taken from *Pendragon: Book One: The Merchant of Death* by D.J. MacHale (2002: 3).

1. He's the guy who turned my house into that laser-maze game.
 2. He's the one who was throwing pizzas at my party last year.
 3. I gotta tell you, he was the coolio uncle everybody wished they had.
 4. But there was always something a little mysterious about Uncle Press.
 5. I don't know what he did for a living, but he always had boatloads of money.
 6. He wasn't married, but sometimes he'd show up at the house with some odd character.
 7. One time he brought this lady over who never said a word.
 8. I think she was African or something because she was real dark-skinned.
 9. But it was strange because she'd just stare at me and smile.
 10. I'd have to say that my Uncle Press was the coolest guy I'd ever met.
-

¹⁰¹ If you can manage to get all five types of *that* in a row while still creating a grammatical sentence, you should share it with me so I can include it in future editions of this text. The sentence *I found out that that that that that man used should've been a which* has five in a row, but two of those *thats* are working as determiners, so it is not an example of all five *thats* in a row.

14.2 Non-restrictive modifiers

Rather than functioning as post-modifiers, some relative clauses provide more information about a head noun or pronoun in a less grammatically connected and embedded manner. For instance, the following italicized relative clauses are not post-modifiers:

- (14.13) a. In hopes of becoming a Band Geek (***which**, surprisingly, is a step up from the Brains*), he's learning to play the tuba in the marching band.
(Brockway and Masiello 2011: 10)
- b. ...they saw her tail, ***which** was like the tail of a porpoise* (21)

These relative clauses function as **non-restrictive modifiers** (NRM).

Structurally, non-restrictive modifiers share two major features with post-modifiers: non-restrictive modifiers are modifiers that often occur after the head noun they're describing, and the NRM function tends to correlate with the grammatical forms noun phrase and relative clause. Moreover, like post-modifiers, when the NRM is a clause, the head noun being modified plays a grammatical and/or semantic role within that clause. For example, in the following COCA examples, the relative clauses have been italicized with their relative pronouns bolded:

- (14.14) a. 'Goldrush,' the most modern variety in my top six, is a dessert apple ***that** has become the darling of professional cider-makers*.
- b. He didn't want to go through the back and wake up Speedo, ***who** might start barking and arouse the neighbors, **who** wouldn't be pleased*.
- c. All week Tavy read the books ***GAP**^{RelPro} she had checked out from the library*.

A key feature of these clauses is that the relative pronoun, which refers to the head noun being modified, plays a grammatical role in the clause itself. For instance, in (a), the relative pronoun *that* refers to *a dessert apple*, and *that* is the subject of the relative clause. In (b), the relative pronoun *who* refers to *Speedo*, and *who* is the subject of the relative clause; inside that relative clause is another relative clause, where the relative pronoun *who* refers to *the neighbors* and functions as the subject of its relative clause, *who wouldn't be pleased*. Finally, in (c), the relative pronoun is gapped, yet it still plays a grammatical function in the clause because it is the direct object of *checked out* and refers to *the books*. Of these examples, both relative clauses in (b) are non-restrictive modifiers while the relative clauses in (a) and (c) are post-modifiers. The only way you can distinguish between these types of modifiers is through context, punctuation use, and intended meaning.

Non-restrictive modifiers differ from post-modifiers in their application and meaning. While a post-modifier restricts the meaning of the head noun, a non-restrictive modifier does not. A non-restrictive modifier indicates that there is only one referent or set of referents for the head noun, and the description provided by the NRM is extra information, which means you don't need that additional information to figure out which head noun is being referred to. Post-modifiers, on the other hand, indicate that there are many options for the referent of the head

noun, and the PostM provides the necessary information to isolate which one is being referred to. These differences are best explored through examples.

In the following three sets of COCA examples, (a) provides an example of a post-modifier while (b) provides a related example of a non-restrictive modifier. Furthermore, the head noun being modified is bolded, and the relative clause is italicized.

- (14.15) a. thank God I had a **sister** *who came over there to study the language as well with me.*
 b. My parents and I had Skyped with my **sister**, *who was living in the UK.*

The post-modifier in (a) suggests that the speaker has more than one sister, and she is thanking God for the sister who went with her to study the language. The PostM helps us figure out which sister the speaker is referring to. The non-restrictive modifier in (b) suggests that the speaker has only one sister, and the sister lives in the UK. The NRM isn't needed to tell us which sister the speaker is referring to, but it provides extra information about her.

In the next two examples, focus on the differences between the meanings created by the relative clauses modifying the head noun *students*:

- (14.16) a. in most countries, **students** *who read fiction for enjoyment* are much more likely to be good readers
 b. The consequences of having regular access to a bar in my dorm at Yale would have been catastrophic, but then drinking is different for **American students**, *who are always on a desperate hunt for extralegal means of getting drunk and when they find alcohol drink it as quickly as possible, so it can't be taken away from them.*

The post-modifier in (a) suggests that out of all students, a subset of them read fiction for fun, and only the students belonging to that subset are more likely to be good readers. The non-restrictive modifier in (b) suggests that all American students are on a wild hunt for alcohol.

In the following examples, pay close attention to how the head noun *desk* is being modified by the relative clauses:

- (14.17) a. Jake Masters sat behind a glass-topped **desk** *that was littered with what looked like nothing other than junk.*
 b. The sherry was the same color as the top of the judge's huge **desk**, *which in the lowering afternoon sunlight took on a reddish cast.*

The post-modifier in (a) suggests the reader doesn't yet know which desk is being referred to—perhaps the reader has not been introduced to his desk yet, or perhaps there are several glass-topped desks Jake could've been sitting behind. The PostM provides more information about the desk so readers know which one is important for the context. The non-restrictive modifier in (b) suggests the reader understands there can only be one judge's desk, and the description isn't necessary for picking that desk out of a desk line-up.

In formal prescriptive writing, commas should reflect the status of the modifier: a post-modifier does not take commas while a non-restrictive modifier is set off from the rest of the sentence with commas. In the three sets of examples above, notice that the PostM examples are comma-free while the NRM examples are set off with commas. Because context doesn't always tell us whether the modifier should be interpreted as a PostM or NRM, the misuse of these commas in writing can lead to potential miscommunication, as in the following COCA example.

(14.18) At Raymond's school, fifth grade students, *who were reading below grade level*, utilized a reading and singing software program (RSSP).

The way this sentence is punctuated, it suggests that all fifth grade students at Raymond's school are reading below their grade level. However, the context around this sentence points to an interpretation of the relative clause as a post-modifier to indicate that, out of all the fifth grade students, the ones who are reading below their grade level use the RSSP. In formal writing, the use or omission of commas can change the meaning of the sentence, so while a PostM interpretation is probably what the author had intended, the use of commas leaves open the interpretation that all fifth grade students read below their grade level and utilize the RSSP.

While the relative pronoun can be omitted for post-modifying relative clauses when its function is not the subject, the relative pronoun cannot be omitted for non-restrictive modifiers. Consider the following example (repeated from (14.14c) above), which has been reworded in (b) and (c):

- (14.19) a. All week Tavy read the books *she had checked out from the library*.
(COCA)
b. *All week Tavy read the books, *she had checked out from the library*.
c. All week Tavy read the books, *which she had checked out from the library*.

Adding the comma renders the sentence ungrammatical when the relative pronoun is omitted because non-restrictive relative clauses require an explicitly stated relative pronoun. Adding the relative pronoun *which* makes it grammatical, but it also changes the meaning from the original, shifting the interpretation of *the books* to an already mentioned set of books, all of which were checked out from the library.

Prescriptively, relative clauses beginning with the relative pronoun *which* are more likely to function as an NRM, and any relative clause beginning with the relative pronoun *that* functions as a PostM. Furthermore, in formal writing, there is a preference for using relative pronouns for particular head nouns:

	Restrictive RelPro	Non-restrictive RelPro
human head noun	<i>who</i>	<i>who</i>
non-human head noun	<i>that</i>	<i>which</i>

Table 14.1 Preferences for relative pronouns

The relative pronoun *who* can be used for either restrictive or non-restrictive modifiers, but the preference tends to be for the head noun to be human. However, for some speakers, any animate head noun can take *who* as the relative pronoun (e.g., *dog*, *cat*, *giraffes*, *crickets*).

(14.20) Why hadn't I bought one of those nice, retriever-type **dogs** *who mindlessly played fetch all day?* (COCA)

Across English, *that* is becoming the relative pronoun of choice, regardless of whether the head noun is human, any animate being, or inanimate and regardless of whether the clause is functioning as a post-modifier or non-restrictive modifier. For example, in the following sentence, a relative clause beginning with *that* is a non-restrictive modifier for the compound head noun *Olkun and Toluk's*:

(14.21) The results of this study also parallel **Olkun and Toluk's** (2002), *that indicates a limited variety of word problems in the mathematics textbooks in Turkey.* (COCA)

Even in academic writing, the preference for using *that* only for post-modifiers of non-human head nouns is wavering. Speakers and writers often fluctuate between *that* and *who* without even realizing it. For instance, this sentence incorporates both relative pronouns in a single sentence:

(14.22) My **brother** *that I live with* has a **granddaughter** *who is in Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq.* (COCA)

The nouns *brother* and *granddaughter* both refer to humans who are relatives, yet the speaker first uses *that* to refer to *brother* and then *who* to refer to *granddaughter*.

The only option for a possessive relative determiner is *whose*, which provides examples like the following, taken from COCA:

- (14.23) a. With the black lake visible out the windshield of the **car** *whose radio played Perry Como*, Maria put her arms around Randy, who was trying hard not to smile.
- b. Occasionally, we see a pristine **house** *whose owners are holding out against decay.*
- c. Kipnis scoured online rosters of warm-weather **schools** *whose outfields were likely to have vacancies.*

In these examples, inanimate nouns like *car*, *house*, and *schools* take the relative determiner *whose*, which is the possessive determiner form of *who*. However, English doesn't offer a possessive determiner form of *that* or *which* (e.g., **the car that's radio played*, **a pristine house which's owners*). The use of *whose* tends to feel more natural when it is used for animate head nouns, whether the head noun is human or not, as in the following COCA examples.

- (14.24) a. They spoke to each other in a language that he did not understand, words that sound like a **cat** *whose tail has been stepped on*.
- b. Next to it a small table ... of rare Cuban mahogany, has the markings of holes made by hundreds of carpenter **bees** *whose very name, for Larimore, reflects their affinity with his work*.

In these examples, *whose* refers back to the animate head nouns *cat* and *bees*.

Relative clauses are not the only grammatical forms that can take the post-modifier and non-restrictive modifier functions, and appositional noun phrases can also function as either post-modifiers or non-restrictive modifiers. The following example has one NP functioning as a non-restrictive modifier and one NP functioning as a post-modifier. The relevant NPs are annotated to highlight the differences in annotations for post-modifiers and non-restrictive modifiers.

- (14.25) a. Kiyoshi Ikenouchi, *an experienced mountaineer with several winter ascents of Fuji*, charged \$1,000 to guide me and my friend *Hinako*. (COCA)

- b. (Subj **Kiyoshi Ikenouchi**^{PropN})
 (NRM an^{Det}
 : <Att experienced^{Aj}>
 : **mountaineer**^{CN}
 : [PostM with^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep several^{Det}
 : : <Att winter^{Aj}>
 : : **ascents**^{CN}
 : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep **Fuji**^{PropN})
 : : :]
 : :)
 :]
)
- c. (DObj (**me**^{Pro})
 : and^{CoConj}
 : (my^{Det}
 : : **friend**^{CN}
 : : (PostM **Hinako**^{PropN})
 : :)
 :)
)

Non-restrictive modifiers are less directly linked to the noun they modify, so most grammars treat NRMs as distinct grammatical elements that are not incorporated into the head noun's phrase structure. In the example above, the NRM *an experienced mountaineer with several winter ascents of Fuji* is tabbed in underneath the noun it describes, *Kiyoshi Ikenouchi*, but is not embedded inside the NP. The subject NP is closed before the NRM begins.

One reason I annotate these differently is that NRMs can occur in positions other than directly after the noun being modified. I could reword this sentence by placing the NRM before the NP being modified: *An experienced mountaineer with several winter ascents of Fuji, Kiyoshi Ikenouchi charged \$1,000 to guide me and my friend Hinako*. Post-modifiers do not have this same freedom of movement. Another reason I annotate NRMs differently is that, when used correctly, the commas setting them apart from the clause reflect how their structure and content don't affect the larger clause's structure or meaning. The commas set them apart, indicating that the information provided is extraneous. The content within the NRM may be interesting and full of additional semantic information for the context, but it's not required for grammatical or pragmatic purposes.

Preposition phrases more frequently function as post-modifiers, but they can also function as non-restrictive modifiers, as in the following COCA examples.

- (14.26) a. Nation, now, you may have noticed today that some of your favorite **websites**, *like Wikipedia, Reddit, and BoingBoing*, have all gone dark, which means, Internet users, that blue screen of death you were looking at this morning, that's the sky.
- b. But for young **women**, *on the threshold of womanhood*, it was a different matter.
- c. Maybe because I spent so little time in there, it was my favorite **room** in the house, *with its pistachio-green walls and long silk drapes*.

In these sentences, the italicized preposition phrases provide additional information about the bolded head nouns without providing a restrictive reading. In (a), the PP *like Wikipedia, Reddit, and BoingBoing* functions as a non-restrictive modifier for *your favorite websites*, providing a list of potential examples included in the plural noun *websites*. In (b), all young women are on the threshold of womanhood, so that PP functions as an NRM, and the PP *with its pistachio-green walls and long silk drapes* provides a description of the speaker's favorite room. The favorite room is already established, so the description does not provide a restrictive reading. The example in (c) is interesting because *room* is modified by two PPs: *in the house* is a PostM that occurs before the *with*-PP functioning as an NRM.

You have also seen adjective phrases and adverb phrases functioning as post-modifiers, as in these COCA examples:

- (14.27) a. a small wooden cave, about (two **feet** <deep>) by (two **feet** <wide>).
- b. I flooded it. I mean, within seconds I was (a **block** /away/).

In (a), the adjective phrases *deep* and *wide* post-modify the head noun *feet*, and in (b), the adverb phrase *away* post-modifies the head noun *block*. Adjective and adverb phrases do not typically function as non-restrictive modifiers.

Other than relative clauses and noun phrases, the next most common grammatical forms that take both the PostM and NRM functions are non-finite clauses, which are described in Chapter 15 and include examples such as the following:

- (14.28) a. and I saw this **paper** *laying on the dresser with his billfold and watch* (COCA)
 b. He also had on tan polyester pants and a white Western-style **shirt**, *hanging loose*, with one of those little strings held by a silver clasp at the neck. (COCA)

The non-finite clause in (a) functions as a post-modifier while the non-finite clause in (b) functions as a non-restrictive modifier. You will see many more examples like these in Chapter 15.

While non-restrictive modifiers typically modify a noun phrase, non-restrictive relative clauses that begin with the relative pronoun *which* can modify an entire predicate, acting like a predicative relative clause. Consider the relative clauses beginning with *which means* in the following COCA examples:

- (14.29) a. Spinach, for example, is a hardy winter annual, **which means that it germinates in fall, grows during late fall and winter, and then goes to seed in spring.**
 b. 1 in 6 Americans, 50 million, is food insecure, **which means uncertain of having, or unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all household members.**
 c. And our wardrobes are larger than our mother's wardrobes were, **which means more closets.**
 d. I manage a doctor's office here in town, **which means I know more about seven doctors than anyone should.**
 e. Most of them are hungry for winter business, **which means killer deals.**

The first two examples are a bit different from the final three examples; in the first two examples, the relative pronoun *which* could be construed as referring to an antecedent noun or nominal element. In (a), *which* refers to *a hardy winter annual*, and the NRM provides a definition of *a hardy winter annual*. In (b), the *which* refers to *food insecure*, which is an adjective phrase, but the NRM defines *food insecure*, treating it almost like a nominal element. In examples (c)-(e), *which* doesn't have a clear antecedent, instead referring to the entire predicate leading up to it. For example, the *which* in (c) refers to the situation of having larger wardrobes, and in (d) *which* refers to managing a doctor's office in town.

Those examples provide the most frequent pattern found in predicative NRMs, where the verb following *which* is *means*. The COCA examples below feature a different verb following

the *which*, yet all three are examples of a non-restrictive modifier working with an entire predicate.

- (14.30) a. It is kind of a yellowish orange, *which indicates that there's no lead in the lunch box.*
- b. unless we suddenly get a big influx of cash in parishes, *which is not likely.*
- c. "... They blew up three prophets' graves, *which opened my eyes,*" Othman said.

The relative pronoun *which* is special for its ability to begin a clause that modifies an entire predicate as a non-restrictive modifier. If you switch *which* out for the closely related *that*, the sentence reads more as a comma splice than a non-restrictive modifier:

- (14.31) And then she flashed everyone. So Madonna showed her butts, *that means six more weeks of winter*. (COCA)

The *that* in this sentence refers not just to the predicate but to the entire sentence *So Madonna showed her butts* (i.e., anyone else showing their “butts” wouldn’t mean more winter), and *that means six more weeks of winter* reads like a full sentence rather than a relative clause.

When annotating sentences with a *which*-clause functioning as an NRM for a full predicate, its placement reflects its status as a daughter of the LVP. The following three sentences have been annotated to show how alignment indicates whether the NRM relative clause modifies a noun phrase or a predicate.

- (14.32) a. The word comes from the Czech *robot*, which means “tedious labor.” (COCA)

S

(Subj
:
)
||Pred |Pres comesCopV|
:
[SAv1 fromPrep
:
(ObjPrep theDet
:
(Att CzechPropN)
:
robotaN^{NN}
:
)
:
<<NRM (Subj whichRelPro)
:
||Pred |Pres meansCopV|
:
(SPred <Att tediousAj>
:
laborN^{NN}
:
)
:
||
:
»
:
]
||

- b. Leif calls it Helluland, which means Flat Rock Land. (COCA)

S (Subj **Leif**^{PropN})
 ||Pred |Pres calls^{CtV}|
 : (DObj **it**^{Pro})
 : (OPred **Helluland**^{PropN})
 : <<NRM (Subj **which**^{RelPro})
 : : ||Pred |Pres means^{CopV}|
 : : : (SPred **Flat Rock Land**^{PropN})
 : : ||
 : >>
 ||

- c. As for the reward, the shouted offer came from a city constable, which means there's no coin behind the promise. (COCA)

S [Avl as for^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : **reward**^{CN}
 :)
]
 (Subj the^{Det}
 : <Att shouted^{Aj}>
 : **offer**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |Past came^{CopV}|
 : [SAvl from^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep a^{Det}
 : : : (Att **city**^N)
 : : : **constable**^{CN}
 : : :)
 : :]
 : <<NRM (Subj **which**^{RelPro})
 : : ||Pred |Pres means^{CopV}|
 : : : ((SPred **there**^{Exist}
 : : : : ||Pred |Pres 's^{CopV}|
 : : : : : (Subj **no**^{Det}
 : : : : : **coin**^{NN}
 : : : : :)
 : : : : : [SAvl behind^{Prep}
 : : : : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : : : : **promise**^{CN}
 : : : : : :)
 : : : : :]
 : : : : ||
 : : : >>
 : : ||
 : >>
 ||

In both (a) and (b), the relative clause is tabbed in so that it appears below and to the right of the NP it modifies. It has the same tabbing as an embedded post-modifier, but the NP parentheses do not extend to include the relative clause. For (a), the relative clause is embedded inside a preposition phrase because it modifies the NP *the Czech robot*, which functions as an object of the preposition *from*. In (b), the relative clause is tabbed in below the noun *Helluland* to show it modifies that NP. In (c), however, the relative clause is located in the predicate and only tabbed in once, placing it on an even margin with the subject adverbial, which indicates the relative clause modifies the predicate as a whole.

The most common type of grammatical forms associated with PostMs and NRMs are the following:

- Preposition phrases tend to function as PostM and are the most common type of post-modifiers across all genres.
- Relative clauses function as either PostM or NRM and are the most common type of non-restrictive modifiers.
- Appositional noun phrases can function as either PostM or NRM, though NPs tend to function more as NRMs than PostMs.
- Non-finite clauses can function as either PostM or NRM, as you saw in a couple examples in this chapter and will see more of in the next chapter.

The other phrase types that function as post-modifiers, such as adjective phrases and adverb phrases, are much rarer.

Practice Set 14.2 Identifying the PostMs and NRMs

The following sentences were taken from Meg Cabot's (2002: 42) *All-American Girl*. For each sentence, identify any post-modifiers and non-restrictive modifiers. Some sentences may have both post-modifiers and non-restrictive modifiers while others may not have any. You do not need to annotate these modifiers; you can identify them by highlighting, underlining, or otherwise marking them and indicate its type (PostM or NRM).

1. When we pulled up to the front of the house, a uniformed man who was standing at the front door snapped to attention, while another man came down to open my mom's door.
2. The decor actually looked to me a lot like a bed-and-breakfast that we once stayed in in Vermont.
3. David just grinned and reached for some of the mixed nuts in a bowl on the coffee table in front of me.
4. I noticed that he took only salted cashew nuts and left the Brazil nuts in the bowl.
5. We ate in one of the formal dining rooms.
6. I could tell Lucy was very pleased by this, since her outfit, which was royal blue, went better with the decor in the formal dining room than with that of the private one.
7. Theresa, too, was excited, because of the place settings.

8. They were the formal White House china, and they had real gold rims.
9. Theresa said you can't put gold-rimmed plates in the dishwasher, but had to do them by hand.
10. The idea that someone was going to have to hand wash her plate when she was done eating made Theresa very happy.

As these chapters continue exploring complex phrases, it's important to remember that the word *complex* refers to grammatical complexity and embedded constituents rather than word length. For instance, consider the following interaction from a *Friends* episode.

(14.33) GAVIN Who the hell are you?
 RACHEL I'm the hell person whose office this is. (Halvorson 2003)

Both lines are relatively short and easy to understand when heard out loud (you may need to read Rachel's line out loud since it sounds much better in speech than it looks in writing). Yet, both are grammatically complex. Gavin uses *who the hell*, which is best analyzed as an interrogative pronoun *who* with a post-modifying constituent *the hell*—a shortened version of the phrase *who in the hell*. That phrase serves as a great reminder that swear words/phrases are used in intriguing ways and often for reasons modern speakers don't understand.¹⁰² This use of *the hell* borders the line between insert and noun phrase.

Rachel's line is even more complex and is annotated below:

(14.34) (SPred the^{Det}
 : ^Att hell^{Insert} ^
 : **person**^{CN}
 : <<PostM (i whose^{RelDet}
 : : : **office**^{CN}
 : :)
 : :
 : : (Subj **this**^{Pro})
 : : ||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}|
 : : : (i SPred GAP)
 : : ||
 : >>
)

¹⁰² If you're bored someday, look up your favorite swear word in a good dictionary and read through all the idiomatic uses of the word. You'll likely recognize and be able to use most of them, but most speakers can't identify why they say those phrases in that particular wording. Swearing is historically complex because the phrases and uses are very much tied to culture and society.

14.3 Complements

The **complement** (Comp) function shares similarities with post-modifiers and non-restrictive modifiers due to their placement: they complete the meaning of a head word, often a noun, and occur after the word whose meaning they complete. Complements most frequently take the form of a nominal clause or non-finite clause, though preposition phrases can also function as complements. All examples of complements in this chapter will be of nominal clauses or preposition phrases since non-finite clauses have not yet been introduced.

Unlike post-modifiers and non-restrictive modifiers, the head word whose meaning is completed by a complement does not play a grammatical or semantic role in the complement that follows it. The following five examples demonstrate this difference between PostMs, NRMs, and Comps.

- (14.36)a. **non-restrictive RelCl**
For a moment he felt ashamed of Alfred, *who was so much bigger than Jack*. (Follett 2007[1989]: 267)

- b. **post-modifying RelCl with relative pronoun**
That would set a precedent *that could cause endless trouble in years to come*. (268)

- c. **post-modifying RelCl without relative pronoun**
She was still angry, but there was nothing *he could do about it*. (268)

- d. **complement NomCl with subordinator**
There was even a chance—he hardly dared to think it—*that this job would last him the rest of his life*. (266)

- e. **complement NomCl without subordinator**
Tom knew he had won Philip’s trust by the efficient way *he had begun the process of clearing up and made the priory viable again*. (266)

In examples (a)-(c), the relative pronoun, even if it is gapped, plays a grammatical role in the relative clause: in (a), *who* refers to *Alfred* and functions as the subject in the RelCl; in (b), *that* refers to *a precedent* and functions as a subject in the RelCl; and the gapped relative pronoun in (c) refers to *nothing* and functions as the DObj in the RelCl. In all three cases, the head noun modified by the RelCl plays a semantic role in the clause structure. For instance, the RelCl in (c) could be reworded as the independent clause *he could do nothing about it*.

In (d), the nominal clause begins with the subordinator *that*, which does not refer back to a head noun and does not play any role in the clause structure that follows it: *this job would last him the rest of his life* is a complete clause structure on its own. The nominal clause provides more information about the head noun *chance*, thus completing its meaning and indicating which chance is being referred to, yet *chance* does not play a semantic or grammatical role in the NomCl that completes its meaning. In (e), the nominal clause does not have an introductory

subordinator, and the NomCl *he had begun the process of clearing up and made the priory viable again* is semantically and grammatically complete without the head noun *way*, so *way* does not play a role in that clause structure. Complements often co-occur with abstract or vague nouns like *hope*, *feeling*, *way*, *chance*, *fact*, and *idea*, and the complement then clarifies the meaning of the abstract or vague noun.

Like post-modifiers, complements are embedded inside the phrase after the head word they complete, and, in the next three examples, a NomCl functions as a complement and is embedded inside a noun phrase.

- (14.37) a. This was also the sign that the lay workers should go in for breakfast.
(Follett 2007: 267)

```

(SPred  theDet
:
:      signCN
:      ((Comp  thatSubConj
:          :      (Subj  theDet
:          :          :      lay workersCN
:          :          :      )
:          :      ||Pred  |Mod  shouldModAux
:          :          :      :      go inItV
:          :          :      |
:          :          :      [Avl  forPrep
:          :          :          :      (ObjPrep  breakfastNN)
:          :          :          ]
:          :      ||
:      ))
)

```


- b. Tom knew he had won Philip's trust by the efficient way he had begun the process of clearing up and made the priory viable again. (266)

(ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : way^{CN}
 : ((Comp (Subj he^{Pro})
 : : ||Pred || |PastPerf had^{PriAux} i
 : : : : : begun^{MtV}
 : : : : : |
 : : : : : (DObj the^{Det}
 : : : : : process^{CN}
 : : : : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : : : : (ObjPrep clearing up^{NN})
 : : : : :]
 : : : : :)
 : : : : ||
 : : : : and^{CoConj}
 : : : : || |PastPerf GAPⁱ PriAux
 : : : : : : made^{CtV}
 : : : : : |
 : : : : : (DObj the^{Det}
 : : : : : : priory^{CN}
 : : : : :)
 : : : : : <OPred viable^{Aj}>
 : : : : : /Avl again^{Av}/
 : : : : ||
 : : : : ||
 : : : :))
 : : : :)

- c. There was even a chance—he hardly dared to think it—that this job would last him the rest of his life. (266)

S there^{Exist}
 ||Pred |Past was^{CopV}
 : /Avl even^{Av}/
 : (Subj a^{Det}
 : : **chance**^{CN}

 {Paren (Subj **he**^{Pro})
 : ||Pred /Avl **hardly**^{Av}/
 : : |PastMod **dared to**^{SemiAux}
 : : : **think**^{MtV}
 : : |
 : : (DObj **it**^{Pro})
 : ||
 }

 : : ((Comp **that**^{SubConj}
 : : : (Subj **this**^{Det}
 : : : : **job**^{CN}
 : : : :)
 : : : ||Pred |Mod **would**^{ModAux}
 : : : : : **last**^{CtV}
 : : : : |
 : : : : (DObj **him**^{Pro})
 : : : : (OAvl **the**^{Det}
 : : : : : **rest**^{NN}
 : : : : : [PostM **of**^{Prep}
 : : : : : : (ObjPrep **his**^{Det}
 : : : : : : : **life**^{CN}
 : : : : : : :)
 : : : : :]
 : : : : :)
 : : : ||
 : : :))
 : :)
 ||

Examples (a) and (b) annotate the relevant NP to demonstrate how complements are embedded inside another phrase while example (c) offers a full annotation of the entire sentence. Example (c) is special because it is interrupted by a **parenthetical** clause—a full clause structure that is situated within another clause without adding any grammatical structure to it. When that

happens, the parenthetical clause is annotated on the same level as the subject and predicate with the function *Paren* to reflect its parenthetical status. Full clause structures that are not embedded or otherwise subordinated and that are typically set apart from the main clause by punctuation, such as commas, dashes, or parentheses, are annotated with curly brackets, as in the example above. Furthermore, the trickle-down marks “jump” over the parenthetical clause to show that it interrupts a constituent.

Noun phrases are not the only constituents that can include complements. Adjective and adverb phrases can take complements, especially when a comparison is set up in constructions like the comparative *as...as* construction in the next examples.

- (14.38)a. She made her voice as cold as his. (Clark 1989: 129)

S	(Subj	she ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>made</u> ^{CtV}
	:	(DObj	her ^{Det}
	:	:	voice ^{CN}
	:	)	
	:	<OPred	/Deg as ^{Av} /
	:	:	cold ^{Aj}
	:	[Comp	as ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep his ^{Pro})
	:	:	]
	:	>	

- b. But until recently, inventors lacked the aerodynamics expertise to turn diagrams into mechanical versions of something as quotidian as a fly or a bee. (COCA)

(ObjPrep	something ^{Pro}		
:	<PostM	/Deg	as ^{Av} /
:	:		quotidian ^{Aj}
:	:	[Comp	as ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep (a ^{Det}
:	:	:	: fly ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	or ^{CoConj}
:	:	:	(a ^{Det}
:	:	:	: bee ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	)
:	:	]	
:	>		
)			

In these examples, the degree adverb phrase *as* sets up a degree comparison, and the complement completes that comparison. In these examples, the complement function is fulfilled by a preposition phrase.

Nominal clauses can also function as complements to complete comparisons. While most comparative complements follow expected clause patterns, the comparative *as ... as* provides a key difference: the adjective or adverb being used for the comparison plays a semantic role in the clause that follows it and may even play a grammatical role in the clause, as in (c) below. The following COCA examples demonstrate comparative *as ... as* structures:

- (14.39) a. After Christine departed, the two boys would vanish as quickly as they appeared.

```

/Avl      /Deg      asAv/
:         quicklyAv
:         ((Comp    asSubConj
:         :         (Subj    theyPro)
:         :         ||Pred   |Past   appearedItV ||
:         :         ))
/

```

- b. When you decide on making a sculpture that depicts, let's say, Daphne, the most beautiful in her time, so beautiful that even Apollo fell in love, you expect beauty.

```

<NRM      /Deg      soAv/
:         beautifulAj
:         ((Comp    thatSubConj
:         :         /Avl      evenAv/
:         :         (Subj    ApolloPropN)
:         :         ||Pred   |Past   fell in loveItV ||
:         :         ))
>

```

- c. His voice sounded as hopeful as he looked.

```

S         (Subj    hisDet
:         :         voiceCN
:         )
||Pred    |Past    soundedCopV
:         <SPred   /Deg      asAv/
:         :         hopefulAj i
:         :         ((Comp    asSubConj
:         :         :         (Subj    hePro)
:         :         :         ||Pred   |Past    lookedCopV
:         :         :         :         <i SPred   GAP>
:         :         :         ||
:         :         :         ))
:         :         >
||

```

Most of the comparative constructions completed by a complement grammatically behave like all other complement constructions, as in (a) and (b), where neither the adverb *quickly* nor the adjective *beautiful* play a grammatical role in the clause that functions as its complement. Yet,

- b. "I was nervous *he was going to have some apprehensiveness at the plate or on defense*, but he didn't," Weber said.

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})				
	Pred	Past	<u>was</u> ^{CopV}			
	:	<SPred	nervous ^{Aj}			
	:	:	((Comp	(Subj	he ^{Pro})	
	:	:	Pred	PastMod	was going to ^{SemiAux}	
	:	:	:	:	<u>have</u> ^{MtV}	
	:	:	:			
	:	:	:	(DObj	some ^{Det}	
	:	:	:	:	apprehensiveness ^{NN}	
	:	:	:	)		
	:	:	:	[Avl	[at ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}	
	:	:	:	:	:	plate ^{CN}
	:	:	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	:	]	
	:	:	:	:	or ^{CoConj}	
	:	:	:	:	[on ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep the ^{Det}
	:	:	:	:	:	defense ^{NN}
	:	:	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	:	]	
	:	:	:	:	]	
	:	:	:			
	:	:	))			
	:	>				

In (a), the italicized NomCl completes the adjective *happy*, providing a reason for the happiness and a boundary for the happiness being covered. We may not be happy about anything else, but we are happy about their safe return. While the subordinator *that* introduces the nominal clause in (a), it is absent in the nominal clause in (b). The italicized NomCl in (b) completes the adjective *nervous*, once again providing a reason and boundary for the state of nervousness. In these non-comparative uses, the adjective being complemented does not play a semantic or grammatical role within the clause functioning as its complement.

Practice Set 14.3 Identifying PostM, NRM, and Comp functions

The following sentences were taken from *A Grown-Up Kind of Pretty* by Joshilyn Jackson (2012: 1-2). For each sentence, identify any post-modifiers, non-restrictive modifiers, and complements

you find. Only mark the phrases/clauses and identify their functions—you do not need to annotate them. Again, not all sentences will have a constituent you need to identify, and some may have more than one.

1. My daughter, Liza, put her heart in a silver box and buried it under the willow tree in our backyard.
2. Or as close to under that tree as she could get anyway.
3. The thick web of roots shunted her off to the side, to the place where the willow's long fingers trailed down.
4. They swept back and forth across the troubled earth, helping Liza smooth away the dig marks.
5. It was foolish.
6. There's no way to hide things underground in Mississippi.
7. Our rich, wet soil turns every winter burial into a spring planting.
8. Over the years Liza's heart, small and cold and broken as it was, grew into a host of secrets that could ruin us all and cost us Mosey, Liza's own little girl.
9. I can't blame Liza, though.
10. She was young and hurt, and she did the best she could.
11. And after all, I'm the damn fool who went and dug it up.
12. I should have known better; I was turning forty-five, and that meant it was a trouble year.
13. Every fifteen years God flicks at us with one careless finger and we spin helplessly off into the darkness.
14. I'd known that Old Testament-style plagues of Egypt would be stalking my family the second that December ticked over into January.
15. Now, I try not to be overly superstitious; I like black cats about as much as I like any other color cat, and I'll go straight under any number of ladders if you put the right kind of pie on the other side.

Because nominal clauses can be embedded inside other clause structures, you can find examples of complex and lengthy embedding, as in the following example. Embedded clauses can be just as—if not more—complex than the larger clause that houses them. As you read through the annotated example, notice that the larger clause is a simple sentence structure consisting of the NP *it* functioning as a subject and *was* as its head verb. The complexity lies in the nominal clause functioning as the subject predicative. That nominal clause includes another nominal clause, which incorporates yet another one. It is in examples like these that the trickle-down marks are exceptionally helpful, as they guide your eyes to remind you which constituents are operating inside other constituents.

(14.44) It was just that he knew her so well that he could imagine how she would feel and what she would say in just about any situation. (Follett 2007: 270)

S (Subj **it**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Past was^{CopV}
 : /Avl just^{Av}/
 : ((SPred that^{SubConj}
 : : (Subj **he**^{Pro})
 : : ||Pred |Past knew^{MtV}
 : : : (DObj **her**^{Pro})
 : : : /Avl /Deg so^{Av}/
 : : : well^{Av}
 : : : ((Comp that^{SubConj}
 : : : (Subj **he**^{Pro})
 : : : ||Pred |Mod could^{ModAux}
 : : : imagine^{MtV}
 : : : |
 : : : ((DObj ((/i how^{Av}/
 : : : : (Subj **she**^{Pro})
 : : : : ||Pred |Mod would^{ModAux}
 : : : : feel^{CopV}
 : : : : |
 : : : : /i SAvl GAP/
 : : : : ||
 : : : :))
 : : : : and^{CoConj}
 : : : : (((i **what**^{Pro})
 : : : : : (Subj **she**^{Pro})
 : : : : : ||Pred |Mod would^{ModAux}
 : : : : : say^{MtV}
 : : : : : |
 : : : : : (i DObj GAP)
 : : : : : [Avl in^{Prep}
 : : : : : : (ObjPrep/Avl /Deg just^{Av}/
 : : : : : : : about^{Av}
 : : : : : : : /
 : : : : : : : any^{Det}
 : : : : : : : **situation**^{CN}
 : : : : : : :)
 : : : : :]
 : : : : : ||
 : : : : :))
 : : : : : ||
 : : : : :))
 : : : : : /
 : : : : : ||
 : : : : :))
 : : : : : ||

In this sentence, the nominal clauses *how she would feel* and *what she would say in just about any situation* are coordinated into a larger nominal clause that functions as the direct object of the verb *imagine*. The nominal clause *that he could imagine how... any situation* functions as a complement in the comparative construction *so well that he could imagine ... any situation*. That entire constituent is embedded inside yet another nominal clause, *that he knew her so well ... any situation*, which is the subject predicative within the predicate. Nominal clauses come in many shapes and forms and can take on a variety of functions, as this sentence demonstrates.

Practice Set 14.4 Annotating sentences with embedded clauses

The following sentences were taken from Fred Saberhagen's (1983: 41) *The Complete Book of Swords: The First Book of Swords*. Fully annotate each sentence as practice for the upcoming exercise.

1. All streams were behind him now, as far as he could tell.
2. Often he wasn't sure that he was really following a trail at all.
3. By now he was unarguably on the slopes of the mountain itself, but so far the climbing was not nearly as difficult as he had feared that it might be.
4. There were no sheer cliffs or treacherous rockslides that could not be avoided.
5. Mark considered ways he could lighten the load that he was carrying.¹⁰⁴
6. But it consisted of only a few things, none of which he wanted to leave behind.¹⁰⁵
7. The idea that he might discard the sword, somehow, along the way had itself already been discarded.
8. At some timeless bright hour near the middle of the day Mark was jarred back to full awareness of his surroundings by the realization that he'd run into a new feature of the mountain.
9. The sun had warmed the black rocks here considerably, even if the deeper shadows still held patches of snow, and there was a chill in the wind that played endlessly in the fantastic chimneys of the cliff.
10. In some of the chimneys, he could hear a roaring that was deeper than the wind, a noise that he thought was coming up from somewhere far below.

¹⁰⁴ Original: Mark considered ways to lighten the load that he was carrying.

¹⁰⁵ Original: But it consisted of only a few things, none of which he felt willing yet to leave behind.

Terms introduced in Chapter 14

Lexical forms

relative adverb (RelAv)
 relative determiner (RelDet)
 relative pronoun (RelPro)

Clause form

relative clause (RelCl)

Function

complement (Comp)
 non-restrictive modifier (NRM)
 parenthetical (Paren)

Concept

complex noun phrase

Chapter 14 Exercises

Exercise 14.1

The following sentences were taken from John Berendt's (1994: 188-190) *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil: A Savannah Story*. Fully annotate each sentence.

1. Engraved invitations to Jim Williams's black-tie Christmas party arrived in the mailboxes of Savannah's better homes the first week of December.¹⁰⁶
2. They were received with surprise and consternation, for it had been assumed that under the circumstances Williams would not be giving any party at all this year.
3. Savannah's social set grappled with the realization that the crowning social event of the winter season was going to take place at the scene of a notorious shooting and that barely a month later the host would go on trial for the murder.¹⁰⁷
4. Savannah was a place of manners and decorum, first and foremost.
5. It had been the birthplace, after all, of Ward McAllister, that self-appointed social arbiter of late-nineteenth-century America.
6. It was Ward McAllister who had compiled the list of New York's elite "Four Hundred" in 1892.
7. The lively debate that was already raging over Williams's guilt or innocence shifted focus.¹⁰⁸
8. "The only person who's really going to miss that one," Williams said, "will be Leopold Adler."
9. Soon, the laughter and hilarity rose to such a pitch it drowned out the cocktail pianist at the grand piano.
10. It was clear that he had made his goal.

¹⁰⁶ Original: ... party began arriving in the mailboxes ...

¹⁰⁷ Original: Faced with the invitations, Savannah's ...

¹⁰⁸ Original: ... shifted focus, moving to the question of whether it was proper for him to give his Christmas party and whether (since he was indeed going to give it) it was proper to attend.

Exercise 14.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. relative clause with relative pronoun
2. relative clause without relative pronoun
3. relative clause with relative determiner
4. relative clause with relative adverb
5. relative clause as post-modifier
6. relative clause as non-restrictive modifier
7. NP as non-restrictive modifier
8. NP with embedded complement
9. AjP or AvP with embedded complement
10. parenthetical clause

Exercise 14.3

Select texts from two genres, whether those genres are drastically different (e.g., fiction and academic) or more closely related (e.g., young adult fiction and general fiction). From each text, take an excerpt of 300 words so you have 600 words in total.

Mark up each excerpt to identify any post-modifiers, non-restrictive modifiers, and complements. Write a paragraph to discuss the following:

- Which of the three functions occurs more frequently across the two excerpts?
- What similarities, if any, do the head words being modified/completed have? Why do you think that is? If there are no similarities that you can find, why do you think they are so different?

Now compare the use of PostMs, NRMs, and Comps across the two genres, and write a paragraph to address these questions:

- Are the two genres equal in their distribution? How so? How not? Why do you think that is?
- Do you think your excerpts are representative of their genres? How so, and/or why not?

Chapter 15: Non-finite clauses with verbs

And all dared to brave unknown terrors, to do mighty deeds, to boldly split infinitives that no man had split before—and thus was the Empire forged. —Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

15.1 Present participle (-ing) clause

The focus thus far has been on **finite clauses** and their structures, which have an expressed or understood subject and a fully inflected SVP. This chapter introduces **non-finite clauses**, which have SVPs that are not fully inflected. While the head verbs of non-finite clauses can be marked for aspect and voice, they are not marked for tense and/or modality. Three major types of non-finite clauses are present participle (-ing) clauses, past participle (-ed) clauses, and infinitive clauses.

Non-finite clauses take forms that are similar to other constituents, as demonstrated by the COCA examples below. The non-finite clauses are marked with hashtags (#) as boundary markers with their head verbs underlined, and the other constituents are annotated for their phrasal forms.

- (15.1) a. That she |PresProg isPriAux enjoying^{MtV}| herself is a source of pleasure to me, and I don't mean just “#having fun#,” which she has had before, but literally, for the first time, #taking joy in herself#.
- b. Two hours later the team |PresPass isPriAux joined^{MtV}| by Team Baja, #welcomed by a round of hugs and backslaps#.
- c. Once an ant has left nest maintenance work #to become a patroller, midden worker, or forager#, it will not go [_{SAvI} back to^{Prep} nest maintenance].

In (a), the SVP *is enjoying* is finite because it is inflected for the present tense, which is marked on the primary auxiliary *is*. The two participles *having* and *taking* are not supported by a form of *be*, making them non-finite.

Example (b) includes the finite SVP *is joined*, which inflects for the present tense, and the non-finite past participle clause *welcomed by a round of hugs and backslaps*. Past participle verb forms of regular verbs, such as *joined* and *welcomed*, overlap with simple past tense forms, which do not require an auxiliary to be finite, but past participle clauses are built on the passive form, requiring support from a form of *be* or *get*. The verb *welcomed* is not finite because it carries a passive interpretation but does not have a supporting *be* or *get* auxiliary. To make that clause finite, the wording would need to change to *the team is welcomed by a round of hugs and backslaps*.

Finally, (c) has the infinitive clause *to become a patroller, midden worker, or forager*, not to be confused with the preposition phrase *back to nest maintenance*. An infinitive clause begins with the infinitive marker *to* and requires the bare form of a verb or auxiliary to follow, such as *become*. The preposition *to*, on the other hand, requires a nominal constituent functioning as its object, such as the noun phrase *nest maintenance*.

As with these examples, a subject is often not explicitly provided for the verb of a non-finite clause; for instance, the clause *taking joy in herself* in (a) does not have an explicitly expressed subject for its verb *taking*. Instead, the reader must use clues to interpret an understood subject for the verb, and, in this case, the linguistic context provided for the clause indicates that *she* is the intended semantic subject of the verb. Although non-finite verb forms lack grammatical subjects, they still have semantic, or understood, subjects, that can take a variety of semantic roles, depending on the verb and its non-finite form.

These clauses share the same boundary marker in the annotation scheme, but the discussions in this chapter are broken up by clause type because non-finite clauses serve a variety of purposes in English, and each type has its own range of uses and abilities.

English *-ing* clauses are among the most diverse of the non-finite clauses because they can take a wide variety of functions within a sentence, including a nominal argument (e.g., subject, object of the preposition), adverbial adjunct, non-restrictive modifier, or post-modifier. Two different terms are used to describe *-ing* clauses in these roles: a **gerund clause**, or gerund phrase,¹⁰⁹ is an *-ing* clause functioning as a nominal role while a **present participial clause**, or present participial phrase, refers to an *-ing* clause functioning as a modifier, whether it is adverbial, PostM, or NRM.

The following annotated examples demonstrate the use of hashtags as boundary markers for the non-finite clause and the non-finite (NF) superscript on its short verb phrase.

(15.2) a. **gerund clause**

At the same time, workers began *switching jobs more frequently* (COCA)

S	[Avl	at ^{Prep}	
:	:	(ObjPrep	the ^{Det}
:	:	<Att	same ^{Aj} >
:	:		time ^{CN}
:	:	)	
:	]		
	(Subj	workers ^{CN})	
Pred	^{Past}	<u>began</u> ^{MtV}	
:	#DObj	^{NF}	<u>switching</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	(DObj	jobs ^{CN})
:	:	/Avl	/Deg more ^{Av} /
:	:	:	frequently ^{Av}
:	:	/	
:	#		

¹⁰⁹ Typically, a phrase consists of a head word and any modifying or supporting constituents while a clause includes a subject and predicate. As you will see in this and the next chapter, non-finite clauses can incorporate both subjects and predicates, which is why I prefer to call them clauses.

b. **present participial clause**He was screaming over the music to the girl *dancing next to him*. (COCA)

S	(Subj	he ^{Pro})			
	Pred	PastProg	was ^{PriAux}		
	:	:	<u>screaming</u> ^{ItV}		
	:				
	:	[Avl	over ^{Prep}		
	:	:	(ObjPrep	the ^{Det}	
	:	:	:	music ^{NN}	
	:	:	)		
	:	]			
	:	[Avl	to ^{Prep}		
	:	:	(ObjPrep	the ^{Det}	
	:	:	:	girl ^{CN}	
	:	:	:	#PostM	NF <u>dancing</u> ^{ItV}
	:	:	:	:	[Avl next to ^{Prep}
	:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep him ^{Pro})
	:	:	:	:	]
	:	:	:	#	
	:	:	:	)	
	:	]			

In (a), the *-ing* clause functions as the direct object of the verb *began*, and the *-ing* clause in (b) functions as a post-modifier for the head noun *girl* to specify which girl he was screaming to. These types of non-finite clauses include, at minimum, a head verb and any arguments or adjuncts working with that head verb, as in (a), where the clause includes a direct object, *jobs*, and an adverbial adjunct, *more frequently*.

A non-finite *-ing* clause is distinguishable from a finite *-ing* progressive aspect by the inclusion or omission of a form of *be* working as a primary auxiliary. Consider the following example, and identify which *-ing* verbs are finite and which are non-finite.

(15.3) Hadi was now jumping up and down, flailing and gesticulating like an army of biting bugs was crawling around inside his drawers. (COCA)

The verbs *jumping* and *crawling* are both supported by *was*, so they are finite verb forms. However, the verbs *flailing* and *gesticulating* are not supported by a *be* auxiliary and are non-finite forms. Because the *-ing* clause in this sentence appears at the end of the sentence and is not clearly connected with a noun phrase, its best interpretation is that it functions as an adverbial modifier and provides information about the manner in which Hadi is jumping. Finally, the word *biting*, though it looks like a verb, is serving as an attributive adjective for the noun *bugs* in this context.

As you saw in Chapter 6, English present participle forms can grammatically act as a verb, noun, or adjective. Unless it is part of a full *-ing* clause, the *-ing* word should be annotated like a noun or adjective when it functions as one, as in these examples:

- (15.4) a. Inside it was muffled, but out here I was confronted with the <clanking^{Aj}> gears and the **moving**^{NN} and **jolting**^{NN} of all those little mechanical parts that pushed the train onward. (Larsen 2009: 122)

- b. (the^{Det}
: <Att clanking^{Aj}>
: **gears**^{CN}
)
- c. (the^{Det}
: **moving**^{NN} and^{CoConj} **jolting**^{NN}
: [PostM of^{Prep}
: : (ObjPrep all^{Det}
: : : those^{Det}
: : : <Att little^{Aj}>
: : : <Att mechanical^{Aj}>
: : : **parts**^{CN}
: : : «PostM (Subj **that**^{RelPro})
: : : : ||Pred |Past pushed^{CtV}|
: : : : : (DObj the^{Det}
: : : : : **train**^{CN}
: : : : :)
: : : : : /OAvl onward^{Av}/
: : : : : ||
: : : : : »
: : : : :)
: : : : :]
)

While nouns ending in *-ing* are typically non-count, as in *moving* and *jolting*, some are regularly occurring count nouns, like *painting*, *building*, and *meaning*.

The use of *-ing* words as different grammatical forms can create ambiguity in sentences, as in the sentence *Flying planes can be dangerous*. The word *flying* could be interpreted as an adjective: Planes that are flying can be dangerous. However, it could also be interpreted as a verb, creating the *-ing* clause #*flying planes*# with the interpretation that it can be dangerous to fly planes. That ambiguity disappears if the main clause is in the simple present tense: *Flying planes are dangerous* indicates *flying* is an adjective, but *Flying planes is dangerous* indicates *flying planes* is a gerund clause. When they function as subjects, gerund clauses require singular verb forms for agreement.

When an *-ing* clause follows a noun and is working closely with that noun, the noun phrase could be functioning as the grammatical subject of the non-finite verb, or the non-finite clause could be functioning as the post-modifier of the head noun, as in example (15.2b). Consider the differences between the following two examples, focusing on the relationship of the *-ing* clause to the noun before it.

- (15.5) a. Mary swimming in the ocean is not a good idea.

S	#Subj	(Subj	Mary ^{PropN})
:	Pred	NF	<u>swimming</u> ^{ItV}
:	:	[Avl	<u>in</u> ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep <u>the</u> ^{Det}
:	:	:	ocean ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	]	
:			
#			
Pred	Pres	<u>is</u> ^{CopV}	not ^{Neg}
:	(SPred	a ^{Det}	
:	:	<Att	good ^{Aj} >
:	:	idea ^{CN}	
:	)		

- b. The picture hanging on the wall is beautiful.

S	(Subj	<u>the</u> ^{Det}
:	picture ^{CN}	
:	#PMod	NF
:	:	[SAvl
:	:	<u>hanging</u> ^{CopV}
:	:	[SAvl
:	:	<u>on</u> ^{Prep}
:	:	:
:	:	(ObjPrep <u>the</u> ^{Det}
:	:	:
:	:	wall ^{CN}
:	:	:
:	:	)
:	:	]
:	#	
)		
Pred	Pres	<u>is</u> ^{CopV}
:	<SPred	beautiful ^{Aj} >

In (a), *swimming in the ocean* is not a post-modifier for *Mary* because, if it were, the sentence would be saying that Mary—the one who is swimming in the ocean—is a bad idea. The better reading is that the action of Mary swimming in the ocean is a bad idea. When an *-ing* clause includes a grammatical subject, the clause represents an ongoing dynamic activity or ongoing state and takes a subject-predicate structure as in the annotation above. The full clause, *Mary swimming in the ocean*, is a gerund clause.

An *-ing* clause functioning as a post-modifier, as in (b), can be reworded as a relative clause: *the picture that is hanging on the wall*.¹¹⁰ Their structures are reduced, omitting the subject and long verb phrase. Even without an expressed subject, though, the semantic subject reading is retained, allowing, for instance, a subject adverbial argument in the non-finite clause structure. The PP *on the wall* locates the understood, yet unexpressed semantic subject, which is *the picture*. The clause *hanging on the wall* is a present participial clause.

Although gerund clauses can express a grammatical subject, as in the example above, sometimes readers must use situational context clues to interpret an unexpressed semantic subject, as in the following COCA examples:

- (15.6) a. *Living in Duncan's apartment* was a lot like *living in Duncan's furniture repair van*
 b. *Laughing with children* is also useful in *promoting motivation*.
 c. *Promoting campus relationships for non-traditional students* is particularly important because they often have fewer opportunities for networking, due to competing demands on their time.
 d. *Dangling such incentives* would entice potential successors to push Mugabe out now in order to get the benefits.

In these sentences, the understood subject of the gerund clause differs, depending on context. The understood subject can be the narrator, as in (a), where the narrator is the one living in Duncan's apartment. It can also be the general audience or reader, as in (b), where anyone who works or interacts with children can be the one laughing with them. In other gerund clauses, the understood subject is provided by situational context. College administrators or program planners are the ones promoting campus relationships in (c), and a government agency is dangling incentives in (d).

¹¹⁰ Example (15.5b) is potentially ambiguous because it could mean something along the lines of (15.5a): it isn't the picture that is beautiful, but it is the fact that the picture is hanging on the wall that is beautiful. If that interpretation matches the larger context, the annotation would need to change to match the annotation of (a):

```
#Subj      (Subj      theDet
:           :         pictureCN
:           :         )
:           ||Pred    |NF      hangingCopV|
:           :         [SAvl    onPrep
:           :         :         (ObjPrep  theDet
:           :         :         :         wallCN
:           :         :         :         )
:           :         :         ]
:           ||
#
||Pred      |Pres      isCopV|
:           <SPred    beautifulAj>
||
```

This annotation reflects the new interpretation. The picture itself may be ugly; however, the fact that it is there, on the wall, is beautiful.

When the *-ing* clause is integrated into the clause structure, there is potential ambiguity in the interpretation of the relationship between the noun and *-ing* clause, as in the COCA examples below:

- (15.7) a. Before he ran after her, he watched **Margey** *talking with the children*.
 b. Too bad the pool was covered with algae, and had **ducks** *swimming in it*.
 c. I could hardly believe my eyes when I read of **Gov. Blagojevich** *lambasting the Illinois Legislature and then admitting that he hadn't spoken to any of them*, as he was in the air on his way back to Springfield from Chicago.

The question is whether the italicized *-ing* clause should be considered a present participial clause functioning as a post-modifier for the bolded noun or considered a gerund clause with the bolded noun phrase functioning as its subject. It depends. Because proper nouns don't often need post-modifiers, examples like (a) and (c) are probably best interpreted as *Margey* and *Gov. Blagojevich* functioning as grammatical subjects of the *-ing* clauses. However, example (b) could go either way: *swimming in it* could be a post-modifier for *ducks*, but *ducks swimming in it* could also be the direct object of *had*. Notice that these differences affect the grammatical structure and interpretation without affecting the semantic reading of the non-finite verb because in both instances, the ducks are the understood semantic subject of *swimming*. In cases like these, you need to decide which you think is the best interpretation and annotate the forms so that they are consistent with the interpretation you select.

Gerund clauses can follow pronominal forms, taking one of these patterns: (1) a possessive determiner form appears, and the *-ing* verb becomes treated like an abstract noun, or (2) an object form of the pronoun appears, which is treated as the grammatical subject of the *-ing* verb. In both cases, the referent of the pronominal form represents the semantic subject of the following *-ing* verb, as in these examples:

- (15.8) a. He burrows under the blanket post-story, a game that involves *my pretending he's not there* (COCA)

(DObj	my ^{Det}			
:	#	^{NF}	<u>pretending</u> ^{MtV}	
:	:	((DObj	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
:	:	:	^{Pred}	^{Pres} <u>s</u> ^{CopV} not ^{Neg}
:	:	:	: ^{/SAv}	there ^{Av} /
:	:	:		
:	:	))		
:	#NN			
)				

- b. I had the sense that although what I was doing was wrong, it was no more wrong than Ian screwing his students, or *me pretending it wasn't happening*. (COCA)

```
#      (Subj  mePro)
:      ||Pred |NF   pretendingMtV|
:      :      ((DObj (Subj  itPro)
:      :      :      ||Pred |PastProg wasPAux n'tNeg happeningItV| ||
:      :      ))
:      ||
#
```

The determiner form in (a) coerces the *-ing* clause *pretending he's not there* into a non-count abstract noun representing a concept or event. In other words, with the possessive determiner, the *-ing* clause loses its “ongoing” reading. Furthermore, the understood subject of *pretending* is the person speaking, or the referent of *my*. In (b), the pronoun serves as the grammatical subject of the clause, and examples like (b) are perhaps the only instances where, even in formal registers, an object form of a pronoun is required in that subject role because it is ungrammatical to try to use the subject form: **I pretending it wasn't happening*. The use of object pronoun forms as subjects is a feature shared by other non-finite clauses.

While not as common, a possessive determiner form of a noun phrase can precede an *-ing* clause, as in the following example:

- (15.9) Thanks to my embellishments, the threat of *Leghorn's attacking us in the night* overshadowed even the stories about the loose convict with long fingernails. (Key 2010: 14)

```
(ObjP  (      LeghornPropN)sDet
:      #      |NF   attackingMtV|
:      :      (DObj  usPro)
:      :      [Avl   inPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep theDet
:      :      :      :      nightCN
:      :      :      )
:      :      ]
:      #NN
)
```

Not all English speakers accept possessive NP forms before an *-ing* clause, so this example may be awkward for you. As a complex noun form, though, *attacking us in the night* reads as an instance of an attack rather than an ongoing dynamic activity.

Present participial clauses may also have expressed grammatical subjects, as in these COCA examples:

- (15.10) a. Rather than stand, I crawled through reeds and parted them to peer at the ducks swimming and dipping their heads, *their tails bobbing skyward*.

```
#NRM (Subj  theirDet
:      :      tailsCN
:      )
:      ||Pred  |NF    bobbingItV|
:      :      /Avl   skywardAv/
:      ||
#
```

- b. I first felt the dizziness last night, *the stars swimming in my vision as I walked up the stairs to my apartment*.

```
#Avl (Subj  theDet
:      :      starsCN
:      )
:      ||Pred  |NF    swimmingCopV|
:      :      [SAvl  inPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep myDet
:      :      :      :      visionCN
:      :      :      )
:      :      ]
:      ||
:      //Avl  asSubConj
:      :      (Subj  IPro)
:      :      ||Pred  |Past   walkedCopV|
:      :      :      [SAvl  [ upPrep
:      :      :      :      :      (ObjPrep theDet
:      :      :      :      :      :      stairsCN
:      :      :      :      :      )
:      :      :      :      ]
:      :      :      :      [ toPrep
:      :      :      :      :      (ObjPrep myDet
:      :      :      :      :      :      apartmentCN
:      :      :      :      :      )
:      :      :      :      ]
:      :      :      ||
:      //
#
```


- b. I picked at the corner of my textbook where the lamination had broken open, *revealing the soft layers of brown cardboard*. (109)

```

«PostM /Avl whereRelAv/
: (Subj theDet
: : laminationNN
: )
: ||Pred |PastPerf hadPriAux
: : : brokenCopV
: : |
: : /SAvl openAv/
: : #Avl |NF revealingMtV|
: : : (DObj theDet
: : : : <Att softAj>
: : : : layersCN
: : : : [PostM ofPrep
: : : : : (ObjPrep <Att brownAj>
: : : : : : cardboardNN
: : : : : )
: : : : ]
: : : )
: : #
: ||
»

```

present participial clause: post-modifier

- c. I went after a girl *talking about the advantages of mountain biking*, and before a guy who had a whole three-part cardboard presentation on the treatment of malaria. (127)

```

(ObjPrep aDet
: girlCN
: #PostM |NF talking aboutMtV|
: : (DObj theDet
: : : advantagesCN
: : : : [PostM ofPrep
: : : : : (ObjPrep mountain bikingNN)
: : : : ]
: : : )
: : #
: )

```

present participial clause: non-restrictive modifier

- d. He looked over at me, *still sitting and sorting on the floor*. (119)

[AvI	at ^{Prep}		
:	(Obj ^{Prep}	me ^{Pro})	
:	#NRM	/AvI	still ^{Av} /
:	:	NF	sitting ^{ItV} and ^{CoConj} sorting ^{ItV}
:	:	[AvI	on ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(Obj ^{Prep} the ^{Det}
:	:	:	floor ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	]	
:	#		
]			

The *-ing* clause in (d) functions as a non-restrictive modifier for *me* because, in the context of this sentence, the father (*he*) is kneeling next to a wicker stool and looking at his daughter (*me*), who is the one sitting on the floor, sorting through items.

In English, *-ing* clauses can take the perfect aspect and/or passive voice, as demonstrated in the COCA examples below. Because *-ing* clauses require a present participle and inherently provide a progressive reading, they cannot be explicitly marked with the progressive aspect.

(15.13) perfect non-finite *-ing* clause

- a. Just then Charlie appeared on the railing from nowhere, *having jumped from one of the sky-scraping fir trees out in the darkness as if to bless our engagement*.

passive non-finite *-ing* clause

- b. The new hotel, *being developed by James Edmondson*, who owns the land, will have a 20,000-square-foot water park with six slides.
- c. The Rockets did not play a crisp fourth quarter, *getting outscored 25-16* and committing seven turnovers.

perfect passive non-finite *-ing* clause

- d. The girls made pouty frowns to show how sorry they felt about *Claire having been denied her beauty rest*.
- e. *having gotten freed*, she then understood that women needed their rights, too, and made a very, very famous speech

As with SVPs in general, *-ing* clauses that inflect for both aspect and passive voice less frequently occur in natural speech and writing. Therefore, you'll be more likely to encounter examples like (a)-(b) than examples like (d)-(e).

Finally, *-ing* clauses can also be negated. If the *-ing* clause lacks any overt aspect or voice marking, *not* is typically placed directly before the verb but can, in rarer cases, appear after the verb, as in these COCA examples:

- (15.14) a. “Her due date was before mine,” Louisa said, *not knowing if she was telling the truth*.
 b. This story wasn’t a matter of *not believing*, but *not caring*.
 c. Obviously our schools have not done their job in teaching our children the importance of *not skiing into trees*.
 d. You know, I don’t want to get into the weeds, but it’s sort of interesting because you might not be able to bring this yourself, *having not what’s called standing*.

The first three examples represent the most common negated pattern for *-ing* clauses without any aspect or voice marking.

If the *-ing* clause is marked for perfect aspect, the *not* can appear either before *having* or between *having* and the head verb, as in these COCA examples.

- (15.15) a. *not having taken the trouble to doubt*, I pass along to those enjoying the same lazy distaste for systematic disbelief.
 b. *Not having read it*, I can only say the subtitle sounds like the author is on the right track.
 c. Tom Watson is in that group, too, *having not won since the '98 Colonial*.

The first pattern, which places *not* before *having*, is the more frequent pattern.

The same two placements are available for passive *-ing* clauses, as in the following COCA examples.

- (15.16) a. If children hear adults lying and *those lies not being challenged and sanctioned*, they undoubtedly internalize what they observe and start marching down that same deception path.
 b. But just by *not getting blown away with audience ridicule a la Sofia Coppola in “The Godfather, Part III,”* Kinnear has won some credibility as an actor.
 c. I was afraid of being put on trial and *being not believed*.

Placing *not* before *being* or *getting* is the more common pattern, and the second pattern doesn’t provide any matches on COCA when *get* is the auxiliary.

When the *-ing* clause carries both perfect aspect and passive voice, the *not* generally appears before the both primary auxiliaries or after *having*:

- (15.17) a. Artists were also extremely disgruntled at *not having been awarded any of these public art commissions*. (COCA)

- b. The quijote still sat tall in the saddle, *having not been unseated by the collision*. (COCA)

Again, the first pattern is the more common one.

15.2 Past participle (-ed) clause

Past participle clauses, or past participial phrases, are headed by the past participle form of a verb, whether it is a regular verb with an *-ed* form or an irregular verb with an *-en* or other irregular form, and function as a modifier. Past participial clauses are similar to present participial clauses in their structure, but they differ in the way they provide meaning and in their potential range of functions.

All participle forms can be used as adjectives, but the meaning created differs between present and past participle forms because, at their core, the adjectives are based on verb forms, and all verb forms carry a semantic reading of having a subject. While *-ing* participle forms often take semantic subjects that are AGENTS, STIMULI, or THEMES, *-ed* participle forms typically take semantic subjects that are PATIENTS or EXPERIENCERS. For instance, consider the difference in meaning among these three closely related noun phrases.

- (15.18)a. (the <angry> **juror**)
 b. (the <angered> **juror**)
 c. (the <angering> **juror**)

To make the discussion of this NP smoother, I'm going to assign the juror the name Mata. When the regular adjectival form *angry* is used, as in (a), the attributive adjective provides a description of Mata's typical temperament. She is an angry person in a given context or situation. When an *-ed* form is used as an attributive adjective, as in (b), Mata is angry because someone or something has angered her. She is not always angry, but she has been affected in some way to feel anger. In other words, Mata is semantically a PATIENT or EXPERIENCER. When an *-ing* form is used as an attributive adjective, as in (c), the reading shifts drastically: Mata is no longer a PATIENT but is an AGENT or STIMULUS with volition. She may not be an angry person, but she has a way of making other people feel angry.

More examples below demonstrate that these differences hold true regardless of the noun being modified:

- (15.19)a. (the <bored> **teacher**) / (the <boring> **teacher**)
 b. (the <interested> **philanthropist**) / (the <interesting> **philanthropist**)
 c. (the <disgusted> **slob**) / (the <disgusting> **slob**)

In all three instances, the noun following an *-ed* participle is affected while the noun following an *-ing* participle is affecting others.

When the noun is not a person or other animate being, the reading for *-ing* attributive forms can shift to INSTRUMENT:

- (15.20) a. (the <cutting> **block**) v. (the <cut> **block**)
 b. (the <writing> **pad**)
 c. (the <fainting> **couch**)

These *-ing* participles indicate the noun is a tool or INSTRUMENT: the block made for cutting, the pad made for writing, the couch made for fainting. These forms don't always have an *-ed* counterpart, as in **the written pad* and **the fainted couch*.

In general, *-ing* forms tend to be more dynamic while *-ed* forms tend to be stative. For instance, consider these pairs:

- (15.21) a. (the <grilled> **burgers**) / (the <grilling> **burgers**)
 b. (the <moved> **picture**) / (the <moving> **picture**)

In (a), the grilling burgers are actively on the grill and cooking whereas the grilled burgers are finished being grilled and are ready to be eaten. The use of *moving* in (b) creates some ambiguity because *moving* could (1) be defined as 'touching/causing emotion,' (2) indicate a Harry-Potter-style rendering of a picture that literally moves, or (3) provide the interpretation that someone keeps moving the picture. All three interpretations require a more active reading of the phrase *the moving picture*. However, *the moved picture* creates a stative reading of being in its new location with no further moving action.

These examples of *-ed* adjectives help illustrate a couple key facts about *-ed* clauses: (1) they typically function as a modifier, whether as an adverbial, post-, or non-restrictive modifier; and (2) anything modified by an *-ed* clause needs to be able to take a passive or PATIENT-like reading. Consider the differences in the meanings provided by the *-ing* clauses and *-ed* clause in the example below.

- (15.22) For me, that night, comfort was in the stars *swimming in the black sea of fragrant summer air*. They'd been there for eons, *pinned to the velvet sky, glittering above celebrations and parties, above births and marriages, courtships and deaths*.
 (COCA)

The *-ing* clauses provide an active and dynamic reading, where the stars are turned into anthropomorphic entities that can control themselves as AGENTS, and they choose to swim and glitter. The *-ed* clause, on the other hand, treats the stars as PATIENTS because someone or something stuck them in the sky. Furthermore, the *-ed* clause provides a stative reading because the stars' location—and, thus, their current state—is in the sky, where they actively swim and glitter.

The following examples further illustrate the differences in interpretation between *-ing* and *-ed* clauses:

- (15.23) a. While *serving myself an orange juice, made from Florida oranges, picked by workers plagued with financial worries, fruit piled in trucks that drove overnight across the country*, I sat down at the kitchen table across from

- my brother and started a monologue about the previous night that ended in the retelling of the pink Pegasus pen joke. (Bender 2010: 124-125)
- b. While *toasting and eating my waffle*, the circle *split into small indented squares formed in a factory in Illinois*, each square *equipped to hold the maple syrup collected and boiled by a hardworking family in Vermont who had issues with drug and alcohol addiction*, I made the joke again. (Bender 2010: 125)

Throughout both sentences, *-ing* clauses (*serving myself an orange juice* and *toasting and eating my waffle*) provide an active, AGENTIVE reading. The modifying *-ed* clauses provide a passive, PATIENT-like reading, such as the first *-ed* clause in (a), *made from Florida oranges*, which provides a non-restrictive modifier for the noun *orange juice* and describes a past event that has already occurred and resulted in the current state of the juice. Consider the differences between these two rewordings:

- (15.24)a. The orange juice was made from Florida oranges.
b. The workers made the orange juice from Florida oranges.

Even though the verb *made* is a dynamic verb, when it occurs in the passive, as in (a), it becomes more stative and describes a current state of events rather than a dynamic making of orange juice. When it occurs in the active voice, as in (b), the sentence reads actively even though it is in the past tense. Understanding this difference in cognitive perception of active versus passive readings is important for knowing why active voice is preferred in most written genres and for understanding when passive sentences and *-ed* clauses can be most effective.

Because *-ed* clauses provide a passive reading, the only verbs that can appear in these clauses are transitive-type verbs, and their structures follow the expected structures for passive predicates. Therefore, a monotransitive verb will not have any required arguments, a ditransitive verb will have either a direct or an indirect object, and a complex-transitive verb will be followed by a subject predicative or subject adverbial. The following annotated examples demonstrate three major functions of *-ed* clauses. Notice that, in all examples, the verb is a transitive-type verb with its associated arguments required for a passive structure.

(15.25)a. **adverbial**

At the base of the dishwasher, Mom's high black heels tilted against each other, *kicked off her feet*. (Bender 2010: 124)

Pred	Past	<u>tilted</u> ^{CopV}
:	[SAvl	against ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep each other ^{Pro})
:	]	
:	#Avl	NF <u>kicked</u> ^{CtV}
:	:	[SAvl off ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep her ^{Det}
:	:	: feet ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	:	]
:	#	

b. **non-restrictive modifier**

Dad, *preoccupied with straightening the red correctly*, skimmed the room, but when his eye caught the stool, his face cleared. (Bender 2010: 118-119)

S	(Subj	Dad ^{PropN})
	#NRM	NF <u>preoccupied</u> ^{CtV}
	:	[SAvl with ^{Prep}
	:	#ObjPrep NF <u>straightening</u> ^{MtV}
	:	: (DObj the ^{Det}
	:	: red ^{CN}
	:	:)
	:	: /Avl correctly ^{Av/}
	:	#
	:	]
	#	
	Pred	Past <u>skimmed</u> ^{MtV}
	:	(DObj the ^{Det}
	:	: room ^{CN}
	:	:)

c. **post-modifier**

Ben & Jerry's has apologized for putting fortune cookies in pints of its "Taste the Lin-Sanity" frozen yogurt *sold at its Harvard Square, Massachusetts, location in honor of basketball sensation Jeremy Lin.* (Schneider 2012)

```

(ObjPrep itsDet
: (Att Taste the Lin-SanityPropN)
: frozen yogurtNN
: #PostM |NF soldMtV|
: : [Avl atPrep
: : : (ObjPrep itsDet
: : : : (Att Harvard SquarePropN)
: : : : (NRM MassachusettsPropN)
: : : : locationCN
: : : )
: : ]
: : [Avl in honor ofPrep
: : : (ObjPrep (Att (Att basketballN)
: : : : sensationN
: : : : )
: : : : Jeremy LinPropN
: : : )
: : ]
: #
)
```

In (a), *kicked off her feet* provides the reason or circumstances for the heels to be tilted against each other. In (b), *preoccupied with straightening the red correctly*, works with the NP *Dad* as a non-restrictive modifier, and, in (c), the *-ed* clause beginning with *sold* functions as a post-modifier for the head noun *frozen yogurt*. When *-ed* clauses are non-restrictive modifiers or post-modifiers, the understood passive subject of the verb is the head noun being modified, so *Dad* is the understood subject of *(was) preoccupied*, and *frozen yogurt* is the understood subject of *(is) sold*.

While the English *-ed* clause inherently contains a passive reading, it is not overtly marked with the passive voice because it lacks a *be* or *get* auxiliary. If it were to take the auxiliary, it would no longer be an *-ed* clause, so it cannot combine with a marked passive voice. Furthermore, the way *-ed* clauses are constructed restricts them from being able to combine with marked aspects. They can, however, be negated, and when they are, the most typical placement for the negation marker is directly before the verb:

(15.26) Now George Pratt, ordinarily, was a calm and easygoing man, *not given to soul-searching or emotional extremes of any sort.* (COCA)

When a participial clause occurs within a sentence, it is a potential post-modifier or non-restrictive modifier for the *preceding* noun, as in these examples.

- (15.28) a. One **voice** *crying for peace against the drumbeat for war* was Pope Benedict XV, who served as pope from 1914 to 1922. (COCA)

```

(Subj  oneDet
:      voiceCN
:      #PostM |NF cryingItV|
:      :      [Avl forPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep peaceNN)
:      :      ]
:      :      [Avl againstPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep theDet
:      :      :      :      drumbeatCN
:      :      :      :      [PostM forPrep
:      :      :      :      :      (ObjPrep warNN)
:      :      :      :      ]
:      :      :      )
:      :      ]
:      #
)

```

- b. Many of the **identity programs** *created for airlines in the 1960s and 1970s* were so successful that they remained virtually unchanged. (COCA)

```

(Subj  many offDet
:      theDet
:      identity programsCN
:      #PostM |NF createdCtV|
:      :      [SAvl forPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep airlinesCN)
:      :      ]
:      :      [Avl inPrep
:      :      :      (ObjPrep theDet
:      :      :      :      1960sPropN andCoConj 1970sPropN
:      :      :      :      )
:      :      :      ]
:      #
)

```

In these examples, *crying for peace against the drumbeat for war* post-modifies *one voice*, and *created for airlines in the 1960s and 1970s* post-modifies *many of the identity programs*. So far, the modifiers have been placed in appropriate positions.

A misplaced modifier occurs at the beginning of the sentence but does not modify or is not even connected to the following noun phrase. Consider these examples:

- (15.29) a. *Walking down the street in the sun*, everything looks different, everything pleases his eye. (COCA)
- b. *Covered with snow, just like the rest of the landscape*, Will could tell it was a pond. (COCA)

For (a), the understood semantic subject of the *-ing* verb *walking* cannot be *everything*, which is the subject of the main clause. If it were, *everything* would be walking down the street. Instead, the understood subject for that clause is missing and needs to be provided by context. In formal writing, (a) is better worded with a full adverb clause: *As Jack walks down the street in the sun, everything looks different.*

The example in (b) is humorous if you interpret the gapped constituent in the opening *-ed* clause as *Will*, the subject of the main clause: Will is covered with snow, just like the rest of the landscape, and is a human snowman. In formal writing, examples like (b) are better worded by moving the *-ed* clause and rewording it as a full adverb clause: *Will could still tell it was a pond even though it was covered with snow, just like the rest of the landscape.*

Practice Set 15.1 Annotating sentences with *-ing* and *-ed* clauses

Annotate the following sentences, taken from the news article “Nepal bans novice climbers from Everest, considers more limits” by Sugam Pokharel and Michael Person (2015).

1. Facing increasing criticism over safety and the environmental impacts of climbing on Mount Everest, Nepalese tourism officials have banned novice climbers from the the world’s tallest peak and are considering additional limits.
2. “We must maintain the glory of Everest climbing,” Mohan Krishma Sapkota, joint secretary of Nepal’s Ministry of Tourism, said Tuesday.
3. “Everest climbing is a matter of adventure and competence, not a matter of luxury.”
4. Climbing Everest has exploded in popularity in the past few decades, resulting in hundreds of ascent attempts each year, with an increasing number of inexperienced climbers taking advantage of professional guides who help them to the top.¹¹¹
5. Some climbers complain that the novices aren’t up to the task, while environmentalists worry about the impact of thousands of climbers and their garbage left behind on the mountain.

¹¹¹ Original: ... professional guides to help them to the top.

- b. Whatever faults CNN has, news organizations small and large try very hard *to report the truth*. (Stelter 2016)

S ((Avl (i whatever^{Det}
: : **faults**^{CN}
:)
:
: (Subj **CNN**^{PropN})
: ||Pred |Pres has^{MtV}|
: : (i DObj **GAP**)
: ||
:))

(Subj (Att **news**^N)
: **organizations**^{CN}
: <PostM < small^{Aj}>
: : and^{CoConj}
: : < large^{Aj}>
: : >
:)
||Pred |Pres try^{MtV}|
: /Avl /Deg very^{Av}/
: : hard^{Av}
: /
: #DObj |NF to^{Inf}
: : : report^{MtV}
: : |
: : (DObj the^{Det}
: : : **truth**^{NN}
: :)
: #
||

In example (a), the infinitive clause *to be babysat by my brother* functions as the subject, and its subject predicative is the infinitive clause *to share the house for the course of an evening*. In example (b), the InfCl *to report the truth* functions as the direct object of *try*. Many infinitive clauses are in the active voice, but *to be babysat* demonstrates that they can appear in the passive voice.

When an infinitive clause is the subject of a sentence, the understood subject of the non-finite verb is often a vague or ambiguous one. It reads like a statement that could apply to anyone. Thus, when Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote, “’Tis better to have loved and lost than never

to have loved at all,”¹¹³ he seems to be addressing humanity at large. And when Shakespeare wrote the famous soliloquy for Hamlet, he began with the line “To be, or not to be—that is the question,” allowing the audience to be pulled into the dilemma Hamlet was facing. Anyone listening could ask the question right alongside him. In (15.30a), *to be babysat by my brother* could refer to anyone who finds themselves in that position—it does not have a specific understood subject that indicates who is being babysat.

Any non-finite clause that functions as the subject can be extraposed: similar to right-dislocation, **extraposition** (Extp) refers to sentences where a dummy *it* stands in the subject position and refers to a constituent in the predicate, as in the following sentences.¹¹⁴

(15.31)a. It was lovely to hear the laughter of children (COCA)

S	(Subj	it ^{Pro})				
	Pred	Past	<u>was</u> ^{CopV}			
	:	<SPred	lovely ^{Aj} >			
	:	#Extp	NF	to ^{Inf}		
	:	:	:	<u>hear</u> ^{MtV}		
	:	:				
	:	:	(DObj	the ^{Det}		
	:	:	:	laughter ^{NN}		
	:	:	:	[PostM	of ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	:	(ObjPrep	the ^{Det}
	:	:	:	:	:	children ^{CN}
	:	:	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	:	:	]
	:	:	:	:	:	)
	:	:	:	:	:	#
	:	:	:	:	:	

b. It was fun doing that show. (COCA)

S	(Subj	it ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>was</u> ^{CopV}
	:	<SPred	fun ^{Aj} >
	:	#Extp	^{NF}
	:	:	doing ^{MtV}
	:	:	(DObj
	:	:	that ^{Det}
	:	:	show ^{CN}
	:	:	)
	:	#	

¹¹³ This quotation employs right-dislocation, where the *it* from *'tis* (an abbreviation of *it is*) is empty and represents the infinitive clause.

¹¹⁴ Extraposition is distinct from cleft sentences: in extraposition, the opening *it* refers to a constituent within the predicate; however, in cleft sentences, the opening *it* does not. For example, in the COCA example *It was Lucy who had opened the door with the key* from Chapter 13, you cannot replace *it* with the clefted nominal clause: **Who had opened the door with the key was Lucy*.

In these sentences, the *it* refers to the non-finite clause that appears in the predicate, and both these sentences could be reworded with the non-finite clause in place of the pronoun *it*:

- (15.32) a. To hear the laughter of children was lovely.
b. Doing that show was fun.

Using that rewording test can help you distinguish extraposed non-finite clauses from similar-looking, yet non-extraposed non-finite clauses, as in these COCA examples:

- (15.33) a. And I got to the end of my first hour, and I looked down at all the notes, and I hadn't touched the first piece of paper. It was all off the top of my head. It was me being me.

S	(Subj	it ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>was</u> ^{CopV}
	:	#SPred	(Subj me ^{Pro})
	:	:	Pred NF <u>being</u> ^{CopV}
	:	:	(SPred me ^{Pro})
	:	:	
	:	#	

- b. It was life imitating art.

S	(Subj	it ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>was</u> ^{CopV}
	:	#SPred	(Subj life ^{NN})
	:	:	Pred NF <u>imitating</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	(DObj art ^{NN})
	:	:	
	:	#	

In these sentences, *it* refers to a situation previously mentioned in the discourse, and the *-ing* verb is part of a non-finite clause functioning as the subject predicative. These examples cannot be reworded: **Me being me was*, and **life imitating art was*.

When an infinitive clause is the direct object of a monotransitive verb, the understood subject of the non-finite verb is often interpreted as being shared with its mother monotransitive verb. For instance, in example (b) above, the understood subject of *report* from the InfCl *to report the truth* is interpreted as *news organizations big and small*, which is the subject of the main verb *try*. A notable exception is monotransitive communicative verbs like *say*:

- (15.34)a. A recorded voice said *to leave pertinent information*. (COCA)
 b. The women who crossed in total disregard of whether or not the lights said *to walk* swung along jauntily in glossy leather boots and stylish coats, and the men looked far more hopeful. (COCA)

In these examples, the understood subject of the non-finite verb is the addressee: whoever was listening to the recorded voice in (a) should be the one leaving information, and whoever is reading the lights in (b) should be the ones walking.

If the InfCl is the direct object of a ditransitive verb of communication, the understood subject of the non-finite verb will likely be the indirect object of the mother ditransitive verb. The following COCA examples demonstrate that point:

- (15.35)a. they told her *to brush it off and get over it*.
 b. Sheriff Nalchek called me last night and asked me *to bump his reconstruction to the top of my list*.
 c. Loudspeakers warned pedestrians *to go indoors*.

In (a), the understood subject of *brush off and get over it* is *her*, which is the indirect object of *told*. In the same way, the understood subject of *bump* in (b) is *me*, the indirect object of the verb *asked*, and the understood subject of *go* in (c) is *pedestrians*, the indirect object of *warned*.

An exception to this pattern is with the verb *promise*, where the understood subject of the InfCl is more likely to be the subject of the ditransitive verb:

- (15.36)a. He had promised Simcha *to help in the search*. (COCA)
 b. I promised Charles *to watch out for you*, but I can't do that if you continue to take unnecessary risks. (COCA)

In the first example, *he* is the subject of *promise* and is also the understood subject of *help*, and the same interpretation works for (b), where *I* is the understood subject of *watch out*.

Finally, the understood subject of a subject predicative InfCl is often interpreted as the subject of the main clause:

- (15.37) Italy seemed *to be doing well*, even in what had always been one of its least-advantaged cities. (COCA)

In this example, *Italy* is the subject of *seemed* and the understood subject of *be doing well*.

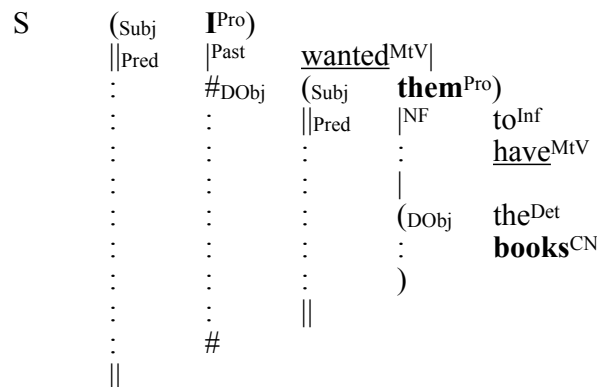
As with other non-finite clauses, infinitive clauses can incorporate an explicit subject, as in the following COCA examples.

- (15.38)a. I wanted *people to think I really had some cooking chops*.
 b. I wanted *them to have the books*

- c. The Greek scholar Thales of Miletus, in the beginning of the 6th century, claimed *water to be the primordial substance from which all life arose and would eventually return*.
- d. Its labyrinthine storage areas inspired *the site's early-20th-century British excavator, Sir Arthur Evans, to claim he had discovered the lair of the Minotaur, the mythical creature that devoured Athenian children sent as tribute to King Minos*.

Verbs like *wanted*, *claimed*, and *inspired* are monotransitive in these instances even though their structures look similar to ditransitive forms. With ditransitive communication verbs like *tell* and *warn*, the noun phrase that appears between the verb and infinitive clause is the semantic RECIPIENT of the message and the grammatical indirect object. However, with verbs like *want* and *inspire*, the noun phrase between the verb and infinitival marker is the subject of the infinitive clause. For example, the NP *them* in (b) is the subject of the InfCl *to have the books* and is incorporated into the clause structure:

(15.39) I wanted them to have the books



As with *-ing* clauses, the subject pronoun, *them*, is expressed in its object form.

If you are looking at a sentence that has a noun phrase situated between a verb and an infinitive clause, you can use a *wh*-question to determine if that noun phrase is an object of the main clause or a subject of the infinitive clause.

- (15.40)a. I wanted them to have the books.
 What is it that I wanted? Them to have books.
 *What is it that I wanted them? To have books.
 => I wanted # them to have the books #
- b. They told her to brush it off.
 *What is it that they told? Her to brush it off.
 What is it that they told her? To brush it off.
 => They told (her) # to brush it off #

Because *them to have books* is the direct object of *wanted*, the first question and answer pair in (a) sounds fine while the second does not. On the other hand, because *told* takes both an indirect and direct object, the first question and answer pair is ungrammatical, and the second is grammatical. These questions help determine how much should be included with the InfCl as a single constituent.

Some verb-InfCl pairings can occur so frequently that they become grammaticalized, as in the semi-modals *be going to* and *have to*. Two verb-InfCl pairings in particular are in the grammaticalization process and offer two potential grammatical analyses: (1) they can be analyzed as semi-modals that provide both tense and modality for a SVP; or (2) they can be analyzed as two distinct constituents, where a head verb takes an InfCl as a direct object. For instance, you can analyze sentences like *I want to swim* in these ways:

- (15.41)a. S (Subj I^{Pro})
 ||Pred |PresMod want to^{SemiAux}
 : : swim^{ItV}
 : |
 ||
- b. S (Subj I^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Pres want^{MtV}|
 : #DObj |NF to^{Inf}
 : : : swim^{ItV}
 : : |
 : #
 ||

Both analyses are viable options because semi-modals like *want to* and *need to* are borderline cases. Semi-modals like *have to*, *have got to*, *used to*, *be fixing to*, and *be going to* are more clearly compound auxiliaries because they are used in ways that couldn't be guessed from their individual parts (i.e., the individual words no longer contribute semantic meaning to the overall interpretation). However, specifically for *want to* and *need to*, the verbs *want* and *need* could be interpreted as carrying lexical meaning.

Both *want to* and *need to* can be considered compound semi-modals for a few reasons. First, for many speakers, the pronunciation of *want to* differs from the typical pronunciation of a head verb followed by an InfCl; for instance, the reduced pronunciation of *I wanna swim* differs from a clear example of an InfCl in *I prefer to swim*. Second, *need to* takes on a different meaning as a compound form than its individual parts might suggest because it often means something similar to *must* or *have to*. Finally, both semi-modals are awkward when passivized, suggesting they may not have grammatical direct objects. Each of the following COCA examples are reworded as passive constructions:

- (15.42)a. he wants to read in the dark
=> *To read in the dark is wanted [by him].
- b. He needs to relax in front of the ball.
=> *To relax in front of the ball is needed [by him].
- c. He prefers to paint on panels
=> To paint on panels is preferred [by him].
- d. he promises to return to the vicinity of his hometown
=> To return to the vicinity of his hometown is promised [by him].

Both (a) and (b) are ungrammatical or at least unnatural for many speakers, while (c) and (d) are acceptable, suggesting that *want to* and *need to* are grammatically different than *prefer to* and *promise to*.

At this point in the discussion, it may appear that the best option is to consider both *need to* and *want to* semi-modals. However, consider the following COCA examples, which are passive constructions with *need to* and *want to*, along with an example of *prefer to* for comparison. Focus on identifying the semantic role(s) of *I* within the sentences.

- (15.43)a. Now I need to be comforted by Jimmy Kimmel and free sushi.
b. and I desperately wanted to be seen by my summer flame.
c. I prefer to be tickled by Mr. Massa.

In all three sentences, *I* has two semantic roles, which shouldn't be possible unless it's working with two head verbs. In (a), *I* is the EXPERIENCER of the needing and the PATIENT of the comforting; in (b), *I* is the EXPERIENCER of the wanting but the STIMULUS for the seeing; and, in (c), *I* is the AGENT or EXPERIENCER of the preferring but the PATIENT of the tickling. This information indicates that *need*, *want*, and *prefer* are working separately from the verb in the *to*-clause, indicating that they are head verbs with a *to*-clause following it. In cases like these, annotating *need* and *want* as head verbs appears to be the best option.

When the subject is not animate, though, *need* no longer reads as a separate verb. Consider the differences in how the inanimate *it* subject is interpreted for the following COCA examples:

- (15.44)a. Our system is broken. It *needs to be fixed*.
b. Testers said this one will suit the masses in terms of foot shapes, and it *wants to be skied hard all over the mountain*. [taken from an article reviewing new ski boots]
c. We try to paper over cruelty, and what we perceive as misfortune, with words. Somehow the well-meaning words that avoid the thoughtless words are supposed to make us feel better, as if a bland word could make suffering go away, as if indifference could summon kindness. Those bureaucratic words make me feel worse. I think, in part, that's why poems exist. They peel the word-paper off and let you feel language as *it wants to be felt*—vital and unapologetic as an animal. (Wormser 2006)

In most cases, when *need to* takes an inanimate grammatical subject, such as *it*, which refers to *our system* in that context, *need* is not interpreted as a lexical verb with the connotation of the subject experiencing a feeling of need. Most speakers probably analyze *needs to* in (a) as a semi-modal and assign *it* one semantic role: PATIENT of *fixed*. When *want to* takes an inanimate *it* as a subject, though, it reads as though the inanimate subject is being personified. In (b), it reads like the ski boots have wants and desires, and example (c) goes so far as to compare language to an animal. Therefore, *want* in examples (b) and (c) could still be analyzed as a head verb with a *to*-clause direct object.

Both *need to* and *want to* are stuck in the grey area between being a head verb with a *to*-clause direct object and being a semi-modal. Being in the grey area means you may end up annotating them as a semi-modals in sentences like (15.42a-b) but as head verbs in sentences like (15.43a-b). Sentences like those in (15.44) can take either interpretation. There is not necessarily a right answer—only a best annotation to match the interpretation selected.

When infinitive clauses function in a nominal role, they can, in certain contexts, appear as **bare infinitives** without the infinitival marker *to*. In the following example, the subject predicative is a coordinated bare infinitive clause:

(15.45) The first thing I did was *squint my eyes in confusion and stare at it*. (Key 2010: 13)

S (Subj the^{Det}
: first^{Det}
: thing^{CN}
: «PMod (i GAP^{RelPro})
: :
: (Subj I^{Pro})
: : ||Pred |Past did^{MtV}|
: : : (i^{DObj} GAP)
: : ||
: »
)
||Pred |Past was^{CopV}|
: #SPred # |NF squint^{MtV}|
: : : (DObj my^{Det}
: : : eyes^{CN}
: : :)
: : : [Avl in^{Prep}
: : : : (ObjPrep confusion^{NN})
: : : :]
: : #
: : and^{CoConj}
: : # |NF stare^{ItV}|
: : : [Avl at^{Prep}
: : : : (ObjPrep it^{Pro})
: : : :]
: : #
: : #
||

The example above could work with or without the *to* infinitive marker: *The first thing I did was to squint my eyes*. Some constructions, like the one above, show a preference for the bare infinitival form while others require it.

In the examples below, the verbs require that the infinitive clause functioning as the direct object express a subject and use the bare infinitive.

- (15.46) a. We watched *the pepper parts crackle in the oil*. (Bender 2010: 132)
 b. I heard *the camellia bush shake* and then the whop-whop of his wings as he launched after me. (Key 2010: 13)
 c. You saw *me sing*? (COCA)
 d. She felt *her smile start in her heart and fill her face*. (COCA)

They cannot be changed to grammatically incorporate the infinitival *to*: **You saw me to sing*? These verbs share three features: they are (1) frequent (2) sensing verbs originating from (3) Germanic origins that are native to the English language. Because they are of native origins, that means English has never borrowed these verbs, and they naturally developed in English over time. The more entrenched the verb is in our language, the more likely it is to take the bare infinitive.

Two of those features, frequency and native origins, apply to other verbs that allow the bare infinitive. Consider the following sets taken from COCA; in each set, the first verb is native to English while the second and third verbs, which are synonymous with the first verb, have been borrowed from a French or Latin source.

(15.47) **make/cause/force**

- a. After breakfast, they made him walk around the halls.
 b. He had multiple sclerosis which caused him to walk with a limp.
 c. The expansion of electrically lit cities during the twentieth century created a technology fog that forced astronomers to move their hilltop observatories from the outskirts of towns to remote places such as the Canary Islands, the Chilean Andes, and Hawaii's Mauna Kea.

let/allow/permit

- d. we'll let people decide whether or not your network is being fair.
 e. the senate failed to pass a law that would have allowed citizens to decide for themselves if alcohol could be sold in their communities.
 f. Girls, however, had to continue pursuing the right to be included, which led to a civil rights investigation in 1973 that ultimately led to a 1974 decision from Congress that permitted girls to participate in the National Little League baseball program.

help/aid/assist

- g. Get a first-hand look at the rare pterosaur fossils that have helped *paleontologists learn all that we know about these animals.*
- h. I know of no better legacy a man can leave to the world than that he had aided *others to labor at an art so beautiful as that to which I have devoted my life.*
- i. UCPs have assisted *students to eliminate stereotypes of counseling*

In these sets, the more frequent native verb allows the bare infinitive, but the less frequent borrowed verb does not. While this pattern exists, not all native verbs allow the bare infinitive pattern (e.g., communicative verbs like *say*, *ask*, and *tell* appear alongside infinitive clauses with the infinitival *to*). Some instances of the bare infinitive sound archaic due to the verb form, such as *She bade him be welcome* (COCA). However, the older form persists in modern usage with frequent and common verbs like *make*, *let*, and *help*.

One common verb, *have*, allows the bare infinitive, but its synonyms don't allow an InfCl at all, as seen in these COCA examples.

- (15.48) a. Doing autographs, I've had *women pull me over the table and kiss me on my mouth.*
- b. We've had *coons scramble down the tree and attack our call.*
- c. We haven't experienced *kids getting tired at the end of the day* because they have a lot to do.
- d. I'd no sooner touched down on the island than I encountered a cow *crossing the path ahead of me.*

While the verb *have* can take a bare InfCl as a direct object, the synonyms *experience* and *encounter* cannot. The verb *experience* can take a non-finite *-ing* clause as a direct object, but *encountered* can only take a noun phrase as a direct object. In (d), the *-ing* clause *crossing the path ahead of me* is post-modifying *a cow*. Verbs get to choose what grammatical functions they need for their predicates to be completed, and, as these examples show, verbs have the power to decide what constituent forms can fill those functions. They are the autocrats of the clause, and some are more lenient than others.

In Old English and Middle English, the **subjunctive** mood was marked on verbs expressing doubt, desire, opinion, or counterfactual information. While the subjunctive mood began dying out in Middle English and is nearly non-existent in Modern English, it persists in some constructions and verb forms. I mention it in this chapter because, for most subjunctive clauses, the verb form results in what looks like an infinitive clause:

- (15.49) a. We recommend that *he* [*SubjunctivePass be^{PAux} returned^{CrV}*] *to the White House to complete a job he has, in many ways, only just begun.*
- b. If there are more than 30 students in a classroom, demand that *class sizes* [*SubjunctivePass be^{PAux} lowered^{MtV}*].

- c. Robert Dole's recent demand that *history teaching* [_{Subjunctive} take^{MtV}] *as its main goal the proposition that the United States is the greatest country in the world* doubtless has a real audience; Dole certainly expected campaign brownie points.

These are examples of nominal clauses in the subjunctive mood. If these were infinitive clauses, the subordinator *that* wouldn't appear as an introductory word, and the pronoun subject would show up in its object form (e.g., **We recommend him be returned*). These relics of the subjunctive mood are restricted to certain verbs, including *recommend* and *demand*, and even for those verbs, the subjunctive verb forms are disappearing in modern English. Example (c) demonstrates that when *demand* is used as a noun, it can still trigger the subjunctive in its complement nominal clause. These verbs carry the subjunctive superscript in place of other tense and modality markings.

The only other subjunctive form that persists for some speakers is the use of *were*, regardless of the subject, in clauses that express information that is counterfactual. For instance, the following lyrics use the subjunctive *were*:

- (15.50) If *I* [_{Subjunctive} were^{CopV}] *a butterfly*, I'd thank you, Lord, for giving me wings.
(Howard 1980)

Even though *I* is the subject of the clause *if I were a butterfly*, the verb form is *were*; in this case, it does not express the past tense because the speaker is talking about the here and now but is referencing a world that doesn't exist. I'm not a butterfly. But if I were...

Not all speakers use this subjunctive form, and some dialects prefer using verbs in the simple past tense in these instances:

- (15.51) I wish *I* [_{Past} was^{CopV}] *a little bit taller* / I wish *I* [_{Past} was^{CopV}] *a baller* / I wish *I* [_{Past} had^{MtV}] *a girl who looked good*, I would call her (Skee-Lo 1995)

This example demonstrates that past tense forms, such as *was* and *had*, can be used to express a semantic state of irrealis.

15.4 Versatility of infinitive clauses

Infinitive clauses can do more than fill nominal roles, and they often function as an adverbial modifier. In many cases, you can test to see if the infinitive clause is adverbial by changing the infinitive *to* marker to the full phrase *in order to*. If the result is grammatical, the infinitive clause being tested is adverbial. This substitution works because adverbial infinitive clauses are often used to provide the reason for something happening.

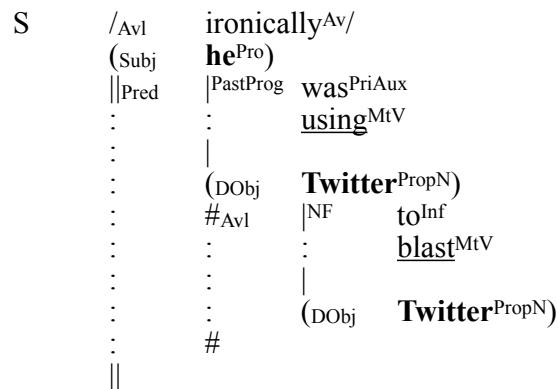
- (15.52) a. Outside, men stood on a billboard ledge pushing up rolls of paper *to construct the shape of a woman's giant chin*. (Bender 2010: 125)

- b. *To change the subject*, I told her a little about Joe's disappearance. (Bender 2010: 131)
- c. Ironically, he was using Twitter *to blast Twitter*. (Stelter 2016)

You could change the *to* in all three examples to *in order to*: for instance, you could easily reword (c) to read *he was using Twitter in order to blast Twitter*.¹¹⁵ All three are examples of adverbial infinitive clauses. As with these examples, the understood subject of an adverbial InfCl is usually the subject of its housing clause: *men* are constructing the shape in (a), *I* am changing the subject in (b), and *he* was blasting Twitter in (c).

Annotations of adverbial infinitive clauses match the structures of nominal infinitive clauses:

(15.53) Ironically, he was using Twitter to blast Twitter.



The infinitive clause *to blast Twitter* takes the adverbial function label. If you encounter an InfCl beginning with *in order to*, consider it a compound infinitive marker: *in_order_to*^{Inf}.

Sometimes a single InfCl has more than one potential grammatical interpretation and, thus, more than one potential annotation. For instance, the following example is ambiguous, and its ambiguity lies in where the reader embeds a non-finite *to*-clause. The original string was posted on Tumblr in 2013.



Image 15.1 True self control

¹¹⁵ Word underlines *in order to* as a grammar error because, in formal writing, the preference is to use *to* rather than *in order to*. The *in order* does not provide any additional information and can result in prescriptive wordiness.

(15.54)a.

S	(Subj	<Att	trueAj>
:	:	:	self control NN
)	:	:	:
Pred	Pres	<u>is</u> CopV	
:	#SPred	NF	<u>waiting</u> ItV
:	:	//Avl	<u>until</u> SubConj
:	:	:	(Subj theDet
:	:	:	: movie CN
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	Pred Pres <u>starts</u> ItV
:	:	//	
:	:	#Avl	NF toInf
:	:	:	: <u>eat</u> MtV
:	:	:	
:	:	:	(DObj yourDet
:	:	:	: popcorn NN
:	:	:	)
:	:	#	
:	#		

b.

S

(Subj
:
)
||Pred |Pres |isCopV|
:
:# |NF waitingItV|
:
: //Avl untilSubConj
:
: : (Subj theDet
:
: : movieCN
:
:)
:
: ||Pred |Pres startsMtV|
:
: : #DObj |NF toInf
:
: : eatMtV
:
: : |
:
: : (DObj yourDet
:
: : popcornNN
:
: :)
:
: : #
:
: : ||
:
: : //
:
: : #

||

The difference in grammatical embedding and function of the infinitive clause changes the understood semantic subject of the infinitive clause. In (a), the infinitive clause is an adverbial

modifier and, thus, shares an understood semantic subject with its housing clause, which is headed by the non-finite verb *waiting* with a vague or general subject. Therefore, whoever is waiting will also do the eating. In (b), the infinitive clause functions as a direct object, so its understood subject is shared with its mother monotransitive verb: the movie will eat the popcorn. In this particular example, the ambiguity relies not only on dual interpretations of the infinitive clause but also the ability of the verb *start* to appear in different valency patterns.

Of the two interpretations, only (a) can grammatically take the *in order to* replacement, indicating it is an adverbial clause. That replacement test works regardless of the type and function of the housing clause:

(15.55) New web sites designed *to trick and mislead people* seem to pop up every single day. (Stelter 2016)

(Subj	<Att	new ^{Aj} >	
:		web sites ^{CN}	
:	#PostM	NF	<u>designed</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	#Avl	NF to ^{Inf}
:	:	:	<u>trick</u> ^{MtV} and ^{Coord} <u>mislead</u> ^{MtV}
:	:	:	
:	:	:	(DObj people ^{CN})
:	:	#	
:	#		
)			

In this example, the InfCl *to trick and mislead people* is an adverbial modifier for the *-ed* clause *designed to trick and mislead people*, which serves as a post-modifier for *new web sites*. This example could be reworded as *new websites designed in order to trick and mislead people*.

Using the “in order to” test, determine which, if any, of these two italicized infinitive clauses are adverbial:

(15.56) Joseph had a test *to re-take* after school, so I took the bus home by myself, stopping at the small magazine-shop on Melrose at Fairfax *to buy my usual bag of chips as a celebratory finale to my paper*. (Bender 2010: 130)

The second infinitive clause (*to buy my usual bag ... my paper*) is adverbial and provides a reason for her stopping at the magazine-shop. The first infinitive clause, *to re-take*, functions as a post-modifier for *a test*. Replacing *to* with *in order to* in that clause results in the ungrammatical structure **Joseph had a test in order to re-take after school*.

The first half of that example is annotated below to draw attention to the post-modifying infinitive clause:

(15.57) Joseph had a test to re-take after school

S	(Subj	Joseph ^{PropN})		
	Pred	Past	<u>had</u> ^{MtV}	
	:	(DObj	a ^{Det}	
	:	:	test ^{CN i}	
	:	:	#PostM	NF to ^{Inf}
	:	:	:	<u>re-take</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	(ⁱ DObj GAP)
	:	:	#	
	:	)		
	:	[Avl	after ^{Prep}	
	:	:	(ObjPrep school ^{NN})	
	:	]		

When an InfCl is a post-modifier, it has a co-indexed GAP that links to the head noun or pronoun being post-modified; in this example, *re-take* is a monotransitive verb, and its direct object is the gapped NP *a test*. Another example of a post-modifying InfCl is below:

(15.58) Josh Stearns, a longtime media activist who now works at Democracy Fund, said newsrooms also have a role *to play*. (Stelter 2016)

	(DObj	a ^{Det}		
	:	:	role ^{CN i}	
	:	:	#PostM	NF to ^{Inf}
	:	:	:	<u>play</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	(ⁱ DObj GAP)
	:	:	#	
	:	)		

The InfCl *to play* features the monotransitive verb *play*, and *a role* is the gapped direct object.

As discussed in Chapter 14, a key difference between post-modifiers and complements is that the head word plays a grammatical role in a post-modifier but does not in a complement. That same feature holds true for infinitive clauses. In the previous examples, the head noun plays a role within the post-modifying InfCl, and the next examples demonstrate that they do not play a role in an InfCl functioning as a complement. Both examples are taken from Stelter (2016).

- (15.59)a. But that's a deliberate attempt *to confuse the issue*.

```

(SPred  aDet
:      <Att  deliberateAj>
:      attemptCN
:      #Comp |NF  toInf
:      :      :  confuseMtV
:      :      |
:      :      (DObj  theDet
:      :      :  issueCN
:      :      :  )
:      #
)

```

- b. Not only was there no proof of this, but it was pretty easy *to disprove*.

```

S      (i Subj  itPro)
||Pred |Past  wasCopV|
:      <SPred /Deg  prettyAv/
:      :  easyAj
:      :  #Comp |NF  toInf
:      :      :  disproveMtV
:      :      |
:      :      (i DObj  GAP)
:      :  #
:      >
||

```

While both of these are examples of complements, they show two structural differences. In (a), the InfCl does not have any gapped constituents and completes the head noun *attempt*. The understood semantic subject of *confuse* is not expressed in the sentence structure—the one confusing the issue must be gleaned from the larger context of the article.

When a complement InfCl is embedded inside an adjective phrase, it can have a gapped constituent, but it will not be co-indexed with the head word whose meaning is being completed. In (b), the InfCl has a gapped direct object that is co-indexed with the subject of the main clause and complements the head adjective *easy*. Even though there is a gapped constituent within the InfCl, it does not refer back to the head word being complemented (i.e., the GAP does not refer to *easy*). Again, the understood subject of the non-finite verb is not provided in the sentence structure, and the reader understands that someone, likely the author, disproved it.

Sometimes the complement InfCl is required to complete a comparison, as in the examples below.

- (15.60) a. It's time for a new rule on the web: Double, no, triple check before you share. Especially if it seems *too good to be true*. (Stelter 2016)

```

<SPred /Deg tooAv/
:      goodAj
:      #Comp |NF toInf
:      :      :      beCopV
:      :      |
:      :      <SPred trueAj>
:      #
>

```

- b. As I said on Sunday's "Reliable Sources" on CNN, unreliable sources about this election have become *too numerous to count*. (Stelter 2016)

```

(i Subj <Att unreliableAj>
:      sourcesCN
:      [PostM aboutPrep
:      :      (ObjPrep thisDet
:      :      :      electionCN
:      :      )
:      ]
)
||Pred |PresPerf havePriAux
:      :      becomeCopV
:      |
:      <SPred /Deg tooAv/
:      :      numerousAj
:      :      #Comp |NF toInf
:      :      :      :      countMtV
:      :      :      |
:      :      :      (i DObj GAP)
:      :      #
:      >
||

```

These comparative clauses are similar to the ones described in Chapter 14 because a degree adverbial sets up a comparison, and the complement completes it. In this case, *too* is the typical comparative degree adverb for the non-finite *to*-complement clause.

Of the non-finite clauses, the infinitive *to*-clause is the most diverse for potential combinations of aspect and voice, as demonstrated by the following COCA examples.

(15.61) progressive *to*-clause

- a. At first I was shy and scared *to be working with such impressionable children* but within a few weeks, my confidence grew.

perfect *to*-clause

- b. He was one of the last people *to have lived at the house*.

perfect progressive *to*-clause

- c. We would expect the Maya *to have been fighting each other over valuable farmlands as a consequence*, but Mayanist Linda Schele concluded in 1984 that “I do not think warfare was territorial for the most part”

passive *to*-clause

- d. I want *my mother to be remembered for who she was, not how she died*.
 e. Anything else is not a legal excuse *to get thrown off a jury*.

progressive passive *to*-clause

- f. He appears *to be being dragged by those forces*.
 g. And with Jupiter—your ruling planet—passing through the ardent sign of Aries for the next five months, you appear *to be getting caught+up in endeavors that engage both your mind and your heart*.

perfect passive *to*-clause

- h. the works of Agnes, Felipa, and Marguerite are the first extant vernacular biographies *to have been written by European women about other contemporary women*.
 i. “The gallery was lucky *not to have gotten flooded*,” I said when we arrived.

Although it is technically possible to get a perfect progressive passive *to*-clause structure in English (*to have been being VERB-ed*), it is not easily found in natural English texts. COCA does not have any examples of the construction, and the results on Google Books for *to have been being* are all taken from grammar textbooks that use it as an example (e.g., search for *to have been being painted* on Google).

Google Books does, however, include two results for the *get* passive construction, *to have been getting VERB-ed*:

- (15.62) a. A battle was shortly fought, in which the Romans appear *to have been getting worsted*, when some cavalry from Beneventum appeared on Hannibal’s flank and obliged him to withdraw. (Dodge 1992[1891]: 461)
 b. My feeling level seems *to have been getting smashed*. (Janov 2007: 192)

The first example was originally written in 1891 and uses the passive form of the verb *worsted*, which means ‘defeated.’ In the second example, it could be argued that it is not a case of the passive voice but an example of a perfect progressive infinitive clause with *smashed* as an adjective phrase functioning as a subject predicative. Based on the limited evidence and the dwindling numbers of examples as more auxiliaries are added to the SVP, it’s clear that English speakers prefer SVPs that are less complex.

When negating infinitive clauses, the negation marker *not* can be inserted between the infinitive marker *to* and the head verb or before the *to*, as in the following COCA examples:

- (15.63) a. And both Drew and Jon have asked me *not to speak up*.
 b. Samantha studied the floor, determined *not to speak even if spoken to*.
 c. Like a classical musician practicing scales, learning a piece measure by measure so as to have only to breathe soul into the music onstage, Hoffman prepares *not to play, but to vivify, a character*.
 d. you let me getting hired here be your excuse *to not finish your dissertation*.
 e. Jamie asked her *to not say things about his stuttering to the whole class—even if they laughed at him—because he found this embarrassing*.

As auxiliaries join the infinitive clause SVP, the preference remains for the negator to be placed before the infinitival *to*. The *not* can appear in more locations, but examples of other placements are much less frequent. As an example, the following COCA results are for progressive *to*-clauses:

- (15.64) a. he couldn’t help think that that was strange, for Molly *not to be talking*, and he realized that she too was jealous.
 b. That seems to be everyone’s focus and *to not be focusing on that seems like we’re not in line with where the district’s going*.
 c. And we think that many of those people are sitting at home and some of them are likely *to be not sleeping well* and otherwise, you know, kind of in front of the television.

Example (c) was the only result for my search of *to be not verb-ing*. If that is the only result in a corpus of over 520 million words, that pattern doesn’t occur often.

The overall pattern I found for negated *to*-clauses is that the more auxiliaries that are added to the SVP, the less likely it is to be negated. For instance, I could only find one example in all of COCA for a negated progressive passive *to*-clause:

- (15.65) What is it about the Democratic message that seems not to be selling or *not to be being bought* in the heartland?

Just because speakers *can* do something grammatically, that doesn’t mean it actually occurs often or even at all.

The preference for placing the negator before the *to* can be related to an overall dispreference for splitting infinitives. Prescriptive grammars warn writers to never place an adverb between the infinitival *to* and its head verb, and doing so results in a **split infinitive**.¹¹⁶ However, in natural discourse, both spoken and written, adverbs split infinitives frequently, appearing in the same locations as a finite SVP. The following examples, taken from COCA, provide instances of split infinitives:

- (15.66) a. Later, he put tail feathers in a wind tunnel *to /further/ explore* their “aeroelastic flutter,” air trembling around those trailing vanes as if past the reed of a saxophone.
- b. His obsession with wind has led him to build two hang gliders, which he flies from a local hilltop *to /better/ understand* the air currents.
- c. If a plane is taking off and its nose is up and at a certain—couple of thousand feet of altitude, it may be hard *to /actually/ see* the birds and avoid them.
- d. And her way *to /wildly/ celebrate* the moment? She went to TGI Friday’s with family and best friend Sha’Dare McNeal, last year’s lone senior.

In many ways, trying to reword these examples creates awkward phrasing. For instance, consider the rewordings provided below for (a):

- (15.67) a. *he put tail feathers in a wind tunnel to explore further their aeroelastic flutter
- b. he put tail feathers in a wind tunnel to explore their aeroelastic flutter further

The first wording is ungrammatical for many speakers, and the second wording creates an awkward phonetic combination of *flutter further* at the end of the sentence that many speakers and writers may want to avoid.

Other rewordings have more disastrous results; consider these potential rewordings of (15.66c).

- (15.68) a. *it may be hard to see actually the birds and avoid them
- b. it may be hard to see the birds actually and avoid them
- c. it may be hard actually to see the birds and avoid them
- d. it may be hard to see the birds and avoid them actually

Placing *actually* after the verb *see* results in an ungrammatical sentence, and placing it anywhere else turns the reading of *actually* into a discourse adverb so that it reads like speaker commentary rather than a modification of the verbs *see* and *avoid*. The only way to place *actually* in that

¹¹⁶ I purposefully split an infinitive in this sentence to gleefully show my stance on this debate. And, yes, I just split yet another infinitive in my footnote about splitting an infinitive.

clause to make it clear that it modifies both verbs is to place it after *to* and before *see*, as it was in the original wording.

I opened this chapter with a quote from Douglas Adams that includes the clause “to boldly split infinitives that no man had split before.” The joke is twofold: (1) it splits an infinitive with the adverb *boldly*, and (2) it references the outrage prescriptivists had after *Star Trek* was released with its opening quotation:

(15.69) Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its 5-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before. (*Star Trek*)

Prescriptivists went wild with worry over the state of current English that a TV show would release such linguistic dribble. However, the reality is that native English speakers and writers split infinitives all the time—and split them with purpose. *To boldly go* sounds better and carries more “oomph” than *to go boldly*.

Another feature of infinitive clauses is that some appear with the correlative compound infinitive marker *for ... to*, where the subject of the infinitive clause appears between *for* and *to* as in these COCA examples:

(15.70)a. And I must say that it's much easier for me to write fiction.

```

<SPred  /Deg    muchAv/
:        easierAj
:        #Comp  fori
:        :      (Subj  mePro)
:        :      ||Pred  |NF  toi Inf
:        :      :      :      writeMtV
:        :      :      |
:        :      :      (DObj  fictionNN)
:        :      ||
:        #
>

```

b. The metal lock has a cylinder that, for the door to open, must turn.

```

#Avl    fori
:      (Subj  theDet
:      :      doorCN
:      :      )
:      ||Pred  |NF  toi Inf
:      :      :      openItV
:      :      |
:      :      ||
:      #

```

The co-indexed superscripts with *for* and *to* indicate they work together as a team. Because they are not a compound in the sense that they do not appear side-by-side, there is not a GAP; instead, the superscript by *to* is co-indexed with *for* to create the infinitive marker. This superscripted annotation is consistent across all examples of correlative words, whether they are correlative coordinators, subordinators, or infinitive markers.

As with other examples of adverbial infinitive clauses, example (b) above could be expanded with *in order*: *in order for the door to open*. The following examples from COCA demonstrate that compound correlative form:

- (15.71)a. Four conditions had to coexist in order for the episode to develop.

```
#Avl    in order fori
:      (Subj    theDet
:           :    episodeCN
:           )
:      ||Pred   |      toi Inf
:           :    :      developltV
:           :    |
:           ||
#
```

- b. In other words, in order for the family to be just, women must be allowed to be as selfish as men and pursue the “equality of opportunity” as freely as do men, “even if the family as a whole may on that account find its life more difficult.”

```
#Avl    in order fori
:      (Subj    theDet
:           :    familyCollN
:           )
:      ||Pred   |      toi Inf
:           :    :      beCopV
:           :    |
:           :    <SPred justAj>
:           ||
#
```

In these adverbial infinitive clauses, the full correlative infinitive marker is *in order for ... to*, with the subject sandwiched within the individual parts.

Practice Set 15.2 Annotating sentences with non-finite clauses

Annotate the following sentences, taken from *Murder is a Girl's Best Friend* by Amanda Matetsky (2004: 214-215).

1. The very second Jimmy closed himself up in the bathroom, Abby and I got to work.

2. She started going through the drawers of his dresser while I tackled the closet.
3. Otto kept dashing back and forth between us, whimpering at Abby and growling at me.
4. “Did you find anything?” I whispered to Abby, closing the closet door and turning to see how she was making out.
5. “I found a few holsters,” she said, dangling a handful of jockstraps in the air, “but nothing that even remotely resembles a gun.”
6. “Besides the gun, keep your eyes peeled for a black lunchbox.”
7. “Aye, aye, captain!” she whispered, turning toward the area near the bathroom door, where the small kitchen appliances and cabinets were lined against the wall like cartons in a stockroom.
8. Lifting up the edge of another brown blanket, I put my face down next to the floor and peered into the darkness underneath.
9. Otto darted under the bed and crouched down over the bone, staring out at me, snarling, protecting his treasure with unabashed zeal.
10. I backed away from the bed, lowered the blanket, and crawled a few feet over to examine the small, low dusty bookshelf—dime store novels with titles like *Hot Rod* and *Pickup Alley*.

The following table summarizes the major correlations between form and function that have been presented thus far.

		Nominal roles					Predicative		Adverbial roles			Non-adverbial modifier roles				
	Pred	Subj	DObj	IObj	ObjP	Voc	SPred	OPred	SAvl	OAvl	Avl	PostM	NRM	Comp	Att	Deg
LVP	•															
(NP)		•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•		•	
<AjP>							•	•				•	•		•	•
/AvP/									•	•	•	•				
[PP]									•	•	•	•	•	•		
«RelCl»												•	•			
((NomCl))		•	•	•	•		•							•		
//AvCl//											•					
#InfCl#		•	•				•	•			•	•	•	•		
#-ed#			•								•	•	•			
#-ing#		•	•	•	•		•				•	•	•			

Table 15.1 Major form/function correlations

Some of these correlations are much less frequent than others, such as a nominal clause or *-ing* clause functioning as an indirect object, yet they do occur:

- (15.72) a. And I think they can give *whoever emerges from the West* some trouble. (COCA)
 b. Ma, maybe we'd better give *standing by the booth* another try. (COCA)

Another restricted use is an *-ed* clause as a direct object, but it occurs with very common verbs, as seen in these COCA examples:

- (15.73) a. And today I saw *the woman drawn to the temple*
 b. he's heard *the story corroborated by friends, neighbors, archaeologists—even agents from Mexico's version of the FBI*, although he admits Capone's name wasn't on the deed.
 c. I fancied that the clerk would have *me arrested and deported to Delhi*, disgracing my mother in the eyes of her neighbors and acquaintances.
 d. Bastard got *me fired from my old job*.

As in these examples, when an *-ed* clause is a direct object, it requires an expressed subject.

Correlations other than those included in the chart above are, of course, possible. The chart provides the correlations you're most likely to come across in written American English. Since English is ever-changing, it is impossible to capture all the possibilities while still showing that there are some limitations. Furthermore, not all functions and clause types are represented in the chart; for example, parenthetical and quotative clauses are not included, and the next chapter introduces two more clause types that are not listed here. Chapter 16 focuses on the final clause types that are described in this text: verbless clauses and tag questions.

Practice Set 15.3 More practice with non-finite clauses

Annotate the following sentences, taken from *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, written by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows (2008: 159).

1. There's so much to tell you.
2. I've been in Guernsey only twenty hours, but each one has been so full of new faces and ideas that I've reams to write.
3. You see how conducive to working island life is?
4. Look at Victor Hugo—I may grow prolific if I stay here for any length of time.
5. The voyage from Weymouth was ghastly, with the mail boat groaning and creaking and threatening to break to pieces in the waves.
6. I almost wished it would, to put me out of my misery, except I wanted to see Guernsey before I died.

7. And as soon as we came in sight of the island, I gave up the notion altogether because the sun broke beneath the clouds and set the cliffs shimmering into silver.
 8. As the mail boat lurched into the harbor, I saw St. Peter Port rising up from the sea on terraces, with a church on the top like a cake decoration, and I realized that my heart was galloping.
 9. As much as I tried to persuade myself it was the thrill of the scenery, I knew better.
 10. All those people I've come to know and even love a little, waiting to see—me.
-

Terms introduced in Chapter 15

Lexical form

infinitive marker (Inf)

Phrasal form

subjunctive (Subjunctive)

non-finite (NF)

Function

extraposition (Extp)

Concepts

bare infinitive

finite clause

gerund clause

infinitive clause

misplaced modifier

past participial clause

present participial clause

split infinitive

Chapter 15 Exercises

Exercise 15.1

The following sentences were taken from Norton Juster's (1989[1961]: 46-47) *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Fully annotate the sentences.

1. Huge wooden-wheeled carts streamed into the market square from the orchards, and long caravans bound for the four corners of the kingdom made ready to leave.
2. Sacks and boxes were piled high waiting to be delivered to the ships that sailed the Sea of Knowledge, and off to one side a group of minstrels sang songs to the delight of those either too young or too old to engage in trade.
3. But above all the noise and tumult of the crowd could be heard the merchants' voices loudly advertising their products.
4. "Get your fresh-picked ifs, ands, and buts." / "Hey-yaa, hey-yaa, hey-yaa, nice ripe wheres and whens." / "Juicy, tempting words for sale."
5. They were from every place imaginable and some places even beyond that, and they were all busy sorting, choosing, and stuffing things into cases.
6. As soon as one was filled, another was begun.
7. There seemed to be no end to the bustle and activity.
8. Milo and Tock wandered up and down the aisles looking at the wonderful assortment of words for sale.
9. There were short ones and easy ones for everyday use, and long and very important ones for special occasions, and even some marvelously fancy ones packed in individual gift boxes for use in royal decrees and pronouncements.
10. Milo had never thought much about words before, but these looked so good that he longed to have some.

Exercise 15.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures

for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. gerund clause as subject
2. gerund clause as direct object
3. gerund clause as object of preposition
4. present participial clause as post-modifier
5. present participial clause as non-restrictive modifier
6. past participial clause as post-modifier
7. past participial clause as non-restrictive modifier
8. infinitive clause in nominal role
9. infinitive clause as adverbial modifier
10. infinitive clause as post-modifier

Exercise 15.3

Select an excerpt of at least 500 words. Identify the non-finite *-ing*, *-ed*, and *to*-clauses in the excerpt by placing them in hashtags and underlining their head verb. For each non-finite clause you identify, identify its function with the appropriate subscript.

Create a table that shows the number of each type of clause and the number of times each clause type took a particular function. Only include the functions you find in your excerpt.

As an example, I have marked up the following short excerpt and created a table for it:

Bess Windom had been reading to herself as she did every evening. From #ObjPrep watching #DObj her lips move#, the boy could observe her slow progress. When Windom blurted his remark, Bess had been savoring her favorite verse in the fifth chapter of Matthew: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The boy, Joseph Moffat, sat with his back against a corner of the chimney, #Avl whittling a little boat#. He was twelve, with his mother’s stocky build, broad shoulders, light brown hair, and eyes so pale blue they seemed colorless sometimes. (Jakes 1982: 3)

	DObj	ObjPrep	Avl	Total
<i>-ing</i> clauses		1	1	2
<i>-ed</i> clauses				0
infinitive clauses	1			1

Table 15.2 Example non-finite clause table for analysis

Write a paragraph to discuss the following:

- Which of the non-finite clauses appeared more frequently in your text?
- Based on the information you read and practiced in this chapter, did your results fit in with what you had expected? Why, or why not? Consider structural features, such as the inclusion of a subject, and functions of the clauses in your answer.

After discussing those features, turn your focus to pragmatic/semantic features and stylistic uses of non-finite clauses. Write a paragraph to discuss the following:

- What, if any, instances of non-finite clauses in your excerpt strengthen the style and flow of information in the text? How so?
- What, if any, instances of non-finite clauses in your excerpt weaken the style and flow of information in the text? How so?

In your paragraph, make sure you tie your observations to the genre you selected.

Chapter 16: Verbless and tag clauses

Catherine wished to congratulate him, but knew not what to say, and her eloquence was only in her eyes. From them, however, the eight parts of speech shone out most expressively, and James could combine them with ease. — Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey (ch15)

16.1 Verbless clauses

All the clauses introduced thus far have, at the minimum, a head verb and any constituents required by the head verb. **Verbless clauses**, however, omit a copular verb and typically function as an adverbial element or non-restrictive modifier. Some verbless clauses take a structure similar to noun phrases with embedded post-modifiers, especially post-modifying preposition phrases. To begin the comparison between these two grammatical patterns, the COCA examples below demonstrate PPs functioning as post-modifiers for a head noun, with the relevant portions italicized and annotated:

- (16.1) a. *The zombie in charge* sat in a stall with the door swung halfway open.

```
(Subj  theDet
:      zombieCN
:      [PostM  inPrep
:          :      (ObjPrep chargeNN)
:          ]
:      )
```

- b. These spectra turned out to differ from that of the Sun—*rainbows on a planet orbiting a distant star* differ from *rainbows on the Earth*.

```
(Subj  rainbowsCN
:      [PostM  onPrep
:          :      (ObjPrep  aDet
:              :      planetCN
:              :      #PostM  |NF  orbitingMtV|
:              :      :      (DObj  aDet
:              :              :      <Att  distantAj>
:              :              :      starCN
:              :              )
:              #
:          )
:      ]
:      )
```

```
(ObjPrep rainbowsCN
:      [PostM  onPrep
:          :      (ObjPrep  theDet
:              :      EarthPropN
:              )
:          ]
:      )
```

Each annotated noun phrase contains an embedded post-modifier that restricts the meaning of the head noun to identify a more specific referent. The PP *in charge* in (a) identifies the zombie sitting in a stall and indicates that more than one zombie exists in the fictional world, and out of all the zombies that exist, this sentence refers to the one in charge. The PP restricts the meaning of the referent for the reader. The same occurs with the PPs in (b), where *on a planet orbiting a distant star* and *on the Earth* restrict the meaning of *rainbows* to indicate which rainbows the author is focusing on out of all the rainbows that exist. The first NP in (b) incorporates a second post-modifier, a non-finite clause to restrict the referent of *planet* to a planet that orbits a distant star—a planet not in Earth’s solar system.

Some structures of verbless clauses look similar to these examples on the surface, as demonstrated by the following examples taken from Google Books:

- (16.2) a. Paralee froze, *her heart in her throat*.

S

(Subj	Paralee ^{PropN)}		
Pred	Past <u>froze</u> ^{ftV}		
:	#Avl (Subj her ^{Det}		
:	:	heart ^{CN}	
:	:	)	
:	:	Pred NF GAP ^{CopV}	
:	:	[SAvl in ^{Prep}	
:	:	:	(Obj)Prep her ^{Det}
:	:	:	throat ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	]
:	:		
:	#		

- b. Finally, Uncle Connor went on, *his voice quiet now, gentle*, “Let me take you away from here, baby, please, Lys. Let me protect you and Archer. Please.”

@Quot	/Avl	finally ^{Av/}			
:	(Subj	Uncle Connor ^{PropN)}			
:	Pred	Past <u>went on</u> ^{ItV}			
:	:	#Avl (Subj his ^{Det}			
:	:	:		voice ^{CN}	
:	:	)			
:	:	Pred	NF GAP ^{CopV}		
:	:	:	<SPred <	quiet ^{Aj>}	
:	:	:	:		
:	:	:	/Avl now ^{Av/}		
:	:	:	:	<	gentle ^{Aj>}
:	:	:	>		
:	:				
:	:	#			
:					
@					

The gapped copular verb in both verbless clauses above could be substituted with a non-finite copular verb form without changing the meaning of the larger sentence, as in *Paralee froze, her heart beating in her throat* and *Uncle Connor went on, his voice sounding quiet now, gentle*. Adding in the non-finite verb form results in a grammatical structure that means roughly the same as the verbless forms. Two grammatical features in particular help to distinguish these examples from the post-modifiers in (16.1).

In (a), the subject adverbial *in her throat* locates the subject *her heart* with a gapped copular verb between the two arguments, and the non-finite verbless clause functions as an adverbial modifier, providing circumstantial information for Paralee's freezing. Paralee only has one heart, so *in her throat* does not restrict the meaning of the referent for *heart*; if it were a post-modifier, it would mean that Paralee has multiple hearts, and this particular sentence refers only to the one in her throat. Furthermore, post-modifying phrases can be grammatically expanded into relative clauses, as in *the zombie that was in charge sat in a stall*. Because *in her heart* is not a post-modifier, expanding it into a relative clause results in an ungrammatical structure: **Paralee froze, her heart that was in her throat*.

In example (b), the subject predicative in the verbless clause is interrupted by the optional adverbial *now*, as if *gentle* is an afterthought rather than strongly connected to the adjective *quiet*. Despite the interruption, *quiet* and *gentle* work together to describe the subject *his voice* with a comma joining the two constituents. The full non-finite verbless clause functions as an adverbial modifier for the quotative's predicate, providing a manner for how Uncle Connor sounded as he went on. As with the verbless clause in (a), the phrase *quiet, gentle* does not restrict the meaning of *voice* to refer to one out of Uncle Connor's many voices so cannot be a post-modifier. Moreover, the relative clause rewording results in the ungrammatical **Uncle Connor went on, his voice that was quiet now, gentle*.

You can use these distinguishing features to test whether a constituent is best analyzed as a phrase with an embedded post-modifier or a verbless clause structure:

- Does it restrict the meaning of a referent to indicate which noun, out of all the possibilities, the sentence refers to? If so, it is probably a post-modifier.
- Can you turn the potentially embedded phrase into a relative clause with grammatical results? If so, it is an embedded post-modifier.

These tests can help you identify post-modifiers, which aids with distinguishing between an embedded post-modifier and a verbless clause that has an expressed grammatical subject.

As with other non-finite clause structures, if the subject of a verbless clause is a pronoun, it will typically appear in its object form, as in the COCA examples below:

- (16.3) a. *Me in my '84 jeep*, we're going about four miles an hour.
 b. We clashed horribly, *him unable to control his frustration at my relative lack of experience as a coxswain*, me at first terrified and later angered by his terse ways.

- c. All it made me think of was my father: William Dineen with his short, dark beard, laughing and swinging me up in the air, *him red-eyed with anger when he and my mother argued, him silver-haired*, nodding, smiling, calling me, “The Girl Who Doesn’t Know What Fear Is!”

In each of the italicized examples above, the pronominal subject of the verbless clause is in its object form.

Like other non-finite clauses, verbless clauses can omit the subject, resulting in a reduced structure that typically consists of an adjective phrase with an embedded complement. The following COCA examples demonstrate this type of verbless clause.

- (16.4) a. *Leery of humans*, city coyotes must wait until night falls to venture out to forage.

#NRM	NF	GAP ^{CopV}
:	<SPred	leery ^{Aj}
:	:	[Comp of ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep humans ^{CN})
:	:	]
:	>	
#		
(Subj	(Att	city ^N)
:	coyotes ^{CN}	
)		

- b. The enchanting peacock, *radiant with unseen colors*, took him nearly three weeks, and when he was done he felt ready for the task he had secretly been preparing for: an imaginary kingdom.

(Subj	the ^{Det}	
:	<Att	enchanting ^{Aj} >
:	peacock ^{CN}	
)		
#NRM	NF	GAP ^{CopV}
:	<SPred	radiant ^{Aj}
:	:	[Comp with ^{Prep}
:	:	(ObjPrep <Att
:	:	unseen ^{Aj} >
:	:	colors ^{CN}
:	:	)
:	:	]
:	>	
#		

- c. We learn to live with these mini-hassles, *happy that most of them never balloon into unwelcome adventures*.

#Avl	NF	GAP ^{CopV}	
:	<SPred	happy ^{Aj}	
:	:	((Comp	that ^{SubConj}
:	:	(Subj	most ^{Pro}
:	:	:	[PostM of ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep them ^{Pro})
:	:	:	]
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	Pred /Avl never ^{Av} /
:	:	:	Pres balloon ^{CopV}
:	:	:	[SAvl into ^{Prep}
:	:	:	(ObjPrep <Att unwelcome ^{Aj} >
:	:	:	: adventures ^{CN}
:	:	:	)
:	:	:	]
:	:	:	
:	:	))	
:	>		
#			

Both (a) and (b) are non-restrictive modifiers for a head noun, so *leery of humans* provides more information about the coyotes, and *radiant with unseen colors* provides more information about the peacock. Like other non-finite clause structures, when a verbless clause begins a sentence, the interpretation is the the head noun following the clause is the one being modified, as in (a). However, in other locations of the sentence, the verbless clause follows the noun when it acts as a non-restrictive modifier, as in (b). The verbless clause in (c) is an adverbial modifier, providing information about how we live. As with other non-finite clause structures, the function of the adjective phrase is treated as though there were an expressed subject and verb, taking a subject predicative function within the verbless clause.

Treating these as verbless clauses rather than simple adjective phrases captures the similarities in terms of use and placement with other non-finite clauses and draws distinctions between their use and the use of adjective phrases. If the adjectives from the examples above were not accompanied by an embedded complement, the preferred wording would need to include a non-finite verb form:

- (16.5) a. *Leery, city coyotes must wait until night falls.
 b. Being leery of humans / Being leery, city coyotes must wait until night falls.

- c. *The enchanting peacock, radiant, took him nearly three weeks.
- d. The enchanting peacock, looking radiant with unseen colors / looking radiant, took him nearly three weeks.
- e. *We learn to live with these mini-hassles, happy.
- f. We learn to live with these mini-hassles, feeling happy that most of them never ballon into unwelcome adventures / feeling happy.

The ungrammatical rewordings in (a), (c), and (e) indicate that adjective phrases do not typically appear in the same patterns as non-finite clauses, and the grammatical rewordings in (b), (d), and (f) demonstrate these verbless clauses can incorporate a copular verb form without changing the meaning of the larger structure and, if a verb is present, the complement clause can be deleted.

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 5, adjective phrases can function as post-modifiers, but they tend to only be able to post-modify indefinite pronouns, as in these examples:

- (16.6) a. At school, though, something strange happened.

(Subj **something**^{Pro}
 : <PostM strange^{Aj}>
)

- b. This tiny restaurant has someone wonderful twisting wontons in the kitchen.

(Subj **someone**^{Pro}
 : <PostM wonderful^{Aj}>
)

If the pronouns were turned into nouns, the results would be ungrammatical: **the event strange happened* and **a chef wonderful twisting wontons in the kitchen*. In general, English prefers for adjective phrases to function as an attributive modifier, subject predicative, or object predicative. Verbless clauses, on the other hand, tend to function as an adverbial or a non-restrictive modifier with more diverse placement options within a clause. These preferences highlight how verbless clause structures inherently differ from adjective phrases.

Verbless clauses differ from co-indexed gapped head verbs in instances of **zeugma** (pronounced *zoog-muh* or [zugmə]), where a full short verb phrase of a finite clause is gapped and co-indexed with a previously used finite SVP. The examples below demonstrate this grammatical feature.

- (16.7) a. Many in the family were musical. Mary Anna Wilcox played the piano; *her husband, the cello; and Lester, the violin.* (Google Books)

S	S	(Subj	Mary Anna Wilcox ^{PropN})
		Pred	i Past <u>played</u> ^{MtV}
		:	(DObj the ^{Det}
		:	: piano ^{CN}
		:	)
	S	(Subj	her ^{Det}
		:	husband ^{CN}
		)	
		Pred	i GAP
		:	(DObj the ^{Det}
		:	: cello ^{CN}
		:	)
	and ^{CoConj}		
	S	(Subj	Lester ^{PropN})
		Pred	i GAP
		:	(DObj the ^{Det}
		:	: violin ^{CN}
		:	)

- b. He'd been big then, *she small.* (COCA)

S	S	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
		Pred	i PastPerf 'dPriAux
		:	: <u>been</u> ^{CopV}
		:	
		:	<SPred big ^{Aj} >
		:	/Avl then ^{Av} /
	S	(Subj	she ^{Pro})
		Pred	i GAP
		:	<SPred small ^{Aj} >

In (a), the understood SVP in the last two clauses is *played*, which retains its simple past tense in the gapped SVPs for the final two clauses. The author omits repetitive instances of *played*, yet

readers are able to unpack the final two clauses as *her husband played the cello and Lester played the violin*. In (b), the understood SVP in the second clause is *(ha)d been*, so readers can interpret that clause as *she'd been small*. Zeugma creates structures that avoid redundancy and package more efficient strings of similar constructions that omit predictable grammatical information.

Practice Set 16.1 Identifying the non-finite clauses

The following sentences were taken from Daphne du Maurier's (2001[1938]: 1-2) *Rebecca*. For each sentence, identify all non-finite clauses and their functions; furthermore, identify any noun phrases functioning as non-restrictive modifiers in these sentences.

1. Nature had come into her own again and, little by little, in her stealthy, insidious way had encroached upon the drive with long, tenacious fingers.
 2. The woods, always a menace even in the past, had triumphed in the end.
 3. They crowded, dark and uncontrolled, to the borders of the drive.
 4. The beeches with white, naked limbs leaned close to one another, their branches intermingled in a strange embrace, making a vault above my head like the archway of a church.
 5. And there were other trees as well, trees that I did not recognise, squat oaks and tortured elms that straggled cheek by jowl with the beeches, and had thrust themselves out of the quiet earth, along with monster shrubs and plants, none of which I remembered.
 6. The drive was a ribbon now, a thread of its former self, with gravel surface gone, and choked with grass and moss.
 7. The trees had thrown out low branches, making an impediment to progress; the gnarled roots looked like skeleton claws.
 8. Scattered here and again among this jungle growth I would recognise shrubs that had been landmarks in our time, things of culture and grace, hydrangeas whose blue heads had been famous.
 9. No hand had checked their progress, and they had gone native now, rearing to monster height without a bloom, black and ugly as the nameless parasites that grew beside them.
 10. I came upon it suddenly; the approach masked by the unnatural growth of a vast shrub that spread in all directions, and I stood, my heart thumping in my breast, the strange prick of tears behind my eyes.
 11. There was Manderley, our Manderley, secretive and silent as it had always been, the gray stone shining in the moonlight of my dream, the mullioned windows reflecting the green lawns and the terrace.
-

16.2 “Pro-verbs”

Along with the verbless wonders described in the previous section, English allows for many auxiliary forms, as well as the head verb *be*, to be used as “**pro-verbs**”¹¹⁷ (ProV), which refer to or stand in for an entire understood long verb phrase. They are like pronouns for long verb phrases. The most common pro-verb¹¹⁸ is *do*, since it can refer to any LVP. If the pro-verb refers to an LVP with an expressed auxiliary or string of auxiliaries, the pro-verb form is more likely to match that auxiliary or string of auxiliaries. However, if the pro-verb refers to an LVP with *be* as its head verb, the pro-verb is more likely to also take the form of *be*. The table below summarizes the typical patterns of pro-verb forms.

	Prior verb phrase	Pro-verb form
Pattern 1	<u>non-<i>be</i> verb</u>	<i>do</i>
Pattern 2	Aux ¹ (Aux ²) <u>verb</u>	Aux ¹ (Aux ²)
Pattern 3	Aux (Aux) <u>verb</u>	<i>do</i>
Pattern 4	(Aux ¹) (Aux ²) <u>verb</u>	Aux ³
Pattern 5	<u><i>be</i></u>	<i>be</i>
Pattern 6	—	any

Table 16.1 Patterns of pro-verb forms

A general restriction is that if the verb or auxiliary could not appear with negation without the dummy *do* in a typical SVP, it cannot be used as a pro-verb. Pro-verb forms look simple on the surface, but they convey intricate and potentially complex pragmatic information, especially when speakers or writers choose to shift the TMAV information on the pro-verb form to create a new meaning or use an unexpected pro-verb form to create nuanced meaning within the discourse.

The first pattern is the most basic, where a pro-verb form refers to a verb phrase headed by a main verb in an active simple tense and takes the appropriate form of *do*, as in the following example:

¹¹⁷ The term *pro-verb* is not widely used; Biber et al. (1999) refer to this same concept as *pro-predicate*, since the pro-form stands in for the head verb and the rest of the predicate. I use the term *pro-verb* rather than *pro-predicate* to serve as a reminder that as a verb form, it is fully finite and can be marked for TMAV information. Furthermore, in the same way pronouns are able to stand in for NPs—no matter how complex—pro-verbs can stand in for LVPs, even complex ones.

¹¹⁸ When typing the word *pro-verb*, make sure to always include the hyphen; otherwise, you’ll end up talking about a socio-cultural truth-bearing platitude or maxim, which can be an interesting topic but isn’t the grammatical feature described here.

(16.8) Some guys *liked the way I played* and some guys did^{ProV} n't. (COCA)

S	S	(Subj	some ^{Det}	
		:	guys ^{CN}	
		)		
		Pred	Past	<u>liked</u> ^{MtV}
		:	(DObj	the ^{Det}
		:	:	way ^{CN}
		:	:	((Comp (Subj I ^{Pro})
		:	:	Pred Past <u>played</u> ^{ItV}
		:	:	))
		:	)	
	and ^{CoConj}			
	S	(Subj	some ^{Det}	
		:	guys ^{CN}	
		)		
		Pred	Past	<u>did</u> ^{ProV} n't ^{Neg}

The pro-verb in the coordinated sentence structure inflects for the same tense of predicate from the first sentence structure: *liked* is in the simple past tense, and so is *did*. In this example, the pro-verb *did* means *liked the way I played*.

Pro-verbs can appear in non-coordinated sentence structures, as in the following COCA example, which follows the same basic pattern where the *do* pro-verb refers to a previous long verb phrase in an active simple tense.

(16.9) You *spent, Cobie, a lot of time in this movie running*.
Yes, I did^{ProV}, sir.

S	^ _{DiscM}	yes ^{Insert}	^
	(Subj	I ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Past	<u>did</u> ^{ProV}
	(Voc	sir ^{NN})	

This example is an excerpt from a live interview, and the pro-verb *did* in the reply refers to the LVP *spent a lot of time in this movie running* in the prompt.

Pro-verb forms match an auxiliary or string of auxiliaries from the prior verb phrase, as in the following COCA examples.

(16.10)a. “*Has* your mother *improved*?”
“The cardinal’s physicians say she has^{ProV} not.”

- b. If the kidnapper, seen in police sketches, heard the Fronczaks' plea, she *was not moved by it*. But others were^{ProV}.
- c. They may not think they *'re offending me or hurting other people*. But they are^{ProV}.

In each instance, the primary auxiliary from the italicized phrase provides the form of the pro-verb: *has*^{PriAux} / *has*^{ProV} in (a), *was*^{PriAux} / *were*^{ProV} in (b), and *(a)re*^{PriAux} / *are*^{ProV} in (c).

The first word from a semi-modal can also serve as a pro-verb form if—and only if—the semi-modal can be negated without a *do* auxiliary:

- (16.11) a. And if the dancing is not enough, she *'s going to bust a rhyme*.
Oh, am^{ProV} I? (COCA)
- b. So, as we approach this station, we know that there've always been get-togethers where kids *aren't supposed to be invited* but they are^{ProV}. (COCA)
- c. either he *'s got to be the jerk* or I do^{ProV}. (COCA)
- d. You *don't always have to give [your approval]* but if you do^{ProV}, don't let the cost be too high. (Google Books)

The forms of semi-auxiliaries beginning with *be*, such as *be going to*, *be supposed to*, and *be fixing to*, tend to take a form of *be* as the pro-verb, as in examples (a) and (b). However, semi-auxiliaries that require *do* for negation, such as *have to* and *have got to*, tend to take *do* as a pro-verb form, as in (c) and (d).

So far, the examples feature a pro-verb unsupported by auxiliaries, but pro-verbs can inflect for modality and aspect, and their inflections do not need to match the prior verb phrase. The following excerpt provides additional context to better interpret the pro-verb:

- (16.12) “He did all of Lauren’s expressions homework. In seconds. He knew what every face meant.”
- There was a silence while David shifted in bed and adjusted his pillow. “Joanna, honey,” he said, “I know you’re upset about Ryan going into special education, but—”
- “Yes, I am, but that doesn’t have anything to do with this.”
- David sighed. “Oh, Joanna. He *must have been guessing*.”
- “But he *could*^{ModAux} *n’t*^{Neg} *have*^{PriAux} *been*^{ProV}. If he was guessing, he wouldn’t have been right every time.”

S	but ^{CoConj}	
	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
	_{Pred}	_{ModPerf} could ^{ModAux} n’t ^{Neg}
	:	have ^{PriAux}
	:	<u>been</u> ^{ProV}
	:	

In this example, the full SVP, *couldn't have been*, carries both modality and perfect aspect and is headed by the pro-verb *been*, whose form matches the final auxiliary *been* in David's utterance. David's utterance uses *must* as the modal auxiliary to indicate necessity, indicating that the best interpretation of Ryan's performance on the test is that he guessed. However, Joanna switches the modal auxiliary to *could* and uses negation to indicate that David's interpretation is not possible.

Another COCA example of shifting modality in the pro-verb's short verb phrase is provided below:

- (16.13) Malnikov moved around the desk and stepped in front of Cloud. He was half a foot taller than Cloud and dramatically wider. He *could've broken Cloud in half with his bare hands*. Any other man, and he would^{ModAux} have^{ProV}.

A simple switch in modal auxiliaries provides a wealth of potential interpretations, all of which indicate that while Malnikov has the ability to break Cloud in half, he didn't. Without more context, you don't know why Cloud is special, but you can infer unstated information from the wording *Any other man, and he would have*: (1) Malnikov is willing to break people in half; (2) Cloud has done something worthy of being broken in half; (3) Cloud is different from other men; so (4) Malnikov will ignore his instincts in this case.

Even when a pro-verb could take the form of a previously mentioned auxiliary, it may appear as *do*, as in these COCA examples:

- (16.14)a. Some *have taken off*, others did^{ProV} n't^{Neg}.
 b. Being assistant manager meant that I could cover for Sam if he *ever got caught*, which he never did^{ProV}; it also meant that I *could take phone calls from his girlfriend at my leisure*, which I never did^{ProV}, except for once.

The typical expected form of the pro-verb in (a) is *have* because it refers to the LVP *have taken off*, and the sentence could have been structured as *Some have taken off, others haven't*. Shifting the pro-verb to *do* can create a subtle, nuanced interpretation that perhaps the ones that have not yet taken off never will. Saying *others haven't* indicates a possibility that may still take off at some point. The reality, though, is that the speaker may not have intended that subtle change. Speakers use *do* so frequently as a pro-verb form, especially in speech, that the switch to *do* may have just been a word switch without an intentional meaning switch. While you cannot definitively state what the speaker originally intended, you can postulate what the speaker *could* have intended based on context.

In (b), the pro-verb *did* refers to the LVP *ever got caught*, and because the auxiliary *get* cannot carry negation by itself, it requires a form of *do* as its expected pro-verb form. Continuing on in (b), the second instance of the pro-verb *did* creates a nuanced interpretation because it replaces an LVP that includes the auxiliary *could*, which is a viable source for a pro-verb, as in *He couldn't leave, but I could*. In this example, though, *did* refers to the LVP *could take phone calls from his girlfriend at my leisure* to create one of two interpretations: (1) while I could have taken calls from his girlfriend, the situation never presented itself, so I did not take any calls; or

(2) his girlfriend called, and I chose not to answer. Regardless of meaning, the *do* auxiliary shifts the meaning from conditional to reality because *could* represents ability, permission, or possibility, but *do* represents what actually happened or didn't happen.

Auxiliary forms can also be used as pro-verbs to represent verb phrases that do not incorporate their particular forms, as in these COCA examples:

- (16.15)a. But Carol *did know how to relax on occasion*, anyway she used to^{ProV}.
 b. Our man *tried it*. Should^{ProV} you?
 c. Francine doesn't want to leave her daughters, Alexandra and Catherine, but she has to^{ProV}.

Example (a) conveys quite a bit of layered meaning packed into one sentence. The use of the emphatic *do* in the first clause indicates that someone doesn't think Carol knows how to relax, and the use of *used to* as the pro-verb in the second clause indicates that she may no longer know how to relax. Based on the grammatical information provided in that one short sentence, you can get a sense of Carol's personality. Example (b) demonstrates the ability to use a modal auxiliary to represent a verb phrase that does not incorporate any auxiliaries, where *should* refers to *tried it*. Both examples (a) and (c) demonstrate that full semi-modal auxiliaries can appear as pro-verb forms, typically referring to a verb phrases with different verb forms.

If the pro-verb refers to a verb phrase headed by the verb *be*, the pro-verb will typically also take the form of *be*, as in these COCA examples:

- (16.16)a. People believe they *are money*, and so they are^{ProV}.
 b. "The current generation of men *is much better as fathers* than their fathers were^{ProV}," he says, "but it's not clear to me that we're *much better husbands* than our fathers were^{ProV}."
 c. You don't expect children to *be that frank*, but they are^{ProV}.
 d. There's *no phone at Witherswood*. Never has^{PriAux} been^{ProV}.

In each example, the pro-verb *be* refers to a verb phrase headed by *be*. Example (c) demonstrates that pro-verb forms can refer to LVPs within embedded non-finite clauses, where *are* refers to *be that frank*. As with other pro-verb forms, *be* can carry aspect marking along with tense, as in (d), where *has been* is in the present perfect.

A sixth and final pattern discussed in this section includes examples that provide no immediate context for the pro-verb's reference. In these cases, you need to look at the full discourse to understand its use. Consider the following COCA example, which is an excerpt taken from a fiction text and presented as three small paragraphs in the original text:

- (16.17) "Here you go," said Truckie. "Merry Christmas."
 It was a necktie, this one composed of a rep pattern in gray and blue stripes.
 "Aw, Uncle Truck, you should^{ModAux} n't have^{ProV}. But I already have one."

In looking at the full discourse, it's clear that *shouldn't have* means something along the lines of “shouldn't have bought this for me.” However, no explicit LVP is provided prior to the sentence to provide that interpretation; instead, you have to rely on your ability to contextually understand what *shouldn't have* refers to.

While the majority of the examples above present basic subject-predicate order for the pro-verb clause structures, in some instances, pro-verbs can appear in inverted clause structures, where the predicate appears before the subject. In declarative clauses, this inversion typically occurs with *so* or *nor* as an introductory constituent. In the COCA examples below, *so* is an adverb that grammatically functions as a “**pro-adverb**” (ProAv) to stand in for the rest of the predicate being referenced.

- (16.18)a. Ron *doted on his daughters* and so^{ProAv} did^{ProV} his wife, Vicki.
 b. David *brushed that off* and so^{ProAv} did^{ProV} Oprah.
 c. Luxury *has changed over the years*, and so^{ProAv} has^{ProV} the Ritz.
 d. In the novel, fear *is in the air*, but so^{ProAv} is^{ProV} magic.
 e. it *is supposed to be taken very seriously*, but so^{ProAv} is^{ProV} falsely accusing someone.
 f. If it *survived*, so^{ProAv} would^{ProV} she.

These examples incorporate a variety of pro-verb forms to demonstrate that inversion is a possibility regardless of the pro-verb used. When annotating these examples, the predicate precedes the subject in the annotation, and example (d) is fully annotated below to show this inversion:

- (16.19) In the novel, fear is in the air, but so is magic.

S	S	[_{Avl}	in ^{Prep}
		:	(Obj _{Prep} the ^{Det}
		:	: novel ^{CN}
		:	)
		]	
		(Subj	fear ^{NN})
		_{Pred}	_{Pres} is ^{CopV}
		:	[_{SAvl} in ^{Prep}
		:	: (Obj _{Prep} the ^{Det}
		:	: air ^{NN}
		:	)
		:	]
	but ^{CoConj}		
S		_{Pred}	/ _{Avl} so ^{ProAv} /
		:	_{Pres} is ^{ProV}
		(Subj	magic ^{NN})

In instances like these, the function of *so* is best described as adverbial because, while it is grammatically required for the inverted structure, it does not function as a required argument for the pro-verb. It provides the same meaning as *too* or *as well* would in other sentences, both of which carry the adverbial function. For instance, without inversion, this example would not incorporate *so*: *fear is in the air, and magic is, too*.

The following COCA examples incorporate *nor* as a coordinator with an inverted clause structure headed by a pro-verb form.

- (16.20)a. But Amara *hadn't given up yet*, nor would^{ProV} she.

S	S	but ^{CoConj}	
		(Subj	Amara ^{PropN})
		Pred	PastPerf had ^{PriAux} n't ^{Neg}
		:	: <u>given up</u> ^{ItV}
		:	
		:	/Avl yet ^{Av/}
	nor ^{CoConj}		
	S	Pred	Mod <u>would</u> ^{ProV}
		(Subj	she ^{Pro})

- b. This was not a vision any of those regimes *was likely to embrace*. Nor have^{ProV} they.

S	nor ^{CoConj}	
	Pred	Pres <u>have</u> ^{ProV}
	(Subj	they ^{Pro})

In both examples, the full predicate consists only of a short verb phrase headed by the pro-verb, and its subject appears after the predicate. In general, when *nor* coordinates two clause structures, some type of inversion is required, whether it is full clause inversion like the examples above or an auxiliary in the pre-nucleus slot as in the example provided in Chapter 3: *we did not know where our hotel was—nor did we know its name* (COCA).

16.3 Tag questions

Tag questions (TagQ) are short questions that incorporate a pro-verb form in an inverted clause structure and are tagged on to the end of statements for a variety of reasons, including confirming expectations, eliciting information, expressing surprise, incorporating a rhetorical question, and emphasizing a point. The pro-verb forms in tag questions are more restricted than other pro-verbs because they can only carry tense or modality, and the number of auxiliaries allowed in the pattern is more restricted. For instance, semi-modal auxiliaries do not tend to be used in tag questions even though they can be pro-verb forms in other instances. The auxiliary in

the tag question typically matches the auxiliary from the main clause, matches the head verb *be* from the main clause, or uses the dummy *do*.

Regardless of the pro-verb used, the SVP can consist of only one verb form and, if negated, the contracted form of the negator. The tag question carries the opposite polarity from the main clause, so if the main clause is positive, the tag question is negated, but if the main clause is negated, the tag question is positive. A final restriction is that the subject in the tag question is typically a pronoun. These features are summarized in the table below.

Main clause	Tag question
positive polarity	$\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Tense } \underline{\text{DO}}^{\text{ProV}} \text{ n'tNeg} \mid \mid$ (Subj pronoun ^{Pro}) $\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Tense } \underline{\text{BE}}^{\text{ProV}} \text{ n'tNeg} \mid \mid$ $\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Tense } \underline{\text{HAVE}}^{\text{ProV}} \text{ n'tNeg} \mid \mid$ $\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Mod } \underline{\text{MODAL}}^{\text{ProV}} \text{ n'tNeg} \mid \mid$
negative polarity	$\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Tense } \underline{\text{DO}}^{\text{ProV}} \mid \mid$ (Subj pronoun ^{Pro}) $\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Tense } \underline{\text{BE}}^{\text{ProV}} \mid \mid$ $\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Tense } \underline{\text{HAVE}}^{\text{ProV}} \mid \mid$ $\ _{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Mod } \underline{\text{MODAL}}^{\text{ProV}} \mid \mid$

Table 16.2 Typical structures for tag questions

As full clause structures that are typically semi-embedded into a main clause without being dependent on the larger structure, tag questions are annotated as “special clauses” like parenthetical clauses and are enclosed with curly brackets ({}).

The following COCA examples are annotated:

(16.21)a. Wrong numbers were Elsie's department, weren't they?

S (Subj <Att wrong^{Aj}>
 : **numbers**^{CN}
)
 $\|_{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Past } \underline{\text{were}}^{\text{CopV}} \mid$
 : (SPred (**Elsie**^{PropN})'s^{Det}
 : : **department**^{CN}
 :)
 ||
 {TagQ $\|_{\text{Pred}} \mid \text{Past } \underline{\text{were}}^{\text{ProV}} \text{ n'tNeg} \mid \mid$
 : (Subj **they**^{Pro})
 }

- b. You will be careful, won't you?

S	(Subj	you ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Mod	will ^{ModAux}
	:	:	be ^{CopV}
	:		
	:	<SPred	careful ^{Aj} >
	{TagQ	Pred	Mod wo ^{ProV} n't ^{Neg}
	:	(Subj	you ^{Pro})
	}		

- c. Santa doesn't wrap presents, does he?

S	(Subj	Santa ^{PropN})	
	Pred	Pres	does ^{PriAux} n't ^{Neg}
	:	:	wrap ^{MtV}
	:		
	:	(DObj	presents ^{CN})
	{TagQ	Pred	Pres does ^{ProV}
	:	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
	}		

The subject of the tag question is usually the pronominal form of the subject of the main clause, as seen in the examples above. For instance, in (a), the subject of the main clause, *wrong numbers*, is the referent for *they*, the subject of the tag question. Furthermore, the tense or modality from the main clause matches the tense or modality of the tag question, so the tag questions in (a) and (c) match the tense of the main clause, and the tag question in (b) matches the modality. The main clauses in (a) and (b) are positive in polarity, so their tag questions are negated; however, the main clause in (c) is negated, so the tag question is not.

The main clauses in the examples above are full clauses, but they do not need to be, especially in informal registers.

(16.22) “Barbaric, weren't they?” said someone reading the board next to him. (COCA)

In this example, the tag question *weren't they* follows the incomplete clause *barbaric*. If it had been expanded, it would read something like *They were barbaric, weren't they?* Even when the clause is incomplete, the subject of the tag question matches the assumed subject of the fragmented main clause.

For most tag questions, the expected answer is the opposite polarity of the tag question: if the tag question is negated, the expected answer is most likely ‘yes,’ but if it is positive, the expected answer is ‘no.’ Of course, if the tag question is rhetorical, no answer is expected, but the speaker is emphasizing a point with opposing polarity. For instance, assuming the example above incorporates a rhetorical tag question, the point the speaker is making is that they were indeed barbaric.

The following COCA examples further demonstrate the opposing polarity between the main clause and the tag question, as well as the opposing polarity between the tag question and the expected answer.

- (16.23)a. But this can’t be a school anymore, can it?
 b. Seems kind of obvious in a way, doesn’t it?
 c. Even if the manager has made the decision when he gets to the mound, and it’s often made because the manager usually doesn’t come out to the mound unless there’s a decision made to change pitchers, how you communicate with the pitcher probably matters, doesn’t it?

When incorporating a tag question, speakers have an idea of what the answer is or what it *should* be; if they didn’t, the information would be more likely to be structured as an interrogative clause rather than a statement with a tag question.

When the subject of a tag question is *I*, verb agreement strays from its typical expectations if the pro-verb is a form of *be*. Typically, *I* requires *am* as the present tense form of *be*, but if the tag question is negated, it shifts to *aren’t*. The COCA examples illustrate that shift:

- (16.24)a. I’m not in trouble, am I?
 b. I’m going to have to call Sam, aren’t I?
 c. I’m her brother, ain’t I?

Example (a) demonstrates that if the tag question is positive, the pro-verb form is *am*, which is the expected form of *be* that agrees with a first-person singular subject. If the pro-verb needs to be negated, though, as in (b), the typical form in the tag question is *aren’t*. Nowhere else would *are* be the expected form of *be* for a first-person pronoun *I* subject: **I aren’t calling Sam*.

Some dialects retain an older contraction, *ain’t*, which originally comes from a contracted form of *am not* and can be used in these cases, as in (c). However, over time, some English dialects have lost that contraction, their speakers insisting that “Ain’t ain’t a word.” Negated tag questions require a contracted form, though, and due to the loss of the *ain’t* contraction, *aren’t* became the widely accepted form for instances where *I* is the subject.

If the tag question is rhetorical, emphasizes a point being made in the main clause, or passive-aggressively points out a flaw in someone else’s ideas or argument, the polarity may not change between the main clause and tag question, as in these COCA examples.

- (16.25)a. I’m invading your private time, am I?
 b. I’m grumpy, am I?

- c. So, my son wants to fly, does he?
- d. Chivalrous, am I?

In (a), the tag question *am I?* underscores the point that the addressee believes the speaker is invading their private time, but the speaker either disagrees or doesn't care. Rewording that sentence with a negated tag question changes the illocutionary force of the utterance, changing the speaker's attitude and expectations. Notice the difference between the wording in (a) and the reworded *I'm invading your private time, aren't I?* These same-polarity tag questions are more likely to be found with positive polarity in both clauses. For instance, most speakers would find *I'm not grumpy, aren't I?* awkward while (b) above is grammatically sound.

Tag questions are distinct from similarly structured clause-like inserts serving as discourse markers. For example, consider the COCA examples below:

- (16.26)a. I'm in no mood for wiseacre stuff, get me?

S	(Subj	I ^{Pro})	
	Pred	Pres	<u>'m</u> ^{CopV}
	:	[SAvl	<u>in</u> ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep <u>no</u> ^{Det}
	:	:	mood ^{CN}
	:	:	[PostM <u>for</u> ^{Prep}
	:	:	(ObjPrep <Att <u>wiseacre</u> ^{Aj} >
	:	:	stuff ^{NN}
	:	:	)
	:	:	]
	:	:	)
	:	:	]
	^DiscM	<u>get me</u> ^{Insert}	^

- b. You work for me, got it?

S	(Subj	you ^{Pro})
	Pred	Pres <u>work</u> ^{ItV}
	:	[Avl <u>for</u> ^{Prep}
	:	(ObjPrep me ^{Pro})
	:	]
	^DiscM	<u>got it</u> ^{Insert}

The inserts *get me* and *got it* are like the inserts *you know* and *I mean* because they have clause-like structure and provide discourse-level information. Unlike other discourse markers, they are restricted in their placement, mimicking the placement of tag questions and being used in ways similar to tag questions. While they mimic tag questions, they are still inserts because they do not take the same grammatical features as tag questions. For instance, the subject of the insert in (b) is *it*, yet the referent for *it* doesn't appear in the main clause. Furthermore, the polarity cannot shift between the main clause and the insert: **You work for me, got not it?* or **You work for me, doesn't it?*

These inserts have been grammaticalized so that their forms are not malleable—the insert *got it?* shows up in the same form whenever it's used (i.e., it doesn't show up with different subjects or even in a different tense). Because they are frozen in form, they are annotated as compounded inserts. Changing the tense of *got* to the present tense *get* results in a different insert because the uses of *get it?* and *got it?* are different for most speakers. While *got it?* implies the speaker expects the addressee to accept conditions in the main clause, *get it?* implies the speaker wants to make sure the addressee understands information from the main clause. The insert *get it?* often follows jokes or puns, as this conversation from COCA demonstrates; in this example, the slashes divide different participants' input, and the *get it* insert is italicized:

(16.27) Here we snow again. / Say it ain't snow. / There is no business like snow business.
/ Snow biz. / Snow doubt about it. / Going snow-where fast. / Oh snow, snow
way! / Ice, ice, baby. / Snow, my god. / Snow joke, *get it?*

There are “snow” many ways the grammatical features of these inserts differ from tag questions.

Single-word inserts like “good?” or “okay?” can also be used in ways similar to tag questions, but they are discourse markers rather than tag questions. The COCA examples below include single-word inserts, which have been italicized:

- (16.28) a. You two can walk back to the house on your own after school, *okay?*
b. You wrote this, *right?*
c. Look, Youngblood, you like to play, *good?*
d. Let's get rolling on this next year, *cool?*
e. I mean, that's definitely the idea, *yeah?*

Again, these inserts can pragmatically function in the same way as tag questions (e.g., they can verify information or provide a rhetorical reading), but they are grammatically distinct from tag questions.

One insert that has changed slightly in how it can be used is *see*, as in these COCA examples:

- (16.29) a. There's a little lock on it, *see?*
b. It's a park that grows needles, *see?*
c. That's 'cause the police live in your neighborhood, *see?*

Most speakers can use *see* in instances like (a), where the speaker is literally pointing out some feature or information and wants to verify that the addressee can see what is being pointed out. However, in other uses, like (b) and (c), it helps the speaker to verify understanding. For some dialects, *you see* is required to create this verification reading of the insert, but other dialects still use *see* on its own. For those speakers that don't use *see* on its own, it can sound archaic, which is the basis of a joke made in *The Muppets*:

- (16.30) WALTER: ... and then, when he thought they were alone, he said, "There's oil under this theater, see! I'm gonna tear it to the ground, see! Sweet, sweet oil, see!"
- MARY: People still talk like that?
- WALTER: Maybe that's just how he sounded in my head. (Bobin 2011)

Walter's use of *see* as an insert and the voice he uses to speak create an archaic-sounding dialogue.

Practice Set 16.2 Annotation practice

The following sentences were taken from *Why Can't I Be You* by Allie Larkin (2013). Fully annotate each sentence.

1. The day before the Ivolushun launch, Monica called me into her office.
 2. "Are you still leaving us," she asked, "after this is all over?"
 3. "Yeah," I said. "I think I'm moving to Seattle."
 4. It felt nice to be honest with her and not feel like I had to scramble and tell her what she wanted to hear.
 5. "You paint?" she said, raising her eyebrows.
 6. "No chance I could move you over to art direction in the ad department, is there?"
 7. "Listen," she said, sitting down in the chair next to me, like we were friends having a chat. "I get it."
 8. "Thank you," I said, blinking hard, worried I might cry.
 9. It reminded me of what Anita said: "What doesn't kill us gives us superpowers."
 10. "I've noticed you two aren't exactly chatty lately. Fix that, okay?"
-

16.4 Inserts in social media and texting

Through social media and texting, English writers have introduced inserts specifically associated with those platforms. For example, writers can use *lol* as an insert, which has been grammaticalized and lost its original meaning, 'laughing out loud.' The following tweets incorporate *lol* as an insert:

- (16.31) a. what a beautiful day to not do anything lol
 b. I just realized I bought an ice cream maker and I'm lactose intolerant so why did I do that lol
 c. Soon as I get some coffee in my system I'm hitting the road. Your girl is tired. No traveling for me for a minute unless it's to Wakanda lol
 d. Don't bother me if you play games lol that's annoying af
 e. y'all can understand that US schools tell half truths, omit facts, and straight up lie about sex education so why wouldn't they do the same with other highly politicized subjects lol

The tweeters are most likely not laughing out loud while typing these statements. Instead, the *lol* functions as a discourse marker that brings levity to a statement, whether the statement is potentially funny, as in (b), or very serious, as in (e).

Twitter and other social media platforms use hashtags¹¹⁹ (#) to tag particular messages, themes, or topics, and, in some cases, hashtags function as discourse organization tools that allow users to find and interact with specific content. Writers can incorporate hashtags into the grammatical structure of the message, as in these examples below, taken from Christine Schreyer's (@C_Schreyer) tweets:¹²⁰

- (16.32) a. New Vlog Brothers video in which @hankgreen tells the world his fav college class was #Anthropology Yes! (Aug. 11, 2017)
 b. Off to Castlegar to talk about my research & for he connections between #langugerevitalization & #conlang learning. (Aug. 2, 2017)
 c. Random thoughts on solo road trips....@dixiechicks #NotReadytoMakeNice still gives me literal goose-bumps when I hear it! (Aug. 3, 2017)

Schreyer, an anthropology professor in Canada, often uses hashtags related to academic content, and, in these examples, the hashtag functions as a grammatical constituent within the clause structure. For instance, in (a), the hashtag *#Anthropology* is a subject predicative within a nominal clause. A hashtag can introduce more than one word, creating a complex compound form written without any spaces since a space ends the hashtag's reign; therefore, the hashtag *#langugerevitalization* is a two-word NP functioning as part of a compounded object of the preposition *between*, yet it is written without any spaces. Hashtags can become lengthy with this

¹¹⁹ The hashtag by any other name reads just as sweet... The hashtag symbol was first called an octothorpe (or 'octothorp'), the first half of which refers to the eight points (*octo*-). The *thorpe* portion is taken from someone's last name, and some online sources trace it back to Jim Thorpe, an Olympic athlete. While Jim Thorpe had nothing to do with the octothorpe itself, the person who supposedly named it greatly admired him. The term *octothorpe*, while fun to say, fell out of fashion when it started being called the pound key or pound sign though no one is really sure why that switch happened. And, of course, some people simply call it the number sign since it's used to indicate numbers: #3. Finally, the hashtag is also called a hash sign.

¹²⁰ All tweets in this section are typed as is—complete with any autocorrections, typos, punctuation/spacing conventions, and emoji; even though the emoji available on my computer look slightly different than the emoji on Twitter, the faces/actions are the same.

mashing together of words, as in (c), where *not ready to make nice* has been compounded into a single hashtag. Schreyer capitalizes key words within the hashtag as a way of making it easier to read, though not all hashtags receive such treatment.

Hashtags do not need to be integrated into the grammatical context of the tweet, as demonstrated by the following tweet, taken from I.O. Scheffer (@IOScheffer) on August 13, 2017:

(16.33) Me: *reads post where someone types “a” instead of “an”*

Me: Stop. Don’t be that person.

Also Me: “I think you meant ‘an’.”

#humor #grammar

Scheffer’s tweet ends with two hashtags to mark the topic or content of the tweet without incorporating the either *humor* or *grammar* into the structure of the message itself. Here, the hashtag acts as an insert functioning as a discourse marker to provide searchable themes for the message.

Some hashtags are more cryptic, especially if they use abbreviations that are not widely used by the majority of Twitter users. For instance, consider the following tweet from Lynne Murphy (@lynneguist) on August 14, 2017:

(16.34) Difference of the Day: AmE ‘cat/pet door’ v BrE ‘cat flap’ (or ‘catflap’). Thanks @hoosiertar #DotD #CatWeek

As a linguist, Murphy’s tweets are primarily about language, and she regularly tweets differences in lingo between American English (AmE) and British English (BrE). In this tweet, she’s saying that while we call it a ‘cat door’ in America, they call it a ‘cat flap’ in England. At the end of her observation that is expressed as a sentence fragment, she thanks the user @hoosiertar for pointing out this difference, and she uses the hashtag #DotD to reference the topic: ‘difference of the day.’ This example demonstrates how hashtags can be ambiguous, because, for most Twitter users (or tweeples, twitterers, or tweeps), that particular hashtag means “dog of the day,” and so searching for #DotD on Twitter leads to tweets that mostly feature pictures of cute dogs. Murphy also tags it as a part of #CatWeek, a hashtag sometimes used for Ellen Degeneres’s annual cat week but also used by others who celebrate cats more frequently throughout the year.

Hashtags often do more than mark the content or topic of a tweet for easier searchability and organization. Many hashtags are entrenched in popular culture and carry an additional layer of pragmatic meaning on top of what the tweet provides within its message. Three of these culturally-referenced hashtags are #fixitjesus, #lestruggle, and #reclaimingmytime.

Inspired by Phaedra Parks from the reality TV show *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, the hashtag #fixitjesus follows messages that detail a problem or complaint with varying degrees of seriousness. The following tweets feature the hashtag:

- (16.35) a. Honestly cannot get outta bed bc cramps #fixitjesus (@CanLiv, the influencer., Aug. 14, 2017)
- b. #Nashville traffic is the epitome of #Atlanta traffic on 45 mph rural roads. #fixitjesus #travelnurse (@adgely1006, AyeYoAdrian, Aug. 4, 2017)
- c. I've been waiting for days for a response from @GoDaddy's Premium Wordpress Support. smh #FixItJesus @Godaddysupport (@VonniMediaMogul, JaVonni Brustow, Aug. 15, 2017)
- d. Angry over this #ABC2020. Jurors convict due to some made up story or they thought this FBI agent would "outwit" the county. #FixItJesus (@Dahling82, Greg Dahling, Aug. 11, 2017)

People who get the reference to Phaedra Parks probably read the hashtag with a particular intonation even if reading silently, and it creates a reading of "someone take this away from me because I cannot handle this right now." Most tweets carrying this hashtag are everyday problems, such as those in (a)-(c), but others focus on larger issues, dealing with politics or national problems, as in (d).

A series of hashtags inserts *le* before common words, usually nouns, to "French-ify" the phrase for a reading with faux sophistication, including the hashtag #*lestruggle*. This practice may have gotten its start from a viral animation video titled "Ze End of the World" (Fluid 2003), or people may have picked it up from Pepé Le Pew in *Looney Tunes*. Rage Comics also adopted the practice in 2007-2008, which may have helped spread its use even more. Regardless of its origins, when tweets end with #*lestruggle*, it often carries a connotation of "the struggle is real" mixed in with a dash of "first-world problems." For instance, consider the following tweets:

- (16.36) a. My body like get some rest T. My mind just wanna work. #LeStruggle (@TheMommaTea, Gawd, Aug. 2, 2017)
- b. My life's storyline is set up to play out like a classic hallmark ch. romcom movie. But, no rom currently so just pure comedy. #lestruggle (@jseaBORN_cr8tiv, Joannah Seaborn, Aug. 8, 2017)
- c. As a #socialmedia coordinator do you wait for photographer pics or iphone? #lestruggle (@TheAndreaTimes, Andrea Moreno, Aug. 12, 2017)

All these tweets provide a common conundrum before the #*lestruggle* tag: the tweets set up conflicting scenarios or options before tagging it as a "sophisticated" struggle. For instance, in (a), user @TheMommaTea is bemoaning the fact that she's physically tired, but her brain isn't letting her sleep. There are two sides to her problem, and the struggle is real. In (c), Andrea Moreno isn't sure whether she should use pictures from an iPhone or wait for better quality photos—a struggle I'm sure many social media coordinators face since iPhone pictures, while in lower resolution, are ready for distribution much faster.

While these tweets show how people can use #*lestruggle* to connote a reading of "I know this isn't serious, but it's real to me," other tweets use it as a way of marking national problems that defy explanation, such as the following tweet:

(16.37) Some of these same ppl screaming “white lives matter” were just saying “all lives matter” ... smh #leprivilege #lestruggle (@TruthBeCold, truth, Aug. 12, 2017)

The user @TruthBeCold points out that the Black Lives Matter movement was denounced by some (mostly white) Americans who said the movement privileged black lives and should be renamed All Lives Matter. However, after the tragedy in Charlottesville, where a woman was killed at a rally protesting the White Nationalist Rally, plans for rallies under the name “White Lives Matter” started popping up.¹²¹ The use of the #lestruggle hashtag alongside the message about the national problem provides a way for @TruthBeCold to poke fun of #leprivilege of the white nationalists who are now facing #lestruggle of trying to get others to recognize that white lives matter.

The *le* prefix can be used with nouns other than *struggle*, as seen in the tweet above with #leprivilege, and the following screenshot shows a tweet from Dora Korpar on August 11, 2017, using the hashtag #lesigh:



Image 16.1 Tweet featuring #lesigh

Korpar’s use of #lesigh creates a connotation whereby she’s making fun of her own problem; she realizes it isn’t the end of the world, but it’s still a very real frustration for her when people get her name wrong.

Culturally relevant hashtags pop up quickly. For example, an online video dated July 27, 2017, featured Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters from California interrupting Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, telling him that she’s reclaiming her time. In the video, Waters asks Mnuchin direct questions, and he quickly moves away from the topic in his answers. She interrupts him, saying, “Reclaiming my time.” Because she has control of the floor for a set time, his long-winded, off-topic answers were literally wasting her time. The video went viral and, within days, had spawned a new hashtag:

¹²¹ Most of those rallies were cancelled within days of announcing their planned dates.

- (16.38) a. I want to call out of work and tell my boss I'm #reclaimingmytime but I don't want the bank to reclaim my house so... 🙌 #lestruggle (@HouseJones_, Her., July 30, 2017)
- b. I'll be Maxine Watering a lot of relationships in this season. Bahahaha. #ReclaimingMyTime (@delaugusta, Del Augusta, Aug. 5, 2017)
- c. I can't take anymore twitter today. #ReclaimingMyTime (@lilsister7, Annastasia, Aug. 14, 2017)
- d. I have too much going for myself to worry about people who failed/ fail/ will fail to realize my value #ReclaimingMyTime (@MerciBest, Merci Best, Aug. 14, 2017)

While some tweets, such as (a), use the hashtag in joking ways, many users have adopted the motto “reclaiming my time” as a reminder that they should only focus on what matters. Time is limited and should not be wasted. The tweet in (b) is especially interesting because Del Augusta turns Maxine Waters’s name into a verb (*Maxine Watering*), indicating he will interrupt relationships so that he can focus on what’s actually important.

Hashtags have even leaked over into spoken language in some instances when people use the word *hashtag* in conversation in the same way they’d use it in writing. For instance, in the song “24K Magic,” Bruno Mars (2016) sings the lyric “hashtag blessed.” Jimmy Fallon (2013) uses this practice as a point of humor in his #Hashtag sketches on *The Tonight Show*, the first of which features Justin Timberlake. The following is the opening of that sketch:

- (16.39) JIMMY Hey, Justin. What’s up?
 JUSTIN Nothing much, Jimmy. Hashtag chillin. What’s up with you?
 JIMMY Just been busy working. Hashtag riseandgrind! Hashtag isitfridayyet.
 JUSTIN Hey, check it out. I brought you some cookies. Hashtag homemade.
 Hashtag oatmealraisin. Hashtag showmethethecookie!
 JIMMY Sweet. Hashtag dontmindifidont.

Every time either one of them says *hashtag*, they create the “hashtag” sign with their hands by holding up two fingers on each hand and double tapping them together. Obviously, people don’t walk around talking like this sketch in everyday life, but the use of *hashtag* (e.g., Bruno Mars’s *hashtag blessed*) does show up in naturally-occurring conversations.

As these examples demonstrate, inserts can take a variety of grammatical forms and pragmatic functions, especially when analyzing hashtags, which can be a single-word insert acting as an organizational tool or a full clause-like structure compounded to function as commentary on modern society. Social media users and texters rely on these types of conventions to incorporate multifaceted and, oftentimes, complex layers of meaning into a short message.

Practice Set 16.3 Hashtags on Twitter

As discussed in the previous section, hashtags can serve as discourse markers, carrying pragmatic information about the message, author, and cultural context. Three hashtags on Twitter are #noregerts, #sorrynotsorry, and #nerdlife. Five example tweets are provided for each hashtag. Analyze the tweets, identifying the range of uses for each hashtag, considering both the appropriate context for using the hashtag and the meaning added to the message by the hashtag.

#noregerts

1. I found a box of stuff from when I lived in Idaho. It was mostly clothes to wear under my normal clothes so I didn't freeze to death. #noregerts (@MMMokler, Molly Mokler, June 22, 2019)
2. Yup- his tattoo is of a deer wearing armor with little fairy wings- #noregerts (@GallagherLinus, Linus Gallagher, June 21, 2019)
3. Finally opened that box of cookies. Ate two. Looked at the expiry: January. Ate two more. #noregerts (@JasonDeWitt15, Jason DeWitt, June 20, 2019)
4. Originally we were going to go to a water park today, but then we remembered that lol we are running a half marathon tomorrow after a full week of theme parking, so now I'm just serving all these Ursula #DisneyBound looks at our hotel pool. #noregerts (@cheriemorte, Super Gay Cherie, April 6, 2019)
5. Joe sends me the outline of his tattoo and our daughters name was spelled wrong #noregerts #seewhatididthere (@mollynstanton, molly, February 4, 2019)

#sorrynotsorry

6. Last. Working. Friday. Of. Summer. Be jealous, #sorrynotsorry (@theingredients4, Kiley, June 28, 2019)
7. I wouldn't say I'm a feminist, but I do got some feminist ways #SorryNotSorry (@KariiBbg, awkward black girl, June 28, 2019)
8. I will never not post pics of my daughter on social media. #SorryNotSorry (@JoseShhmozay, Jose DeJesus, June 28, 2019)
9. If you wish that I listen to your argument, misgendering any trans person will guarantee that I will do the exact opposite. #sorrynotsorry (@AriadneTzn, Ariadne Tzn, June 28, 2019)
10. Prayers going out to everyone in Texas. 🙏 Nothing happened, it just sucks they gotta live there. 😞 #sorrynotsorry #okietweets (@oklahomaishome, Oklahoma Blonde, June 27, 2019)

#nerdlife

11. This is like sports for me. #DemDebate2 #nerdlife (@esperali, Beth Alleman, June 27, 2019)
12. My life is so not nerdy enough *she says, whilst engaging in conversations about Elves, Sindarin and the history of middle earth* #nerdlife (@JuniperMaei, Juniper Maei, June 27, 2019)
13. If you want to make me super happy just buy me some cheap microbio or science knick knack. I just ordered a 10\$ keychain and I am SO EXCITED. Diamonds and jewels ain't got

nothing on my E. coli petri plate keychain. #passion #nerdlife (@kpetrellaa, Kate, June 25, 2019)

14. When finally finding something you've been searching for, does anyone else play the Zelda "found item" sound in your head? 🤔💎 ... no? Just me...? 🤪 #nerdlife (@marielovlee, tiara, June 25, 2019)
 15. Oh, how I love getting things organized at the beginning of a new project. Thanks for the inspiration, #TeamKate! #shelfies #nerdlife #wearewriting (@megankatenelson, Dr. Megan Kate Nelson, June 26, 2019)
-

Terms introduced in Chapter 16

Lexical form
pro-verb (ProV)

Function
tag question (TagQ)

Concepts
verbless clause
zeugma

Chapter 16 Exercises

Exercise 16.1

The following sentences were taken from J.K. Rowling's (2012: 94-95) *The Casual Vacancy*. Fully annotate the sentences.

1. "Ghastly," said Howard; but then he noticed that Samantha's glass was empty, and heaved himself out of his chair to top it up.
2. Shirley drank soup for a while with her eyebrows hovering near her hairline.
3. Samantha slugged down more wine in defiance.
4. "D'you know what?" she said, her tongue slightly unwieldy.
5. "I thought I saw him on the way here."
6. But Maureen croaked over Shirley, drowning her out.
7. "Gavin's quite friendly with the Fairbrothers, isn't he, Miles?"
8. Near identical expressions of complacent amusement touched the candlelit faces of the three women around the table.
9. But in the case of Samantha, Gavin's passivity and caution awoke a feline cruelty; she had a powerful desire to see him slapped awake, pulled into line or otherwise mauled by a feminine surrogate.
10. "Then we've had her in the deli, haven't we, How?" said Maureen excitedly.

Exercise 16.2

Find the following patterns in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents. The head words you identify need to be different across the patterns. Provide the full sentence structures for context, but only annotate the constituents you are using for this exercise. You may find more than one pattern in a single sentence.

1. verbless clause with an expressed subject
2. verbless clause without an expressed subject
3. pro-verb form in declarative clause structure
4. pro-verb form in inverted declarative clause structure
5. tag question in negative polarity (x2)

6. tag question in positive polarity (x2)
7. insert functioning as a discourse marker (x2)

Exercise 16.3

This text provides one way to split up the potential lexical categories in English, resulting in 14 categories, but other scholars argue for fewer categories, and the traditional view of grammar holds that English has eight lexical categories, as the opening quotation from Jane Austen suggests. Some scholars go so far as to say there are only 4-6 lexical categories in English.

If you were given only the following six categories to work with, how would you take the full list of 14 lexical categories provided in this text and split them up so that only these six categories remain?¹²²

• noun	• adverb
• verb	• preposition
• adjective	• coordinating conjunction

In other words, given those six categories, where would you categorize the following eight categories, and why?

• determiner	• subordinator
• auxiliary	• infinitive marker
• pronoun	• existential <i>there</i>
• negator	• insert

Write a paragraph that clearly describes how you would categorize these eight, and provide examples in your justification to demonstrate why that categorization could make sense.

¹²² If you'd like a harder challenge, try to narrow down the 14 parts of speech to only four categories, justifying the decisions you've made about how to combine parts of speech.

Chapter 17: Textual features

The writing style which is most natural for you is bound to echo the speech you heard when a child... All these varieties of speech are beautiful, just as the varieties of butterflies are beautiful. No matter what your first language, you should treasure it all your life. If it happens not to be standard English, and if it shows itself when you write standard English, the result is usually delightful, like a very pretty girl with one eye that is green and one that is blue. —Kurt Vonnegut

17.1 Sentence structure

Sentence structures can be categorized based on the types of constituents embedded in the larger sentence, and the figure below identifies the five basic structures in English: fragment, simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.¹²³

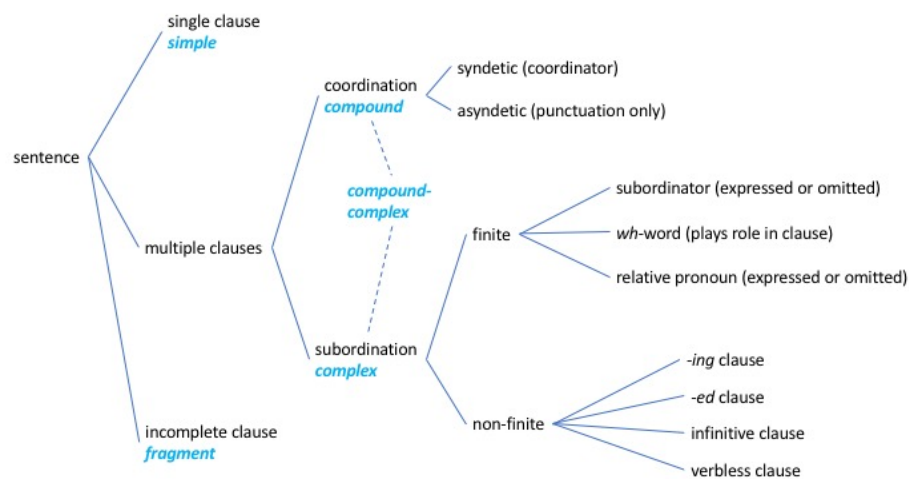


Figure 17.1 Sentence structures

The primary features that distinguish among these types are the number of clauses within the sentence and the types of those clauses (i.e., independent or dependent).

Regardless of the number of phrases incorporated into the sentence, if a sentence consists of only one finite independent clause, the sentence's structure is **simple** (SM). In the following examples of simple sentences, the main verb is underlined and the head word of its subject is bolded:

- (17.1) a. Would a crispy **cucumber**, by any other name, taste as crisp? (Mlodinow 2012: 21)
- b. The **lobes**, in turn, are covered by a convoluted outer layer about the thickness of formal dinner napkin. (36)

¹²³ Because the use of these terms relies on identifying the number and type of clauses in the sentence, their application differs, depending on whether non-finite clauses are considered clauses or phrases. Not all scholars agree with using these terms or with how to use them. For instance, while most people define complex sentences as those containing a dependent or embedded clause, Quirk et al. (2010: 719-720) argue that not all dependent clause types create complex sentences, arguing that relative clauses create complex noun phrases—not complex sentences.

- c. **Faces** play a special role in human behavior. (38)
- d. Just south of the Haw River in central North Carolina lies the old mill **town** of Burlington. (52)

Each sentence structure contains one subject and predicate pair that come together as a single clause. Example (d) demonstrates an inverted word order, highlighting how simple sentence structures can be grammatically intricate.

Sentences that consist of two or more simple sentences of equal status are **compound** (CD) structures. Compound sentences that are overtly marked with a coordinator (e.g., *and*, *but*, *or*) are syndetic structures, and compound sentences held together by a piece of punctuation, such as a semicolon, colon, comma,¹²⁴ or dash are asyndetic structures. In the following COCA examples of compound sentences, the head words of subjects are bolded, and main verbs underlined:

- (17.2) a. **Kai** fought, but the **arms** did not give.
- b. **She** was wearing a new Breckinridge summer outfit—pink slacks and a pink-and-white checked blouse; the only out-of-date **item** in her ensemble were the huge-framed magnifying eyeglasses.
- c. A few years ago, **I** was battling everything at the same time: **I** was going through a divorce, and **I** dislocated my shoulder.

Each example has at least two independent clauses; for instance, in (a), the independent clauses are *Kai fought* and *the arms did not give*. Compound sentences can be comprised of more than two independent clauses, such as (c), which has three simple sentence structures.

If a sentence contains a dependent and an independent clause, the sentence is **complex** (CX). The examples below are marked to indicate the independent clause's simple subject and head verb and to identify the boundaries of the dependent clauses.

- (17.3) a. Simpler **organisms**, too, can appear #to behave with human-like thoughtfulness and intentionality.# (Mlodinow 2012: 12) [italics in original]
- b. The lowly **fruit fly**, for example, goes through an elaborate mating ritual, «which the male initiates by #tapping the female with his foreleg and vibrating his wing #in order to play her a courtship song# # ». (12)
- c. **We** have an unconscious mind and, #superimposed upon it#, a conscious brain. (13)

¹²⁴ In prescriptive grammar, connecting two independent clauses with only a comma creates a comma splice, something academic writers generally avoid. However, comma splices frequently appear in other genres/registers.

- d. These more elegant **restaurants** commonly offer menus #peppered with terms like “crispy cucumbers,” “velvety mashed potatoes,” and “slow-roasted beets on a bed of arugula,”# //as if at other restaurants the cucumbers are limp, the mashed potatoes have the texture of wool, and the beets are flash-fried, then made #to sit up in an uncomfortable chair.# // (21)
- e. **Studies** show ((that flowery modifiers not only tempt #people to order the lyrically described foods# but also lead #them to rate those foods as #tasting better than the *identical* foods #given only a generic listing.# # #)) (21) [italics in original]

Sentences with a single dependent clause structure, as in (a) and (c), are considered complex structures, though some complex structures can incorporate multiple dependent clauses, as in (b), (d), and (e). These examples demonstrate the variety of dependent clause structures, including both finite and non-finite clauses.

When sentences have elements of both compound and complex structures, they are **compound-complex** (CC), as in the following examples:

- (17.4) a. **History** is the story of events «that played out in civilization», but **dreams** and **myths** are expressions of the human heart. (Mlodinow 2012: 8)
- b. The **tortoise** is as brave as a POW, the **cat** peed on the suitcase //because it was mad at us for #going away# //, the **dog** must hate the mailman for some good reason. (12)
- c. But a **roundworm** does not think to itself, ((*I'd better watch my diameter*)); **it** simply moves toward the nutrient «it has been programmed #to hunt down# ». (13) [italics in original]

Compound-complex sentences only require one of the independent clauses to have an embedded dependent clause; for instance, (b) consists of three independent clauses, and only one of those has an embedded dependent clause. However, all sentence structures may be complex, as in (c), which consists of two complex sentence structures held together by a semicolon.

One sentence from each of the sets provided above is annotated in the following examples to demonstrate how sentence structures are labeled in the annotation scheme, where the superscripted abbreviation for sentence structure immediately follows the *S* label. Any marked illocutionary force superscripts follow the sentence structure type, so, for instance, in (a) below, the sentence is labeled as *S*^{SM/Int} to indicate it is an interrogative simple sentence structure. The only feature being added to these annotations is the sentence structure superscript—all other features have been introduced in previous chapters.

(17.5) a. Would a crispy cucumber, by any other name, taste as crisp?

SSM/Int would^{ModAux} i

(Subj a^{Det}
 : <Att crispy^{Aj}>
 : **cucumber**^{CN}
)
 [NRM by^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep any^{Det}
 : : other^{Det}
 : : **name**^{CN}
 :)
]
 ||Pred |Mod GAP^{i ModAux}
 : : taste^{CopV}
 : |
 : <SPred /Deg as^{Av}/
 : : crisp^{Aj}
 : >
 ||

b. Kai fought, but the arms did not give.

SCD SSM (Subj **Kai**^{PropN})
 ||Pred |Past fought^{ItV} ||
 but^{CoConj}
 SSM (Subj the^{Det}
 : **arms**^{CN}
)
 ||Pred |Past did^{PriAux} not^{Neg}
 : : give^{ItV}
 : |
 ||

- c. Simpler organisms, too, can *appear* to behave with human-like thoughtfulness and intentionality.

SCX (Subj <Att simpler^{Aj}>
 : **organisms**^{CN}
)
 /Avl too^{Av}/
 ||Pred |Mod can^{ModAux}
 : appear^{CopV}
 : |
 : #SAvl |NF to^{Inf}
 : : : behave^{CopV}
 : : : |
 : : : [SAvl with^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep <Att human-like^{Aj}>
 : : : : **thoughtfulness**^{NN} and^{CoConj} **intentionality**^{NN}
 : : : :)
 : : :]
 : #
 ||

- d. History is the story of events «that played out in civilization», but dreams and myths are expressions of the human heart. (Mlodinow 2012: 8)

SCC SCX (Subj **history**^{NN})
 ||Pred |Pres is^{CopV}
 : (SPred the^{Det}
 : : **story**^{CN}
 : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep **events**^{CN}
 : : : : <<PostM (Subj **that**^{RelPro})
 : : : : : ||Pred |Past played out^{ItV}
 : : : : : [Avl in^{Prep}
 : : : : : : (ObjPrep **civilization**^{NN})
 : : : : :]
 : : : : : ||
 : : : : : »
 : : : : :)
 : : : : :]
 : : : : :)
 ||
 but^{CoConj}
 SSM (Subj **dreams**^{CN} and^{CoConj} **myths**^{CN})
 ||Pred |Pres are^{CopV}
 : (SPred **expressions**^{CN}
 : : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : : (ObjPrep the^{Det}
 : : : : (Att **human**^N)
 : : : : : **heart**^{CN}
 : : : : :)
 : : : : :]
 : : : : :)
 ||

Every *S* is marked with a structural superscript, so, within compound and compound-complex sentences, the smaller sentences being joined carry structural superscripts, as in examples (b) and (d).

This typology of sentence structure is *not* about sentence length because a compound-complex sentence can have very few words while a simple sentence might have many words. Instead, it is about connections and levels of embedding. For example, when people think of “complex” sentences, they think of sentences like these:

- (17.6) a. Then, when trying to explain to the police officer the reason for our subsequent illegal U-turn, our conscious mind calculates the optimal excuse, while our autopilot unconscious handles the proper use of gerunds, subjunctive verbs, and indefinite articles so that our plea is expressed in fine grammatical form. (Mlodinow 2012: 13)
- b. If someone were to ask about your taste in fine dining and you were to say, “I lean toward food served with vivid adjectives,” you’d probably get a pretty strange look; yet a dish’s description turns out to be an important factor in how it tastes. (21)

Example (a) has four embedded dependent clauses in its 49-word complex sentence structure, and (b) has seven embedded dependent clauses in its 46-word compound-complex sentence structure. These sentences are classically complex.

However, as discussed in Chapter 14, relatively short sentences can have several embedded clauses, like the example *You’ve got the look the Gods agree they wanna see* (Monée 2014). In the same way, complex sentence structures are not necessarily lengthy:

- (17.7) a. I thought it might be Javier, but it was a man who wanted to talk to Rey. (COCA)
- b. He might not save America, but at least he’s trying instead of tweeting drunken #YOLO pictures. (COCA)

Both these sentences are compound-complex: (a) consists of two smaller complex sentence structures, each with an embedded dependent clause, and (b) consists of a simple sentence joined to a complex sentence, which has an embedded non-finite clause.

To further illustrate that sentence type does not necessarily correlate with sentence length, the following annotated examples feature a simple sentence structure in (a) that is lengthier than the complex sentence structure in (b).

- (17.8) a. As a result, to this day, the magnitude and probability of memory error has gone virtually unnoticed. (Mlodinow 2012: 55)

SSM [Avl as^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep a^{Det}
 : : **result**^{CN}
 :)
]
 [Avl to^{Prep}
 : (ObjPrep this^{Det}
 : : **day**^{CN}
 :)
]
 (Subj the^{Det}
 : **magnitude**^{CN} and^{CoConj} **probability**^{CN}
 : [PostM of^{Prep}
 : : (ObjPrep (Att **memory**^N)
 : : : **error**^{NN}
 : :)
 :]
)
 ||Pred |PresPerf has^{PriAux}
 : : gone^{CopV}
 : |
 : <SPred /Deg **virtually**^{Av/}
 : : **unnoticed**^{Aj}
 : >
 ||

- b. Later, he was called to testify under oath about what he had found. (59)

SCX	/Avl	later ^{Av} /			
	(Subj	he ^{Pro})			
	Pred	PastPass	was ^{PriAux}		
	:	:	<u>called</u> ^{MtV}		
	:				
	:	#Avl	NF	to ^{Inf}	
	:	:	:	<u>testify</u> ^{ItV}	
	:	:			
	:	:	[Avl	under ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	(ObjPrep oath ^{NN})	
	:	:	]		
	:	:	[Avl	about ^{Prep}	
	:	:	:	((ObjPrep(ⁱ	what ^{Pro})
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	(Subj	he ^{Pro})
	:	:	:	Pred	PastPerf
	:	:	:	:	had ^{PriAux}
	:	:	:	:	<u>found</u> ^{MtV}
	:	:	:	:	
	:	:	:	:	(ⁱ DObj
	:	:	:	:	GAP)
	:	:	:		
	:	:	:	))	
	:	:	:	]	
	:	#			

Sentences can be grammatically complex without having to “look” complex or lengthy.

Finally, not all sentences are complete independent clauses. Sentence **fragments** (frag) do not have a completed finite independent clause and can consist of one single-word phrase (e.g., *what?*), several phrases, or a dependent clause. The following are examples of sentence fragments.

- (17.9) a. “New York,” I told him. (Vega 2017)

Sfrag	(	New York ^{PropN})
	@Quot	(Subj I ^{Pro})
	:	Pred Past <u>told</u> ^{DtV}
	:	(IObj him ^{Pro})
	:	
	@	

- b. Not because they deserve respect. (Kendrick 2017)

S _{frag}	//	not ^{Neg}
	:	because ^{SubConj}
	:	(Subj they ^{Pro})
	:	Pred Pres <u>deserve</u> ^{MtV}
	:	: (DObj respect ^{NN})
	:	
	//	

In example (a), the NP *New York* serves as an entire clause and is a sentence fragment. Because *New York* appears in isolation without a head verb, it cannot carry a function. In (b), the entire sentence is a dependent adverb clause with no larger structure to lean on; therefore, it is a sentence fragment.

A sentence fragment can be joined to complete sentences as a part of a compound or compound-complex sentence, as in the following example:

- (17.10) And of course, the constant barrage of questions that follow my name: “What kind of name is that? Where is *Tanzina* from?” (Vega 2017)

In this example, the opening structure before the colon is a sentence fragment because, after the initial *and of course*, the rest of that initial constituent is a noun phrase.

Students often have the misconception that sentence fragments must be short because they’re incomplete sentences, yet they can be rather lengthy. For instance, the following paragraph begins with an 82-word compound-complex sentence, which provides context for understanding the final four sentence structures, all of which are fragments:

- (17.11) The truth is a scarier thing to admit: For every troll who has emailed me a rape threat or tweeted at me to tell me I’m a bitch who should die or posted one of my articles on an Internet message with attendant comments about my weight or his efforts to figure out where I live or his detailed description of the many different ways he would like to see me physically violated, there are other men reading, nodding along, maybe laughing. Men who date women, are married to women, ride the subway every day, work in an office and engage in polite water cooler chat, sit next to you in math class, wave to you over the fence. Men we think are “normal.” Men who work in the White House and want to please their boss. And one man who sits behind the desk in the Oval Office. (Filipovic 2017)

One of those sentence fragments is 37 words long but only consists of a single noun phrase: *men* is the head noun, and the relative clause that post-modifies it contains seven coordinated LVPs.

Some structures look like they could be sentence fragments, but they are complete sentences with pro-verb forms that require context to provide the information needed to understand what the pro-verb refers to. For instance, the following sentence has the pro-verb *is*:

(17.12) But it is. (Vega 2017)

SSM but^{CoConj}
 (Subj **it**^{Pro})
 ||Pred |Pres is^{ProV} ||

The original context allows the reader to know what *is* refers to:

As someone who writes about race and relishes a good conversation about it, maybe I should be the last person saying that being asked where I'm "really from" is tiresome and predictable. *But it is.* [italics added]

In this instance, the pro-verb *is* represents the complete predicate *is tiresome and predictable*. Determining sentence structure type requires fully analyzing the grammatical features to identify subjects, predicates, and finite SVPs.

Practice Set 17.1 Practice annotating

Fully annotate the following sentences, taken from J.K. Rowling's (2005: 234-237) *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Remember to include the sentence structure superscripts as you annotate.

1. After dinner, they made their way back to Gryffindor Tower.
2. The common room was very crowded, as most people had finished dinner by now, but they managed to find a free table and sat down; Ron, who had been in a bad mood ever since the encounter with Slughorn, folded his arms and frowned at the ceiling.
3. Hermione reached out for a copy of the *Evening Prophet*, which somebody had left abandoned on a chair.
4. "I told him at King's Cross about Malfoy and that thing he was trying to get Borgin to fix!
5. Well, if it's not at their house, he must have brought whatever it is to Hogwarts with him—"
6. "But how can he have done, Harry?" said Hermione, putting down the newspaper with a surprised look.
7. "We were all searched when we arrived, weren't we?"
8. Momentarily stymied, Harry watched Ginny Weasley playing with Arnold the Pygmy Puff for a while before seeing a way around this objection.
9. "Someone's sent it to him by owl, then," he said.
10. "All the owls are being checked too," said Hermione.
11. "Filch told us so when he was jabbing those Secrecy Sensors everywhere he could reach."
12. There did not seem to be any way Malfoy could have brought a dangerous or Dark object into the school.
13. "Oh, drop it, Harry," said Ron.

14. Where was Dumbledore, and what was he doing?
15. He rarely appeared at meals anymore, and Harry was sure Hermione was right in thinking that he was leaving the school for days at a time.

17.2 Parataxis and hypotaxis

Understanding sentence types is not just an activity for the grammar enthusiast. Writers in general benefit from knowing the effect of sentence types on the flow of information within a text. Written language, in very broad terms, can be categorized into three major components: meaning, grammar, and written conventions, such as spelling and punctuation. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (2007: 99-100) provide a figure that represents the writing process, which is replicated below:

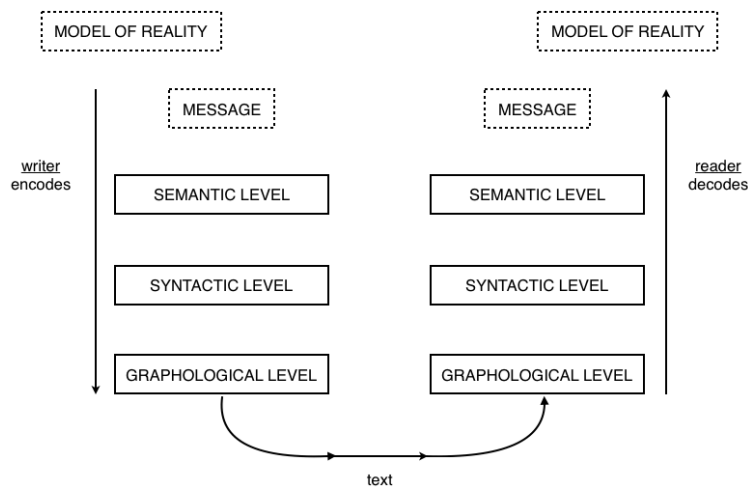


Figure 17.2 Leech and Short's (2007: 99-100) model of the writing process

Writing a text starts with your model of reality, which Leech and Short define as “all the things we know, believe, judge, or understand to be the case in the world in which we live” (Leech and Short 2007: 99-100). The message itself is an abstract concept in your mind, and to share it with others, you need to express it through particular words (the semantic level), grammatical constructions (the syntactic level), and writing conventions (the graphological level). Once you have put your ideas into printed text, it becomes shareable. A reader receives the text and works backwards, decoding the words on the page to create an abstract view of the intended message, which is then compared against or fit into the reader's model of reality.

This figure illustrates that the reader does not receive the exact intended message the author has written because the reader receives a message they construct themselves, based on what is presented in the text and based on their own experiences in the world. One reason academic writing has such stringent rules with grammar and mechanics is that if you have a precise message you need a wide audience to understand with as few changes to the original

message as possible, you need to be very careful with every comma, period, word, and sentence structure.

The figure presents both the writer's and reader's work in equal sizes, making it look like they share the same workload, so to speak. However, Robin Lakoff (1984) points out that in some genres or registers, such as academic writing, the heavier burden is on the writer to make their meaning explicitly clear through word choice, grammatical framing, and written conventions. In these styles, if the reader cannot understand the author's point, it is the writer who is at fault for not being clear in the first place. These are writer-based styles. In other genres or registers, the heavier burden is on the reader to interpret the meaning of the text. The writer may purposely be vague or ambiguous to allow the reader more room for a variety of resulting interpretations. These are reader-based styles. Lakoff connects these styles to grammatical features by examining the level of embedding within sentences (i.e., hypotaxis) and the level of connection among independent clauses (i.e., parataxis).

The word **parataxis** can be broken down into two Greek stems: *para-* means 'beside,' and *taxis* means 'arrangement.' Parataxis refers to two or more clauses that are situated next to each other without an explicit coordinator. While some scholars only use the term *parataxis* to refer to asyndetic compound sentence structures, Lakoff extends that definition to include simple sentences that are placed side-by-side with a period between them. The word **hypotaxis** includes the Greek stems *hypo-* meaning 'under' and *taxis* meaning 'arrangement.' Hypotaxis, then, refers to embedded, or dependent, clauses.

Lakoff breaks down parataxis and hypotaxis into four different levels, creating a continuum of "taxis":

- pure parataxis: two simple sentences side-by-side with only punctuation between (series of simple sentences, asyndetic compound sentence)
- near-parataxis:¹²⁵ a coordinator or linking adverb joins two simple sentences (compound sentence, series of simple sentences with linking words)
- near-hypotaxis: subordinator with finite dependent clause (complex sentence)
- pure hypotaxis: non-finite dependent clause (complex sentence)

The following examples, taken from Trenton Lee Stewart's *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, illustrate the differences within those levels of parataxis and hypotaxis:

(17.13) pure parataxis

- a. He was in a maze of identical rooms. Everything looked exactly the same in every direction. His confidence was quickly draining away. (Stewart 2006: 56)
- b. Reynie racked his brain: Should he follow the green ones? (57)

¹²⁵ Lakoff uses the term *mixotaxis* instead of 'near-parataxis,' but I have chosen to use 'near-parataxis' so that its name more clearly reflects its definition.

near-parataxis

- c. Speed is important, so don't dawdle. (55)
- d. It might be as simple as that. With a quick inspection of the nearest doorway, however, this hope vanished. (57)

near-hypotaxis

- e. It had been a day full of challenges, all of which Reynie had met successfully, and when he stepped through the front door he was brimming with confidence. (55)
- f. If he hadn't turned around, he might have kept his bearings, but now he'd lost them. (56)

pure hypotaxis

- g. About the size of a playing card, the panel had four arrows etched into it, pointing in different directions and painted different colors. (57)
- h. Running his finger over the carved arrows in the panel before him, Reynie smiled. (57)

With pure parataxis, the reader has to assume the connections among independent clauses. In the examples provided in (a), the reader assumes his confidence was dwindling because the rooms looked the same, and, in (b), the reader understands that Reynie is pondering the question *Should he follow the green ones?* as he racks his brain. When a writer uses a coordinator, as in (c), the connection is more explicit: because speed is important, they should not dawdle. In (d), the linking adverb *however* provides a contradiction between the simplicity in the first clause and his hope vanishing in the second clause.

The connection becomes even more solidified in near-hypotaxis, and, depending on the subordinator used, the meaning of the full sentence can change. In (e), the subordinator *when* creates a timeline of events for the reader: his stepping through the door coincides with his feelings of confidence. The subordinator *if* followed by the past tense *had* in (f) creates an irrealis reading, indicating he did, in fact, turn around, and the information in the following clauses provides what *could have been* true rather than what *is* true.

Pure hypotaxis creates the strongest connections among pieces of information provided in clauses. The non-finite clauses *etched into it*, *pointing in different directions*, and *painted different colors* work together in (g) to post-modify the head noun *arrows* and provide varying descriptions of those arrows, connecting them so that the reader knows all three facts are important for understanding the description of the small panel. In (h), the structure connects Reynie's running his finger over the arrows and his smiling in a way that tells readers these two actions are deeply connected.

Those levels of "taxis" reflect differences between reader-based and writer-based styles of writing, as indicated in the figure below:

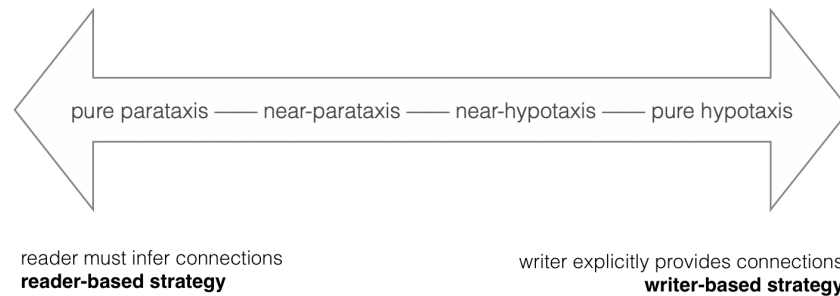


Figure 17.3 Parataxis, hypotaxis, and strategies for writing (based on Lakoff (1984))

The continuum illustrates that reader-based texts, such as some fiction and poetry, are more likely to include more examples of parataxis while writer-based texts, such as scholarly articles and news writing, are more likely to include more examples of hypotaxis. The amount of parataxis and hypotaxis in any type of writing is relative, as few authors write only in paratactic or hypotactic structures, and the difference between reader- and writer-based strategies requires examining the relative frequency of each type of structure within a text.

Relying only on pure parataxis results in “Dick and Jane” sentences, as in the examples below, taken from Weiner and Davilman (2004), a parody of *Dick and Jane* books:

- (17.14) a. See Jane. Jane is married to Bob. Jane loves Bob very much. Bob is a real *mensh*.
- b. Jane and Bob have two children. Their names are Katie and Scott. They do well in school and help take care of Max and Whiskers. “What good kids we have,” say Jane and Bob. “*Kina-hora*.”
- c. Jane works in real estate. Today is Sunday. Jane has an Open House. She must *schlep* the Open House signs to the car. See Jane *schlep*. *Schlep*, Jane. *Schlep*. *Schlep*, *schlep*, *schlep*.

Pure parataxis across a text creates a stop-and-go reading experience that lacks deeper connections among the content of the clauses.

On the other hand, relying too heavily on hypotaxis creates an intense reading experience as the reader untwists complex sentence structures. Consider the following paragraph, taken from Barry King’s (2008) scholarly article, which examines the connection between an innate desire to confess and the popularity of reality television and demonstrates that celebrities are given a different treatment in reality TV than average Joes and that Tom Cruise’s “jumping the couch” moment on *Oprah* was memorable because he broke the conventions. The sentence types are labeled as a superscript after each sentence.

- (17.15) In this sense, the interaction structure is an index of the social status of the average participant: smooth, articulate, open conversational texture for celebrities—for example, *The Larry King Show* or *Parkinson*—and a highly host-directed, low-speech-competence pattern of interaction, relying on non-verbal communication and raw emotions, for ordinary folk.^{CX} If the latter looks

carnavalesque, in reality it is highly controlled by the host—most obviously in the case of *Jerry Springer*.^{CX} If talkshows are about confessional moments, the degree of revelation, its spontaneity and authenticity—a function of apparent depth of feeling—are articulated around the presumed assurances that are the due of fame.^{CX} The formulation is circular, but then so are the facts.^{CD} (119)

The final sentence is the only one to incorporate near-paratactic strategies with a compound sentence structure. While the content is interesting, the reading experience can be challenging due to the complexity of the clause structures, including hypotactic embedding and parenthetical constituents between dashes.

Most writers use a variety of sentence structures, incorporating paratactic and hypotactic strategies to keep readers invested. For example, the following paragraphs are the opening paragraphs of two different books and genres: the first is non-fiction while the second is fiction. As in the previous example, sentence types are labeled.

(17.16) Like most small children, I learned my home address so that if I got lost, I could tell a grown-up where to take me.^{CX} In kindergarten, when the teacher asked me where I lived, I could recite the address without skipping a beat, even though my mother changed addresses frequently, for reasons I never understood as a child.^{CX} Still, I always distinguished “my address” from “my home.”SM My address was where I spent most of my time with my mother and sister, wherever that might be.^{CX} But my home never changed: my great-grandmother’s house, in the holler, in Jackson, Kentucky.SM (Vance 2016)

(17.17) It’s early September.SM Jodi Brett is in her kitchen, making dinner.^{CX} Thanks to the open plan of the condo, she has an unobstructed view through the living room to its east-facing windows and beyond to a vista of lake and sky, cast by the evening light in a uniform blue.^{CX} A thinly drawn line of a darker hue, the horizon, appears very near at hand, almost touchable.SM She likes the delineating arc, the feeling it gives her of being encircled.^{CX} The sense of containment is what she loves most about living here, in her aerie on the twenty-seventh floor.^{CX} (Harrison 2013)

These paragraphs move between varying sentence types, creating an easier reading experience and smoother style, and they illustrate that simple and complex structures tend to be the most frequent type of sentences in typical reading material.

English readers tend to respond most favorably to writing that incorporates movement among sentence structures and varies sentence lengths and initial constituents. For example, the novels *Twilight* and *The Historian* tell a love story featuring a human woman and a male vampire and are written from a first-person perspective of the female human, and both were published in 2005. However, while critics harshly judged Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight*, they praised Elizabeth Kostova’s *The Historian*, and one reason for this difference in reception is the writing style and variation of grammatical features. The following excerpts are taken from the first chapter of each

novel and describe the beginning of the main characters' journeys that lead them to their discovery of vampires; I labeled sentence structures, underlined the initial words of sentences, and bolded the simple subjects of all verbs, including subjects in dependent clauses:¹²⁶

(17.18) *Twilight* text (Meyer 2005)

My **mother** drove me to the airport with the **windows** rolled down.^{CX} **It** was seventy-five degrees in Phoenix, the sky a perfect, cloudless blue.^{CX} **I** was wearing my favorite shirt—sleeveless, white eyelet lace; **I** was wearing it as a farewell gesture.^{CD} My carry-on **item** was a parka.SM

In the Olympic Peninsula of northwest Washington State, a small **town** named Forks exists under a near-constant cover of clouds.^{CX} **It** rains on this inconsequential town more than any other place in the United States of America.SM **It** was from this town and its gloomy, omnipresent shade that my **mother** escaped with me when **I** was only a few months old.^{CX} **It** was in this town that **I**'d been compelled to spend a month every summer until **I** was fourteen.^{CX} **That** was the year **I** finally put my foot down; these past three summers, my **dad**, Charlie, vacationed with me in California for two weeks instead.^{CC}

It was to Forks that **I** now exiled myself—an action that **I** took with great horror.^{CX} **I** detested Forks.SM

I loved Phoenix.SM **I** loved the sun and the blistering heat.SM **I** loved the vigorous, sprawling city.SM

(17.19) *The Historian* text (Kostova 2005)

Autumn comes early to the foot of the Slovenian Alps.SM Even before September, the abundant **harvests** are followed by a sudden, poignant rain **that** lasts for days and brings down leaves in the lanes of the villages.^{CX} Now, in my fifties, **I** find myself wandering that direction every few years, reliving my first glimpse of the Slovenian countryside.^{CX} **This** is old country.SM Every **autumn** mellows it a little more, *in aeternum*, **each** beginning with the same three colors: a green landscape, two or three yellow leaves falling through a gray afternoon.^{CX} **I** suppose the Romans—**who** left their walls here and their gargantuan arenas to the west, on the coast—saw the same autumn and gave the same shiver.^{CX} When my father's **car** swung through the gates of the oldest Julian cities, **I** hugged myself.^{CX} For the first time, **I** had been struck by the excitement of the traveler **who** looks history in her subtle face.^{CX}

Because this **city** is where my **story** starts, **I**'ll call it Emona, its Roman name, to shield it a little from the sort of tourist **who** follows doom around with a guidebook.^{CX} **Emona** was built on Bronze Age pilings along a river now lined with art-nouveau architecture.SM

¹²⁶ Please note that my goal is not to criticize *Twilight* or Stephenie Meyer, as I rather enjoy that series and Meyer's later book, *The Host*. The focus is on identifying grammatical features that lead to different reading experiences.

One difference between these excerpts is average sentence length: each excerpt is roughly 200 words, but the *Twilight* excerpt has 14 sentences with an average length of 13.9 words while *The Historian* excerpt has 10 with an average length of 20.4 words. Within those sentences, grammatical differences between the excerpts include placement of simple sentence structures, variety of subject head words, and inclusion of introductory constituents.

In *The Historian* excerpt, the short simple sentence *This is old country* stands out among the complex sentences that have over 20 words each. That movement between sentence length and sentence complexity makes the information from the shorter sentence more memorable. On the other hand, the final four sentences of the *Twilight* excerpt are a series of short simple sentences, and that repetition of short simple sentences is often what critics refer to as “choppy” style. *The Historian* is more writer-based while *Twilight* is slightly more reader-based, and English readers tend to prefer and praise more writer-based strategies.

Look back at the excerpts and consider the bolded and underlined words. The majority of Meyer’s sentences begin with a pronominal subject, namely *I* and *it*, and her excerpt shows a clear preference for a first-person singular subject, with over half of the subjects being *I*. The repetition of subjects and initial constituents creates what some refer to as a “redundant” style. In Kostova’s sentences, none of the initial words of sentences repeat and fewer than a third of the subjects are the first-person singular pronoun. Overall, the sentences in *The Historian* show more variety and grammatical embedding, which is indicative of a writer-based strategy.

As in *The Historian*, when writers vary sentence structures, they often try to put main points, catchy quotes, and punch lines in simple sentences hidden among complex sentence types because it makes them more memorable for the reader. Writers for TV shows and movies do the same. For example, consider the following quotation from Chris Traeger, who is played by Rob Lowe, in *Parks and Recreation* (Taccone 2013).

(17.20) It appears that where #BitchBoss is clearly an indication of frustration, #BossBitch is a term of endearment.^{CX} Isn’t language fun?SM It’s like racquetball for your mouth!SM

The memorability and impact of those final two sentences partially relies on having a complex structure introduce them; had the entire utterance consisted only of simple sentence structures, the final two would not have stood out.

While simple sentence structures provide memorable quips, English readers tend to find complex sentence structures more “beautiful” because written English trends toward being more writer-based in general. One way to demonstrate this preference is in examining preferences for the quotations that readers share for a variety of reasons: as Willis Goth Regier (2010: 11) notes, people quote to “inform, confirm, persuade, amuse, confuse, warn, excuse, tickle, surprise, intimidate, flatter, curse, and razzle-dazzle.” The quotations shared reflect not just individual preferences but also the linguistic features held in esteem by society. With quotations especially, readers tend to prefer particular turns of phrase because they contain the stylistic features that they have learned are noteworthy and beautiful and sharable.

For instance, Jennifer Schaffer (2014) compiled and posted “51 of the most beautiful sentences in literature” on *BuzzFeed*, including sentences beloved by many readers from various backgrounds. The collection includes the following:

- (17.21) a. In our village, folks say God crumbles up the old moon into stars. (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*)
- b. Beauty is an enormous, unmerited gift given randomly, stupidly. (Khaled Hosseini, *And the Mountains Echoed*)
- c. Sometimes I can feel my bones straining under the weight of all the lives I’m not living. (Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*)
- d. I have spread my dreams under your feet; tread softly because you tread on my dreams. (W.B. Yeats, “Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven”)
- e. I wondered if that was how forgiveness budded; not with the fanfare of epiphany, but with pain gathering its things, packing up, and slipping away unannounced in the middle of the night. (Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*)
- f. One must be careful of books and what is inside them, for words have the power to change us. (Cassandra Clare, *The Infernal Devices*)

A great deal of the beauty is captured in the content and word choice, yet the content could not be expressed without relying on grammatical structures to hold them together. For example, in (b), Khaled Hosseini creates a metaphor when he compares beauty, an abstract non-count noun to a gift, a concrete count noun using a copular verb and subject predicative structure. If you analyze the sentence structures of these sentences, you will see a pattern emerge: each sentence features structures that are explicitly connected through subordination, demonstrating writer-based strategies.

For instance, example (a) is a short sentence that relies on everyday words, such as *folks*, *say*, *old*, and *moon*, which are not particularly razzling or dazzling by themselves. Instead, it’s the combination of words and how they’re grammatically treated that creates a quote-worthy sentiment: Solzhenitsyn treats *the old moon* as the direct object of *crumbles up*, creating an image of the moon being an object that can be crumbled. Furthermore, using the adjective *old* to describe moon creates a possibility that there are old moons that disappear and new ones that take their place. Because *into stars* is the object adverbial for *the old moon*, Solzhenitsyn has completed an image in the reader’s mind of the stars being little pieces of the old moons of days past. The clause *God crumbles up the old moon into stars* is a nominal clause functioning as a direct object of *say*, indicating this message is oft-repeated in the village and allowing readers to begin creating a sense of who these villagers are at a deeper level. Even in its conciseness, the sentence creates connotations of possibility, of changing times and yet of permanence. In-depth analyses of the grammatical structures and word choice provide insight to better understand why some sentences are so memorable, effective, and even affective.

Practice Set 17.2 Sentence type and writing strategies

The following examples were taken from social media. Identify the sentence structures throughout, and then decide whether you think each excerpt is more reader-based or writer-based.

1. Knowing that our universe is so much larger than we are—to the point that it is completely unfathomable—and is ever expanding into an even larger darkness, and that we can never know or understand how large it truly is comforts me. We all think we're so important, but when you get right down to it, we are just as insignificant as a grain of sand at the bottom of the ocean. The most significant event in earth's history is no more important than a speck of dust falling into a star billions of lightyears away. I love that. It's not that I like to feel small—I simply enjoy the idea that even my most embarrassing memory does not matter in the slightest. It offers a sort of serenity. (Caitlin Dahl, Facebook)
2. My wife said I need to grow up. I was speechless. It's hard to say anything when you have 45 gummy bears in your mouth (Josh, @iwearaonesie, Twitter)
3. Wow. I thought I was going to can 13 pounds of pickles tonight. The God of Schadenfreude had other ideas... #floodedkitchen #brokenjars #steamscauld #itsrainingpotsandpans #fixitbuddha (Eyreka Grider, Facebook)
4. My house is messy so I watched Hoarders. My house is now pristine and I have done nothing. Win. (Hillary Winter, Facebook)
5. I heard a punctual 'whenever' & a 'might could' at a pool in TX. Unfortunately I couldn't ask about speaker's background b/c creepy. (Matt Gordon, @AnotherLinguist, Twitter)
6. ... a cricket got in the house. A asked me if crickets bite.

Me: No, they just make noise.

A: Why do crickets have to crick so much?

Me: *laughing too much to answer*

A: *visibly annoyed* What?! Why they always crickin'? (Renee Williams, Facebook)

7. When you try to be the nice neighbor and cut their grass, then this comes crawling around the lawnmower. Excuse my teenage girl screams every 30 seconds the rest of the day when I run into a stick or a branch that touches me.

Neighborhood Snake.

Died: September 3, 2016.

The family has asked in lieu of flowers, please donate to your local animal shelter. Luncheon immediately after the funeral. (Rodney Wehmeyer's caption for a photo of a dead snake)

17.3 Style, genre, register, and purpose

Robert Galbraith's *The Cuckoo's Calling* hit the shelves in late July 2013, and, within three months, the public learned that Galbraith is a pseudonym for J.K. Rowling. Rowling had hoped to keep her pseudonym a secret, which would allow her to receive feedback on her book based on the writing and content rather than her name and *Harry Potter* fame. However, Christopher Gossage, who worked with her agent's firm told a friend of his, Jude Callegari, about Rowling's secret identity. Callegari then leaked that information to the press, which led to London's *Sunday Times* contacting Patrick Juola, a linguist who specializes in textual analysis and forensics.

Juola (2013) writes that he used his Java Graphical Authorship Attribution Program (JGAAP), which tracks thousands of features, such as common collocations, word frequencies, and lexical density. He tested Galbraith's book against books written by four different female authors, including Rowling, and found that the stylistic features of Galbraith's writing were most consistent with Rowling's. While his finding didn't prove that Rowling was the author, it was strong enough support that, when the *Sunday Times* questioned Rowling about it, she admitted to being Galbraith.

Authorial style cannot be attributed to a single feature, and analyzing an author's style requires examining a collection of features and common patterns that take shape over entire texts. Juola (2013) compares stylometry¹²⁷ to sports, calling it "a game of inches," because anyone hoping to use stylometry to test authorship needs to use a lot of data and be prepared to spend a lot of time sorting through it, looking for minute details. He also points out that without an admission from Rowling or her agent, the results he found only would've been enough to cause suspicion. Furthermore, even though readers suspected Galbraith was a pen name for an established author, Galbraith's identity would likely have remained a secret without Callegari's leak because, as Juola (2013) writes,

It's simply not feasible to look at every potential author to see who might have written a book; without old-fashioned detective work (and informants), the haystack is still large enough that needles can successfully hide.

Scholars who work within a field of authorship identification need a point of comparison because the authorial possibilities are too numerous to reach valuable conclusions.

Examples of successful author identification have given some people the impression that everyone has a "linguistics fingerprint" consisting unique and identifiable linguistic features. However, that isn't really the case. You can study features and find specific combinations that are more consistent for a particular author, but you cannot draw firm conclusions because authors shift features of their language usage across time, genre, or situational context. Juola (2013) notes,

¹²⁷ The word *stylistics* can refer to any type of study that analyzes language variation according to genre or author, but the related word *stylometry* refers specifically to those studies of stylistics that use statistical analysis.

Stylometry is much less reliable and accurate than DNA—after all, your DNA is constant and absolutely constant and unvarying throughout your life, but if two novels didn't vary at all, they'd be the same novel.

How you write changes over time, within different situational contexts, and across genres, but certain characteristics are more likely to remain consistent, especially those features you think least about when writing, such as the use of determiners or of particular adverb-adjective combinations. Therefore, the features linguists are most interested in for stylistic comparisons are often not the ones people think of first when thinking of style.

Some of the most common features used in studies that focus on stylistic comparison include the following:

- sentence length (words per sentence)
- sentence types
- average frequency of words
- lexical density, lexical diversity
- hapax legomena, or words that occur only once within a full text
- frequent collocations (lexical, phrasal, or clausal)¹²⁸
- average word length (characters per word)
- verb types, noun types, pronoun use (i.e., any lexical category)
- verbal TMAV

When comparing styles among authors, scholars first compare many features and, if using a computer, they compare thousands of features, before narrowing their focus to the combination of features that stand out as the most distinctive.

While you may not be able to definitively say who authored a particular text, in many cases, you can use grammatical features to identify a text that has more than one author, as in the case of plagiarism. For example, the following excerpt comes from the first page of a student's essay about feminism and anti-feminism (any errors were in the original essay):

(17.22) The idea that there are specific roles for each gender is proof that there are differences because of the gender of the person that makes each role a natural fit. Feminism has become an ideology that sees the relations between the genders as a never ending antagonistic power struggle with women as eternal victims and men as eternal oppressors.

The second sentence uses the phrase *a never ending antagonistic power struggle*, which creates a shift in the type of words used in the first two sentences. Furthermore, the use of the preposition phrase *with women as eternal victims and men as eternal oppressors* with its coordinated object is much more complex than the grammatical constructions in the opening sentence.

¹²⁸ While collocations are often words that co-occur, you can also talk about structural comparisons and collocations, such as a preposition phrase frequently being followed by an adverb clause in a particular text.

Using the three-word string *antagonistic power struggle*,¹²⁹ I conducted a search on Google, and the top result was a speech made by Barbara Kay in 2008 with a sentence matching what the student had written. In the examples below, the student's sentence is provided in (a), and the sentence from Kay's (2008) speech is in (b). The underlined portions of the student's sentence match Kay's wording verbatim.

- (17.23) a. Feminism has become an ideology that sees the relations between the genders as a never ending antagonistic power struggle with women as eternal victims and men as eternal oppressors.
- b. This is an ideology that sees the relations between the sexes as a never ending antagonistic power struggle, with women as eternal victims and men as eternal oppressors. (Kay 2008)

The first matching string, *an ideology that sees the relations between the*, is the shorter string and consists of words not directly related to feminism; yet, that string of words pulled up only six matches on Google, all of which are results for Kay's speech, articles written by Kay based on that speech, or other sources citing that speech.

Language offers authors creative ways to express messages, so even though grammatical patterns are limited, the ways in which authors can "plug" words into those patterns create infinite possibilities. Therefore, one author's resulting sentence structures will not exactly match another's structures. Malcolm Coulthard (2004) demonstrates that, in general, no two authors will use the same string of words even when writing about the same topic. He observes that the maximum number of words that "accidentally" match is 2-6 words, and those are generally frequent collocations, such as *I picked something up* or *I asked her if I could* (2004: 441). In his examples, Coulthard shows that as more words are added to a string, the likelihood of two authors selecting the same words in the same order goes down dramatically. In other words, the example from the student's essay is a clear instance of plagiarism.

Later in the same essay, the student included the following paragraph, which also demonstrates breaks in style.

- (17.24) When it comes to sexual abuse, domestic violence women are always the victims. Men are also the victims of such acts, but the media and the society is so influenced by the society that it does not mentions about the sexual abuse and assault males go through in a day to day life. Again and again the protestors of women's rights movements say that feminism disrespects and demonizes men, treating them as rapists and ignorant individuals, while encouraging women to see themselves as victims. Many also challenge the notion that American women in the 21st century are oppressed, undoubtedly declare that "the patriarchy doesn't exist" and there is no rape culture.

¹²⁹ This three-word string pulled up 949 results while *never-ending antagonistic power struggle* pulled up 101 results, nearly all of which referenced this speech.

In the opening sentence, the student uses a comma rather than a coordinator to connect *sexual abuse* to *domestic violence* and does not use a comma after the opening subordinating clause, between *violence* and *women*. The second sentence continues with errors in determiner use (e.g., *the society* doesn't make sense because no particular society has been introduced, and *a day to day life* is better worded without a determiner or with a possessive determiner), the singular *is so influenced* does not match the plural subject, *does not mentions* has an error in verb form, and *mentions about* is an awkward use of a preposition after that verb. These opening sentences reflect areas of written grammar that the student struggles with.

Then the third sentence incorporates the sentence structure *feminism disrespects and demonizes men*. These two verbs differ from the highly stative verbs (e.g., *comes to*, *are*) and passive verbs (e.g., *is influenced*) from the previous sentences, and the sentence goes on to incorporate a dependent *-ing* clause, which is a feature not used throughout the rest of the student's writing. Using Google, I searched *feminism disrespects and demonizes men* and found a 2014 article written by Cathy Young for *TIME* magazine. In the examples below, (a) provides the student's sentence with the matching portions underlined, and (b) provides the original sentence from Young's article:

- (17.25) a. Again and again the protestors of women's rights movements say that feminism disrespects and demonizes men, treating them as rapists and ignorant individuals, while encouraging women to see themselves as victims. Many also challenge the notion that American women in the 21st century are oppressed, undoubtedly declare that "the patriarchy doesn't exist" and there is no rape culture.
- b. Again and again, the dissenters say that feminism belittles and demonizes men, treating them as presumptive rapists while encouraging women to see themselves as victims. ... Many also challenge the notion that American women in the 21st century are "oppressed," defiantly asserting that "the patriarchy doesn't exist" and "there is no rape culture." (Young 2014)

The differences between the two are minimal with only a few phrases changed, key words switched out for synonyms, and some words deleted.

The shifts in the student's use of words and grammatical structures demonstrate identifiable features of a text written by multiple authors. Even though it is impossible to define a set list of features of an author's style or to identify a linguistic fingerprint of an author, grammatical analysis can help identify frequent patterns across a text or multiple texts and any breaks in style that suggest multiple authors wrote a single text.

These analyses require identifying features at a textual level, which is important for grammar because the constituents appearing in one sentence affect how information is phrased in the next; for instance, *A dog ran* in one sentence can trigger *Then **the** dog* in the next sentence, where the expected form of the determiner shifts from one sentence to the next. You can broaden the focus even more to the **discourse** level to study how the features of one text can influence the next, such as studying a series of personal letters between participants that create an ongoing

discourse or a series of academic papers that respond to previous texts. Studying grammatical features at a discourse level also allows you to find patterns across texts written within the same type of discourse. Linguistic features of a written text shift according to the author and the author's purpose, message, and intended audience, but those four pivotal axes further depend on the genre or register of the text, which shape the linguistic expectations for the text.

Genre offers a way to categorize written texts into similar purposes and reader expectations, such as fiction, recipes, and text messages, or more specific sub-genres, such as young adult fiction, sci-fi, and romance novels. Readers approach texts differently, depending on the text's genre. Some expectations for genre are based on organizational features, such as readers expecting a novel to have chapters but an email to be written as one unit. Titles can be indicative of genre, as Calvin and Hobbes observe in Bill Watterson's comic strip:

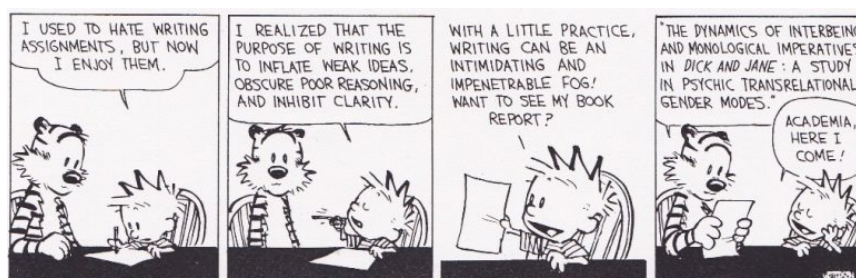


Image 17.1 Calvin and Hobbes on academic titles

Academic titles are so notorious for being overly complex that a website is devoted to scholars poking fun of their own titles: *lol my thesis*¹³⁰ provides abbreviated forms of a title that summarize in plain language what the thesis is about. For example, the following pair provides the suggested plain-English title in (a) and the real thesis title in (b):

- (17.26) a. Does having more antioxidants make elderly flies sexier? It doesn't seem like it, but I did some stuff wrong so maybe.
- b. Effects of transgenic overexpression of superoxide dismutase on the reproductive ability of aging Caribbean fruit flies, *Anastrepha suspensa* Loew

Included in the May 1, 2017, post, this particular title is for a biology thesis written at the University of Florida. Titles in other genres have different tendencies. Elle O'Brien (2017) conducted a study on the titles of romance novels and programmed a computer to generate its own titles worthy of a Harlequin cover, including *The Sheik's Marriage Sheriff*, *Virgin Viking*, *The Billionaire's Marriage Valley*, *Surgery Seduction*, and *Midwife Cowpoke*. These humorous titles mimic common features of romance novels.

Along with preferences for particular formats, layouts, and even types of titles, genre dictates a range of expected grammatical features of the language within the text. Readers are

¹³⁰ lol my thesis: <<http://lolmythesis.com>>

generally not consciously aware of this knowledge, so you may be able to read a text and identify its genre without knowing how or why you were able to do so.

As another lens for categorizing language, **register** refers to whether a text is more formal or informal. For instance, a newspaper contains a variety of articles, and, while every article is classified under the news writing genre, some are formal reports of news events while others are informal op-ed pieces. Examining register helps to distinguish between those types of writing. Genre and register are so interwoven that some scholars don't differentiate between the two, using only one term or the other. Regardless of the term used, the message is the same: linguistic choices reflect the author's purpose, text type, and intended reader.

Three major written genres are news writing, fiction, and academic, and the grammatical patterns that help to identify reader expectations for these genres include differences in nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and modifiers occurring after the head noun, whether they are post- or non-restrictive modifiers. Throughout this discussion, I rely on information from Biber et al. (1999), who provide a thorough discussion of grammatical features as they relate to genre,¹³¹ based on corpus studies. For each feature, they use charts to display the frequencies of features per million words, and this section replicates the information provided in a few of those charts. Because these features occur so frequently, the charts' labels are represented in the thousands per million words, so '100' on a chart represents '100,000' and means that the feature in question appears 100,000 times for every one million words.

Across fiction, news, and academic writing, there is a noticeable difference in how frequently authors use nouns and pronouns. Biber et al. (1999: 235) provide the following distribution for nouns and pronouns:

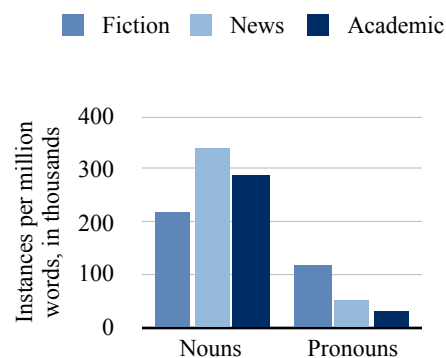


Figure 17.4 Noun and pronoun distribution across three genres

With over 300,000 instances per million words, news writing uses the nouns most frequently out of the three genres, and academic writing is not too far behind. Fiction exhibits the lowest frequency of noun use but highest for pronoun use. News writing and academic texts are more likely to repeat the same noun than use a pronoun (Biber et al. 1999: 237) because specificity is an important feature and expectation of those genres. Ambiguous references are allowed in fiction but avoided in the other genres.

¹³¹ The authors use the term *register* rather than *genre* because texts reflect features related to genre, formality, and situation all at once. I use *genre* in this chapter since that is the term most frequently used in other disciplines and is the term students will be more likely to recognize.

Biber et al. (1999: 359) provide the following distribution for verbs:

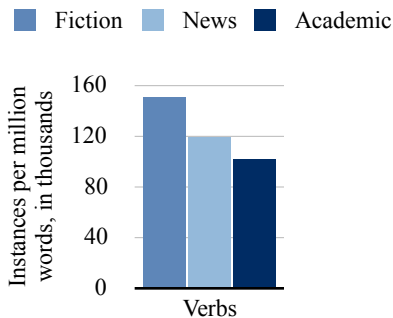


Figure 17.5 Verb use across three genres

Fiction texts incorporate verbs more frequently, with over 150,000 verbs per million words, and academic writing exhibits the lowest verb frequency. The use of verbs connects to content: fiction texts tell stories and narratives, often relying on verbs to take readers from one point to the next. News writing and academic genres, on the other hand, rely on conveying facts, which are often stated in noun phrases.

Biber et al. (1999: 456) further point out that fiction texts are more likely to have a nearly even distribution between past and present tenses, but news writing and academic texts are more likely to use the present tense. The starkest contrast is between the tenses in academic texts:

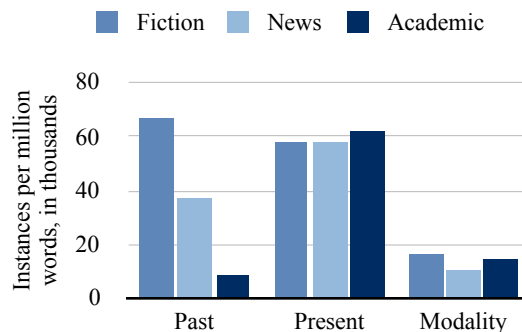


Figure 17.6 Verb tense/modality across three genres

This chart only reflects finite verb forms since non-finite verbs do not carry tense/modality. Out of the tensed verbs, Biber et al. (1999: 461-462) note that the simple past and present tenses appear most frequently in all genres, and if aspect is marked, it is most likely to be perfect. Academic writing shows a clear preference for present tense forms over past tense forms, which reflects the common expectation for scholars to write in the historical present tense.

The final three features discussed in this section reflect noun phrase modification, including the frequency of adjectives, post- and non-restrictive modifiers, and *of*-preposition phrases (i.e., the number of post-modifiers that are preposition phrases beginning with *of*). Biber et al. (1999: 506, 606, 302) provide the following distributions:

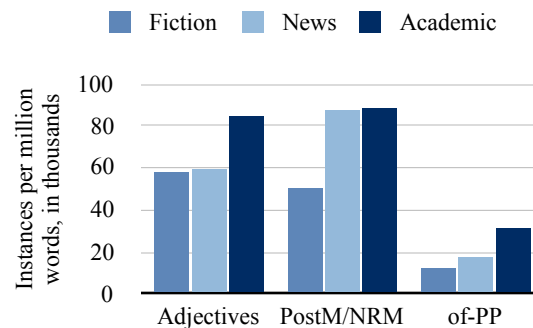


Figure 17.7 Dispersion of adjectives, post- and non-restrictive modifiers, and *of*-PPs across three genres

While news and fiction writing are nearly equal in the distribution of adjectives, which includes both attributive and predicative adjectives, academic texts show a higher frequency. Of these adjectives, the majority of them are attributive across all three genres, though fiction uses more predicative adjectives than either of the other two genres (Biber et al. 1999: 506). Both news writing and academic texts are more likely to use post- and non-restrictive modifiers (Biber et al. 1999: 606), which reflects their focus on specific information and definitions. Specifically, the use of *of*-preposition phrases is higher in academic writing than the other two genres (302).

To demonstrate these common patterns in written language, I selected three texts, one from each representative genre, purposefully selecting excerpts that explore the same theme, Alzheimer's, for easier comparison. The 100-word excerpts for each genre are provided below with square brackets marking the portions not considered for the 100-word analysis (they are provided for context only).

(17.27) Lisa Genova's *Still Alice* (2007: 213-214), fiction

She highlighted anything that struck her as important, so when she needed to backtrack, she could limit her rereading to the colored words.

She became hopelessly stalled on page twenty-six, which was saturated in pink. Her brain felt overwhelmed and begged her for rest. She imagined the pink words on the page transforming into sticky pink cotton candy in her head. The more she read, the more she needed to highlight to understand and remember what she was reading. The more she highlighted, the more her head became packed with pink, woolly sugar, clogging and muffling the circuits in her brain [that were needed to understand and remember what she was reading. By page twenty-six, she understood nothing.]

(17.28) Lawrence Altman (2015), news writing

Sharing thoughts and ideas through spoken communication is a fragile process. Even the simplest verbal response requires a complex sequence of events. The brain must recall the words to best convey a message, put them in proper sequence, and then signal the muscles required to produce speech.

The slightest damage to brain areas that orchestrate these events can produce speech difficulties.

Earlier studies have shown that certain linguistic biomarkers change with disease progression. Spoken vocabulary size declines, for instance, and use of indefinite nouns increases.

Studies of a small group of American nuns have shown a strong relationship between the [complexity of the language the women used in handwritten autobiographical essays when they were young and their cognitive health many decades later.]

(17.29) Ferris and Farlow (2013: 1008-1009), academic

Although subtle language deficits are detected in the early stages of AD, the mechanics of speech (ie, phonological and syntactic performance) appear to be well preserved, and at least some of the perceived deficits result from dysfunction in nonlinguistic domains such as attention and executive control. In the early stages of AD, language impairment involves lexical retrieval problems, loss of verbal fluency, and breakdown in comprehension of higher order written and spoken languages. In the moderate and severe stages of AD, the loss of verbal fluency is profound, with breakdown of comprehension and literal and semantic paraphrases prominent (Table 1);¹³² in very [severe AD, speech is often restricted to echolalia and verbal stereotypy.] (1008-1009)

For each 100-word excerpt, I counted the number of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, post- and non-restrictive modifiers, and *of*-preposition phrases. On the next page, you will find the chart reflecting the features in these excerpts and a chart that compiles the features presented in Biber et al. (1999) for comparison.

While news writing tends to have more nouns than the other genres, this particular excerpt matched the academic excerpt for the number of nouns. However, in both charts, noun use is highest in news and academic writing while pronoun and verb use are highest in fiction writing. Academic writing uses the most adjectives and *of*-preposition phrases, and the news and academic writing excerpts use more post-/non-restrictive modifiers, which matches the overall features of those genres. Of course, had the excerpts been longer, the results would be more reliable, but even in those short excerpts, you can see the same patterns emerging as the grammatical patterns in their representative genres.

Writers do not have to be aware of these patterns for them to naturally emerge within texts, and, in fact, most writers don't set out to write a noun-heavy or verb-forward text to match a particular grammatical feature. Instead, these patterns emerge because the basic purpose of news and academic writing is to inform while the purpose of fiction is to entertain. If authors want to inform their readers, they need to include facts, and facts are often framed with NP-heavy constructions with supporting details, which often appear as adjectives and post- and non-restrictive modifiers. If authors care less about informing and more about entertaining their readers, they will likely focus less on the facts and more on a storyline or journey, which requires more verbs to help readers connect one point in the story to the next.

¹³² The parenthetical note *Table 1* was ignored for the purpose of this analysis.

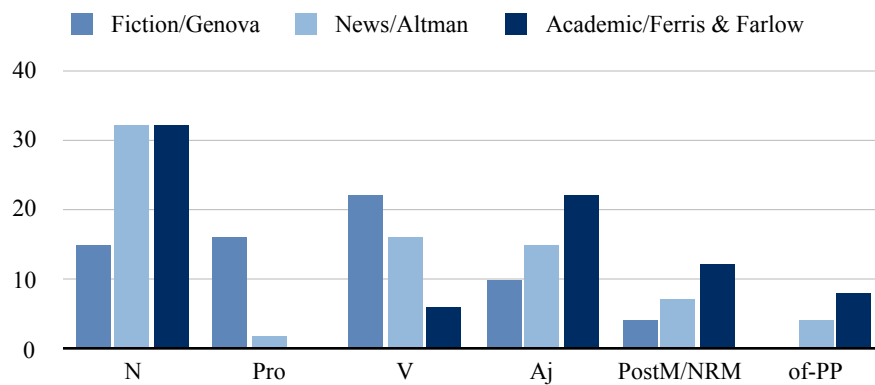


Figure 17.8 Grammatical features of three texts from differing genres

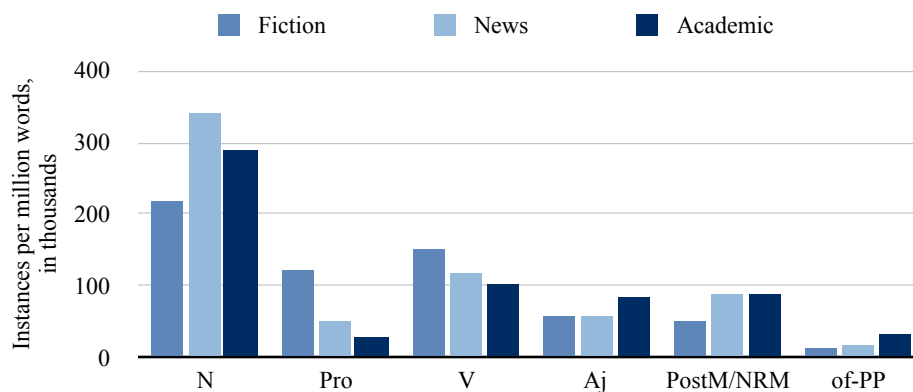


Figure 17.9 Grammatical features of three genres, according to Biber et al. (1999)

Biber et al. (1999: 16) provide the following foundational distinctions among the genres in their Table 1.1, which is partially replicated below.

	FICTION	NEWS	ACADEMIC
main communicative purpose/content	pleasure reading	information/evaluation	information/argumentation/explanation
audience	wide-public	wide-public	specialist
dialect domain	global	regional/national	global

Table 17.1 Partially replicated Table 1.1 from Biber et al. (1999: 16) to identify genre distinctions

The main communicative purposes listed in the table provide the basic purpose of the genre; for instance, news writing often has the end goal of providing information for and evaluation of an event for its readers, who are the general public. However, within news writing, some authors may want to entertain their readers while informing them, such as a sports writer simultaneously

informing readers about the outcome of a game while selecting words and phrases that will entertain the intended readers.

I've selected four 100-word excerpts from Amazon reviews to demonstrate two points: (1) grammatical features shift within genre-specific writing to reflect purpose, and (2) these patterns are pervasive enough to appear even when the writer is not a published author. Two of the reviews are written to honestly inform readers about a product and its features, and the other two are written to entertain readers. Furthermore, I selected two reviews that describe kitchen appliances and two that describe office products.

The first excerpt is William E. Mouser's (2016) informative review of the SterlingPro French Press Coffee and Tea Maker. The square brackets indicate the location of the 100-word cutoff, so the end of the sentence within the square brackets was not considered for analysis.

(17.30) Informative review: French press

I purchased this French press to replace the one with a beaker I had accidentally cracked. I selected the Sterlingpro model based exclusively on price and what appeared (from the reviews) to have satisfactory quality. I have been using it daily now for a month, and I write this review to report on my use of this French press. I have used a French press for over 40 years.

Overall: this is an excellent product for the price. Characteristics of this press which attract my attention:

"Tightness:" There's probably a better term for this, but I'm referring to the way everything [fits snugly together, especially the lid (while brewing) and the screen as it is depressed via the plunger at the end of brewing.]

This initial discussion compares Mouser's informative review to SW3K's (2011) entertaining review of the Hutzler 571 Banana Slicer:

(17.31) Entertaining review: Banana slicer

For decades I have been trying to come up with an ideal way to slice a banana. "Use a knife!" they say. Well...my parole officer won't allow me to be around knives. "Shoot it with a gun!" Background check...HELLO! I had to resort to carefully attempt [sic] to slice those bananas with my bare hands. 99.9% of the time, I would get so frustrated that I just ended up squishing the fruit in my hands and throwing it against the wall in anger. Then, after a fit of banana-induced rage, my parole officer introduced me to this kitchen marvel and my life was changed.

In identifying the nouns, verbs, and adjectives of these excerpts, a pattern for word choice emerged:

	Informative: French press	Entertaining: Banana slicer
Nouns	French press, beaker, Sterlingpro, reviews, years, product, price, characteristics, attention, way	decades, banana, knife, parole officer, gun, wall, anger, rage, marvel, life
Verbs	purchased, replace, had cracked, selected, appeared, have been using, report, is	have been trying, come up with, won't allow, shoot, had to resort, ended up, squishing, throwing
Adjectives	satisfactory, excellent, better	ideal, bare, frustrated, banana-induced

Table 17.2 Content words from informative and entertaining reviews on Amazon

The words in the informative review directly relate to the French press or the decision-making process of purchasing a press. The words in the entertaining review, however, stray from the original product (e.g., *parole officer*; *rage*, *shoot*) as the review continues. Also, while the informative review uses more adjectives to further describe the product, the entertaining review tends to use adjectives to describe other nouns (e.g., *banana-induced rage*).

The second pair of reviews focus on office supplies. An excerpt of Raven's (2015) informative review of the DecoBros Desk Organizer is provided below:

(17.32) Informative review: Desk organizer

I included pictures to help others who are looking for an ideal Organizer. I like this product because it is large and has enough space for my highlighters, pencils, pens, and sharpies for college. This organizer has rubber grips on the end that prevent it from sliding all over your desk. It comes with a drawer that I use for Post-Its. At the moment, I can fit 4 packs of Post-Its in the middle compartment and still have room to fit one or two more packs (just to give you a feel for how big the middle compartment is.) I [put my deodorant stick next to it so that you could compare the size (its all I had at the time!)]

Raven's review incorporates many noun phrases with product-specific nouns, such as *organizer*, *space*, *highlighters*, *grips*, *desk*, and *compartment*, and those nouns are modified by adjectives (*large*, *big*) and post-modifiers (*for college*, *on the end*, *that I use for Post-Its*). The verbs used relate directly to the use of the product (*included*, *has*, *prevent*, *sliding*, *can fit*).

An excerpt of D. Berkowitz's (2012) entertaining review of BIC for Her pens is provided below:

(17.33) Entertaining review: BIC for Her

I thought, being a man and all, that since they didn't have any manly Bic for Him pens, I could buy these, as I need pens and can't always wait for the appropriate pens to come out for my underserved gender. What a mistake.

And don't think I didn't try to look. I searched this very site for Bic for Him, and it recommended the BIC Cristal Stic Ball Pen, Medium Point , 1.0 mm, Black, 12

Pens (MS11-Blk). These are Cristal! There is nothing manly about them, short of the “Stic Ball” reference to a very manly game they used to play in Brooklyn, back when they had stoops. Amazon also recommended other products, [like a Coleman Two-Burner Propane Stove.]

As with the first entertaining review, the noun phrases stray from the product itself (*gender, mistake, site, Cristal, Stic Ball, game, Brooklyn, stoops*), and not all the adjectives provide descriptions relevant to the product (*manly, underserved*). The modifiers, rather than extending the description of the product, provide offhand humor (*to a very manly game they used to play in Brooklyn, back when they had stoops*).

Compiling the results from these four excerpts, the following chart presents the informative reviews as the first two bars in each set with the entertaining reviews on the right of each set. The four features that stand out the most between the two text types is the use of nouns, verbs, present-tense verbs, modals, and post- and non-restrictive modifiers. The use of adjectives was less distinctive for these particular excerpts, and because Amazon reviews tend to be written more informally than other styles of writing, even informative reviews have a higher frequency of pronouns than might be expected in other informative texts.

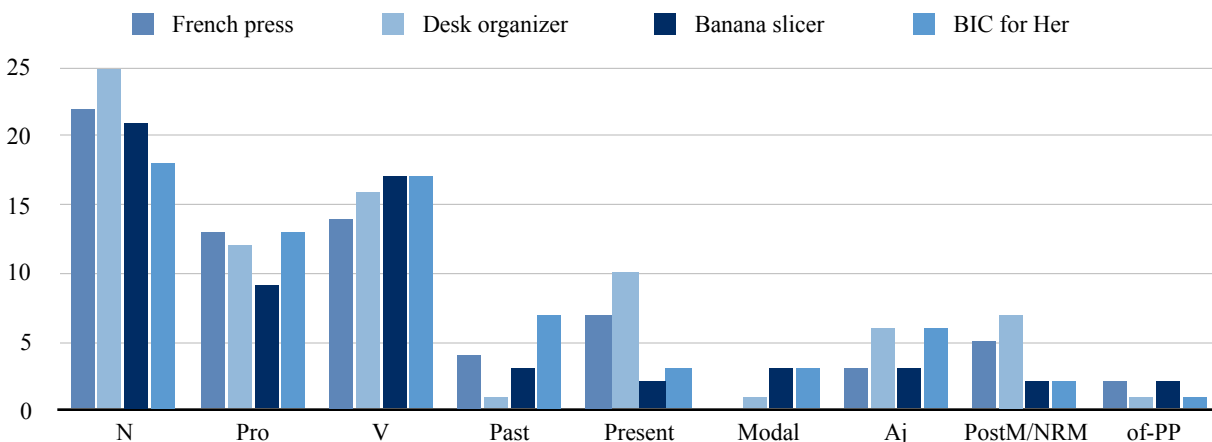


Figure 17.10 Grammatical features of four Amazon reviews

This chart summarizes this section nicely: the more you want to inform your audience, the more likely you are to rely on heavy noun phrases with post-/non-restrictive modifiers; the more you want to entertain your audience, the more likely you are to incorporate a higher number of verbs, often in the past tense. The goals you have for your text affect the language you use to express your ideas.

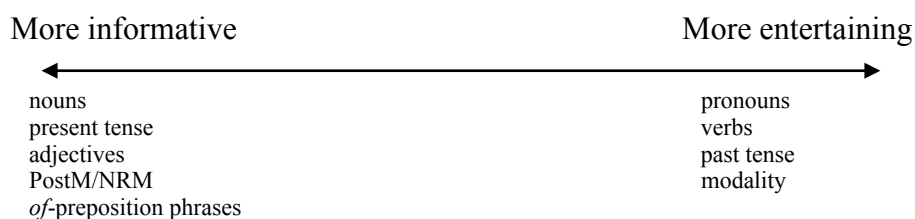
In another example of how the author’s purpose affects grammatical features, Hannah Tumlinson (2016) analyzes the short essay “Just So You Know,” written by Sarah Addison Allen (2010) for Barnes & Noble’s Nook “More in Store” feature. Allen’s essay has dual purposes: to entice readers to buy books while making them feel good and to entertain and read like an essay rather than an overt advertisement. Tumlinson’s close analysis of Allen’s language demonstrates that, to successfully achieve both goals, Allen incorporates conversational features of language,

such as high instances of pronoun use—especially *you*—and both right- and left-dislocation, and mixes those with literary features, such as complex sentence structures and the personification of books. Tumlinson’s analysis underscores the fact that while genre provides a backbone structure for expected grammatical features, authors can manipulate the finer details of their writing to reflect a specific purpose.

Practice Set 17.3 Purpose-driven grammar

The following excerpts have been taken from reference books on English grammar, specifically excerpts that define subjects and predicates, yet they differ in how they reach their goal and intended audience. Make a bar chart that provides the following features for each excerpt: nouns, pronouns, verbs (in total, including finite and non-finite), past tense verbs, present tense verbs, verbs with modality, adjectives, post-modifiers/non-restrictive modifiers, and *of*-preposition phrases.

Based solely on linguistic features, place the four excerpts on the following spectrum, justifying the decisions you made.



Each excerpt is 100 words and ends at the square bracket. Include all portions in parentheses in the excerpt, as those are part of the original text. Compounds are identified in-line in each excerpt, indicated by an underscore: *at all*.

Excerpt 1: Karen Elizabeth Gordon's *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire* (1993[1984]: 3-4)¹³³

The subject is that part of the sentence about which something is divulged; it is what the sentence's other words are gossiping about.

The simple subject, a noun or pronoun, is the essence lurking at its center, without which the complete subject would be nothing at all.

The predicate is the other necessary part of the sentence, the part that has something to say about the subject, that states its predicament.

The complete predicate of a sentence consists of all the words that divulge something about the subject. Like the complete subject, the complete predicate has an essence, a fundamental reality, called [the simple predicate, or verb.]

¹³³ For this excerpt, I omitted the sets of example sentences and any sentences directly discussing example sentences to keep focus on how she writes the descriptions and definitions of the concepts.

Excerpt 2: Liesa Abram's *Easy Guide to Grammar* (2004: 4-5)

The first thing I did was have Rosita type_up a draft of the email on the computer. It was a good thing she'd asked for my help, especially if Charlie really was a grammar snob. Her sentences—if you could call them that—were a mess. It wasn't clear whom her sentences were about, or what was happening in them. A sentence needs two things to do its job.

First, it needs a subject—*something* or *someone* to talk_about. (Don't we all!) Like a good gossip, a sentence should name names, usually in the form of a [**noun**, which is a person, place, thing, or idea.]

Excerpt 3: Mignon Fogarty's *Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students* (2011: 55)

Great! You have your parts_of_speech—the batteries of grammar. It's time to use them to light_up your world, to give voice to your thoughts, and to make_sure others know or understand how you think.

It's time to create sentences.

Unfortunately, you can't turn any set of words into a sentence by just starting with a capital letter and ending with a period.

By the basic definition, a sentence has a subject and a predicate. (Although it is a bit simplistic, it can help to think_of the predicate as the verb for now.)

Here's an example of [a very simple sentence with just a subject and a verb: Squiggly ran.]

Excerpt 4: Constance Hale's *Sin and Syntax* (2013[1999]: 173)

Writers dream of sentences that sail through the waters of thought. We carefully design their build and girth, and we struggle at the helm to keep them gliding rather than thrashing at sea. We can think_of the subject of a sentence, crafted mainly from nouns, as the hull of a boat. And we can think_of the predicate, whose key component is a verb, as the sail or motor, the part that makes the boat move.

All it takes is a simple sentence to get a What and a So_What, a protagonist and a story. What is a simple sentence? A [mini-narrative that contains one and only one subject-predicate pair. In the example *Animals swerve*, the subject is *animals*, the verb is *swerve*. Simple.]

17.4 Readability

The author's style, genre, purpose, register, and intended audience affect the overall **readability** of the text, which Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt (2010: 482) define as “how easily written materials can be read and understood.” The methods described below are attempts

to quantify the readability of a text. Richards and Schmidt state that at least three features are important for determining a text's readability: (1) "the average length of sentences in a passage," (2) "the number of new words a passage contains," and (3) "the grammatical complexity of the language used" (Richards and Schmidt 2010: 482). Methods differ according to which linguistic features they focus on and the ways in which they apply those features to a mathematical equation to quantify the readability. All methods have one feature in common: the higher the resulting number, the more difficult the text. The more difficult the text, the more education and/or specialized knowledge a reader needs to comprehend the text.

One of the earliest models still in use, the Flesch (and later the Flesch-Kincaid) model takes into account two major features of a text to figure out its readability level: the average number of words per sentence and the average number of syllables per word. Two problematic assumptions made by this model are (1) that grammatically complex sentences will be longer than grammatically simple sentences, and (2) the number of syllables of a word is indicative of its readability.

A similar method is the Gunning FOG Index, which also uses the average number of words per sentence, but instead of finding an average number of syllables per word, it distinguishes the percent of "complex" or "difficult" words within the text. The Gunning FOG Index defines difficult words as having three or more syllables, disregarding any compounds (unless the individual words within the compound have three or more syllables) and inflectional affixes that add an additional syllable. For instance, *regarding* is not considered a difficult word by this measure since the third syllable is the inflectional *-ing*; however, *disregarding* is a difficult word because *disregard* is three syllables.

Using syllable counts for figuring out the difficulty of words is not a reliable method because some long words are commonplace (e.g., *difficult*, *excitement*, *comfortable*) while some short words require a high reading level or specialized knowledge (e.g., *ennui*, *mundane*, *hubris*, *oakum*, *jabot*). Furthermore, these methods fail to consider the fact that if readers encounter a difficult or previously unknown word in a text, they will be more likely to remember that word on their next encounter with it in the same text. The more they encounter that word in a single text, the more familiar they become with it, and the difficulty initially provided by that word decreases.

Current publishers and standardized reading scores typically use measurements like the Lexile Framework¹³⁴ measure, which uses a complex logarithm that considers sentence length and the frequency of word use (i.e., how frequently each word is used/repeated across the text). Another measure, the ATOS¹³⁵ readability measure, considers these features: sentence length, word length (measured both by characters and by syllables), word difficulty (based on a standardized Graded Vocabulary List), and word frequency. In other words, newer methods have

¹³⁴ The Lexile website provides more detailed information: <<https://www.lexile.com>>.

¹³⁵ Milone (2014) provides more information about how the ATOS readability measure was formulated.

moved away from relying on syllable counts and toward incorporating other measures while still considering average sentence length as an important feature.¹³⁶

Some scholars eschew sentence length altogether and instead focus measures of readability on the words themselves. One such method is using a text's **lexical density** (LD),¹³⁷ which considers the ratio of content to function words used in the text. M.A.K. Halliday (1989) measures lexical density by counting the total number of content words and dividing that by the total number of finite non-embedded clauses (i.e., finite adverb clauses, finite clauses functioning as non-restrictive modifiers, and independent clause structures).¹³⁸ When identifying content words, the researcher has to first clearly define what counts as a content, or lexical, word in the text. For example, most scholars do not consider all adverbs equally, so manner adverbs are included in the content word category while other adverbs (e.g., temporal or linking adverbs) are included in the function word category. Halliday's view on the matter is that "it does not matter exactly where we draw the line provided we do it consistently" (1989: 63). A text with a low lexical density indicates that it has a high proportion of function words, increasing its readability. Conversational speech relies on function words and shorter clause structures, which gives it a low lexical density. Academic writing, on the other hand, introduces higher amounts of informative content, relying on nouns, verbs, and adjectives and longer clause structures, giving it a high lexical density.

Another approach is to consider the frequency of a text's words within English because words that are frequently used in general are more likely to be known by readers. The website *Word and Phrase*, a sister website to the COCA, provides three **vocabulary frequency ranges**, basing the range on how frequently words appear in English use.

- Range 1: words ranked 1-500 (e.g., *the, be, in, me, very, little*)
- Range 2: words ranked 501-3,000 (e.g., *green, cat, letter, happy, jump*)
- Range 3: words ranked 3,001-60,000 (e.g., *magic, clockwise, vivacious, squander*)

¹³⁶ Because readability is not a static measurement, many publishers use multiple measures to help teachers, parents, and students select texts that are within their predicted reading range. For example, Scholastic (see Doman 2017) includes three interrelated measurements for their books: the Guided Reading level, Lexile measure, and Developmental Reading Assessment level. The Scholastic website shows that *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* has a Lexile measure of 1030L and places it in the Guided Reading level W and DRA level 60, indicating it falls into a sixth-grade reading level for Scholastic standards, assuming the reader is supported with outside resources, such as vocabulary development. The Lexile website includes a grade equivalency chart that shows a rating of 1030L places it in a range that includes the high end of a sixth-grade level, mid-range for a seventh-grade level, and low end for an eighth-grade level. If you look the same book up to compare that information to its ATOS book level, you'll find that it has a 7.2 rating (as reported on the AR Book Find website), which places it at a lower seventh-grade reading level. These results indicate ranges based on averages, which is why advanced readers might read *Harry Potter* in elementary school without any problems while others may not be comfortable with such books until they're in high school or even later.

¹³⁷ A rather unfortunate turn of events has left an overlap between the terms 'lexical density' and 'lexical diversity.' Some people use 'lexical density' to refer to a measure of unique words, or its lexical diversity. Measures of lexical diversity focus on identifying the frequency of new, or unique, words in a text.

¹³⁸ J. Ure (1971) uses a percentage-based approach that divides the number of content words by the number of total words to find the lexical density; if you see lexical density reported as a percentage, Ure's method was likely used.

Range 1 words are primarily function words, along with some common content words, and all texts incorporate more Range 1 words than any other range. Texts that rely more heavily on Range 3 words will likely be more challenging for readers.

In the following discussion, I incorporate a variety of methods for measuring readability to demonstrate how their results compare. The comparisons of lexical density and frequency ranges are based only on the first 150-200 words of the book, which are provided below.

(17.34) John Steinbeck's (2006[1939]) *The Grapes of Wrath*

To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth. The plows crossed and recrossed the rivulet marks. The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and the dark red country began to disappear under a green cover. In the last part of May the sky grew pale and the clouds that hung in high puffs for so long in the spring were dissipated. The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet. The clouds appeared, and went away, and in a while they did not try any more. The weeds grew darker green to protect themselves, and they did not spread any more. The surface of the earth crusted, a thin hard crust, and as the sky became pale, so the earth became pale, pink in the red country and white in the gray country.

(17.35) Wilson Rawls's (2016[1961]) *Where the Red Fern Grows*

When I left my office that beautiful spring day, I had no idea what was in store for me. To begin with, everything was too perfect for anything unusual to happen. It was one of those days when a man feels good, feels like speaking his neighbor, is glad to live in a country like ours, and proud of his government. You know what I mean, one of those rare days when everything is right and nothing is wrong.

I was walking along whistling when I heard the dogfight. At first I paid no attention to it. After all it wasn't anything to get excited about, just another dogfight in a residential section.

As the sound of the fight grew nearer, I could tell there were quite a few dogs mixed up in it. They boiled out of an alley, turned, and headed straight toward me. Not wanting to get bitten or run over, I moved over to the edge of the sidewalk.

(17.36) John Grisham's (1991) *The Firm*

The senior partner studied the résumé for the hundredth time and again found nothing he disliked about Mitchell Y. McDeere, at least not on paper. He had the brains, the ambition, the good looks. And he was hungry; with his background, he had to be. He was married, and that was mandatory. The firm had never hired an unmarried lawyer, and it frowned heavily on divorce, as well as womanizing and drinking. Drug testing was in the contract. He had a degree in accounting, passed the CPA exam the first time he took it and wanted to be a tax lawyer, which of

course was a requirement with a tax firm. He was white, and the firm had never hired a black. They managed this by being secretive and clubbish and never soliciting job applications. Other firms solicited, and hired blacks. This firm recruited, and remained lily white. Plus, the firm was in Memphis, of all places, and the top blacks wanted New York or Washington or Chicago. McDeere was a male, and there were no women in the firm. That mistake had been made in the mid-seventies when they recruited the number one grad from Harvard, who happened to be a she and a wizard at taxation. She lasted four turbulent years and was killed in a car wreck.

To find the Lexile and ATOS measures, I searched for the books on Lexile's website and the AR Book Find website, which is run by Renaissance, a learning company that uses ATOS measures. I figured the average words per sentence and lexical densities by hand, and I used *Word and Phrase* to find the vocabulary ranges. A table with the comparisons for the results of these excerpts is below:

Method of measuring readability		Grapes	Red Fern	The Firm
Lexile measure		680L	700L	680L
ATOS readability measure		4.9	4.9	4.6
Average words/sentence		22.75	16.3	14.73
Lexical density		5.7	4.7	4.4
Vocabulary: frequency ranges	Range 1	67%	80%	72%
	Range 2	20%	9%	13%
	Range 3	14%	11%	15%

Table 17.3 Comparing readability rankings for three books

I specifically chose these books because they are ranked at a fourth-grade reading level and fall within roughly the same Lexile ranking. However, while elementary students read *Where the Red Fern Grows*, I'd be surprised to find *Grapes of Wrath* or *The Firm* on any reading list for readers younger than high school. Part of that expectation is based on content—of the three books, *Where the Red Fern Grows* is the one whose content is best suited for younger readers.

The content is reflected in the vocabulary. For example, *Where the Red Fern Grows* has the lowest percentage of Range 2 and 3 words, and the Range 3 words it has are more commonplace than those in the other books. Below are lists of example words belonging to Range 3 in each excerpt:

- Grapes of Wrath: *scarred, recrossed, rivulet, scattered, colonies, dissipated*
- Where the Red Fern Grows: *glad, unusual, dogfight, residential, proud, sidewalk*
- The Firm: *résumé, ambition, mandatory, womanizing, soliciting, recruited, turbulent*

To some extent, you can get a good sense of the book's content and readability by combing through its list of Range 2 and Range 3 words.

Along with differences in vocabulary, *Grapes of Wrath* is more likely to incorporate longer sentence structures with a slightly higher concentration of content words, making it more challenging for readers. While *The Firm* uses shorter sentence structures with a lower concentration of content words, its higher frequency of Range 3 words may make the text more challenging for some readers.

To show how different these measurements are for more difficult texts, I analyzed the following excerpts, which are taken from Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short's (2007) book *Style in Fiction* and the essay "The Web of the Game," written by Roger Angell and published in 1981 in *The New Yorker*. Both are written at an academic level.

(17.37) Leech and Short's *Style in Fiction*

An earlier book in this series (*A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*) was written with the aim of showing the student of English that examining the language of a literary text can be a means to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the writer's artistic achievement. The present book is written with the same aim in mind, this time taking prose fiction, not poetry, as the object of study.

The book takes its direction from the 'new stylistics' which has applied techniques and concepts of modern linguistics to the study of literature. This does not mean that we expect our readers to know a great deal about linguistics: we shall aim to interpret the principles and methods of linguistic study in a way that demands relatively little technical knowledge. Readers who are familiar with some basic concepts and traditional terms in grammar, phonetics and rhetoric will, we hope, find themselves at home in this book, and even readers new to language study should have little difficulty if they follow up occasional explanations and references given in the notes (see especially section 3.2). The main thing is that the reader should approach the subject of style with appreciative curiosity, and should take a sympathetic view of our guiding maxim, which is that to make progress in understanding style one has to make use of an explicit understanding of language—not just language in a literary context.

(17.38) Angell's "The Web of the Game"

An afternoon in mid-May, and we are waiting for the game to begin. We are in shadow, and the sunlit field before us is a thick, springy green—an old diamond, beautifully kept up. The grass continues beyond the low chain-link fence that encloses the outfield, extending itself on the right-field side into a rougher, featureless sward that terminates in a low line of distant trees, still showing a pale, early-summer green. We are almost in the country. Our seats are in the seventh row of the grandstand, on the home side of the diamond, about halfway between third base and home plate. The seats themselves are more comforting to spirit than

to body, being a surviving variant example of the pure late-Doric Polo Grounds mode: the backs made of a continuous running row of wood slats, divided off by pairs of narrow cast-iron arms, within which are slatted let-down seats, grown arthritic with rust and countless layers of gray paint. The rows are stacked so closely upon each other (one discovers) that a happening on the field of sufficient interest to warrant a rise or half-rise to one's feet is often made more memorable by a sharp crack to the kneecaps delivered by the backs of the seats just forward; in time, one finds that a dandruff of gray paint flakes from the same source has fallen on one's lap and scorecard. None of this matters, for this view and these stands and this park—it is Yale Field, in New Haven—are renowned for the felicity. The grandstand is a low, penumbrous steel-post shed that holds the infield in a pleasant horseshoe-curved embrace. The back wall of the grandstand, behind the uppermost row of seats, is broken by an arcade of open arches, admitting a soft back light that silhouettes the upper audience and also discloses an overhead bonework of struts and beams supporting the roof—the pigeonland of all the ballparks of our youth.

Once again, the Range 3 words in both excerpts are indicative of content: the Range 3 words in *Style in Fiction* include *linguistics*, *artistic*, *curiosity*, *explicit*, *fiction*, *maxim*, and *stylistics*, and the Range 3 words from “The Web of the Game” include *grandstand*, *ballparks*, *right-field*, *memorable*, and *sward*.

There are no Lexile or ATOS measures available for these texts, so the table below omits those rows.

Method of measuring readability		Style	Web	Grapes	Fern	Firm
Average words/sentence		39.2	33.3	22.75	16.3	14.73
Lexical density		10.7	11.9	5.7	4.7	4.4
Vocabulary: frequency ranges	Range 1	67%	63%	67%	80%	72%
	Range 2	21%	14%	20%	9%	13%
	Range 3	12%	23%	14%	11%	15%

Table 17.4 Readability measures of an academic text

The sentences in the academic texts are, on average, longer than the sentences found in the other three texts, and the lexical density results reflect the fact that the academic texts are more difficult to read. “The Web of the Game” has the highest lexical density and highest percentage of Range 3 vocabulary, making it the most difficult text to read out of these five.

Studying grammatical features, such as word choice and grammatical complexity, can help you better understand the types of linguistic features expected in particular genres and registers, the ways particular features can be indicative of style, and the ways those features make a text more approachable for intended audiences.

Practice Set 17.4 Identifying lexical density

The three excerpts below are taken from different genres but focus on the same content: Anne Boleyn's arrest. Using Halliday's method of determining lexical density, calculate the readability of the following three excerpts by following this process:

- 1) Identify the number of content words by adding together the number of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and manner adverbs.
- 2) Identify the number of non-embedded clauses by adding together the number of adverb clauses, independent clauses, finite dependent clauses set off by commas, dashes, or parentheses.
- 3) Divide the number of content words by the number of finite non-embedded clauses.

Excerpt 1: Philippa Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2001: 626), fiction writing

“Where's the king going?” Anne said, looking round.

I glanced toward the London road, longing for the sight of William's horse. But there, on the road, was the king's standard, there was the unmistakable bulk of the king on his horse. There was Norris beside him, and a small escort of men. They were riding quickly, west to London.

“Where is he going in such haste?” Anne demanded, uneasily. “Did he say he was leaving?”

Jane Parker stepped forward. “Didn't you know?” she asked brightly. “Secretary Cromwell had that lad Mark Smeaton at his house all last night and has now taken him to the Tower. He sent to tell the king so. Perhaps the king is going to the Tower to see what the lad confessed to? ...”

Excerpt 2: Suzannah Lipscomb's “Guilty or not guilty: Why did Anne Boleyn have to die?” (2013), news writing

Evidence is limited—but there is enough to appear to support several very different conclusions.

There are a number of undisputed facts relating to Anne's fall. On Sunday 30 April 1536 Mark Smeaton, a musician from the queen's household, was arrested; he was then interrogated at Cromwell's house in Stepney. On the same evening the king postponed a trip with Anne to Calais, planned for 2 May.

The next day, 1 May, Smeaton was moved to the Tower. Henry attended the May Day jousts at Greenwich but left abruptly on horseback with a small group of intimates. These included Sir Henry Norris, a personal body servant and one of his closest friends, whom he questioned throughout the journey. At dawn the next day Norris was taken to the Tower. Anne and her brother George, Lord Rochford, were also arrested.

Excerpt 3: Greg Walker's "Rethinking the fall of Anne Boleyn" (2002: 4-5), academic writing

During that fraught journey to Whitehall, the king subjected Henry Norris, the chief gentleman of his privy chamber and his closest companion (who was still recovering from his exertions as the chief answerer in the tournament) to a series of staggeringly personal questions. The precise details are unknown, but the devastating tenor of the interrogation is clear: what did he know about the queen's sexual conduct? Was she an adulteress? Was he her lover? Henry allegedly offered Norris a full pardon if he would confess and reveal everything that he knew, but Norris steadfastly maintained his innocence. At dawn the next day he joined Smeaton as a prisoner in the Tower. On the same day, Tuesday 2 May, the queen herself and her brother, George, Viscount Rochford, joined them.

17.5 Spoken language features

When analyzing spoken language, two levels of analysis are the speech event and its individual utterances. **Speech events** are the "texts" of spoken language and include a variety of events, including conversations, which take place between two or more participants, whether they are speaking by phone, in person, or at a meeting. Speech events are measured in **utterances**, which are the "sentences" of spoken language. An utterance can be any length, from a partial word (*wha—*) to a four-minute soliloquy on the dangers of not using an Oxford comma. Utterances can even be sounds, such as snorts, sighs, or laughs, which contribute to the flow of the conversation.

Spoken language tends to be more difficult to grammatically analyze because speech is often more pragmatically complex and not necessarily delivered in discrete grammatical constituents. Utterances in spontaneous, naturally-occurring conversations are less cohesive than you may imagine because when you remember conversations, your mind naturally edits for disfluencies like repeated words, a high frequency of discourse markers, mis-starts, interruptions, and incomplete thoughts ending in trailed-off sentences.

The following excerpt is a telephone conversation between two 20-somethings, Ivy and Mia, who have been friends since childhood. Just before this excerpt, Mia mentioned their mutual friend Raini and asked if Ivy had been in touch with her recently, and Ivy realizes how long it has been since she spoke with Raini.

(17.39) Telephone dialogue from naturally occurring conversation

MIA You guys just busy?

IVY Yeah. And I think, um— you know, it's just— we have different lifestyles—

MIA Yeah.

IVY so it's just—when we do talk, like we have to give ourselves a couple months to like build up stuff to talk about —

MIA (laugh)

IVY — kinda thing.

MIA Uh-huh.

IVY And, um, yeah, so that's just, I mean—you know, I think she's still a great friend and everything but it's just that we have such different lifestyles, but —

MIA Nothing personal, just different lifestyles

IVY Yeah, exactly. I mean, you know, she's been married now for three years and

MIA Yeah

IVY You know, they talk about having babies and, you know, just things like that and —and, you know, I'm just not on that track

MIA Right. There's nothing wrong with that.

IVY Oh, no. I mean, I don't complain whatsoever. But— it's just—it's just one of those things that we just—it's not—I don't talk to her like weekly or anything, so

MIA Yeah

IVY So yeah, every once in a while I'll think about her and I'll be like, “Oh, I should probably call her”

The conventions used in this transcript, such as punctuation marks and capitalization, are provided to make the dialogue more comprehensible in written form. The periods represent utterance-final intonation (i.e., a downward pitch) followed by a pause, and dashes represent long pauses within utterances or pauses created by interruptions. The commas provide visual breaks between clauses as a reading aid and do not represent pauses.

Within the excerpt, there is a high frequency of inserts (*you know, I mean, um, yeah*), coordinators (*and, but*), pronouns (*you guys, I, we, she*), repeated phrases (*different lifestyles*), and vague nouns (*things, stuff*). Most of the utterances are fragments (e.g., *Uh-huh, Yeah, kinda thing*) or interrupted or incomplete thoughts (e.g., utterances ending with a coordinator), and, when possible, the speakers omit verbs (e.g., *You guys just busy?* and *Nothing personal, just different lifestyles*). The function words far outnumber the content words in this conversation: the excerpt contains roughly 110 function words compared to 65 content words, and that figure liberally includes *just* as a content adverb even though it reads more like an insert or function word in this excerpt.

When writers replicate speech—whether they are writing a novel with dialogue or a screenplay for a play, TV show, or movie—they try to replicate content and flow but usually edit out those disfluencies characteristic of everyday speech. The following excerpt provides the dialogue portions of a telephone conversation between 20-something sisters Lena and Effie in Ann Brashares's (2011: 308-309) novel, *Sisterhood Everlasting*. All narrative descriptions in between direct quotations have been removed, and I structured the utterances like a spoken transcript for easier comparison between the two excerpts.

(17.40) Telephone dialogue from a novel

EFFIE Hello?

LENA Ef?

EFFIE Lena?

LENA Yes, it's me.
 EFFIE Hey.
 LENA I'm sorry, Effie. I really am. I treated you badly. I'm sorry it's taken me so long to say that.
 EFFIE Not everything was your fault. You weren't wrong about everything. I made mistakes too.
 LENA My mistakes were much worse, Ef. You came to help me. You brought all that stuff. You were really trying and I wasn't. I wasn't even giving you a chance.
 EFFIE No, you weren't.
 LENA I wasn't.
 EFFIE That's why I kept the extra two hundred bucks Mom and Dad gave me and bought a sweet pair of cowboy boots with it.
 LENA You didn't.
 EFFIE I'll share them with you.
 LENA You know they won't fit.
 EFFIE I bought them big. I thought of that.
 LENA Aw, really? That's nice, Ef.
 EFFIE Hey, Len.
 LENA Uh-huh.
 EFFIE I'm sorry about the Traveling Pants. I really am.
 LENA I know. It's okay.

Like the excerpt of naturally occurring speech, this simulated dialogue uses inserts (*hello, hey, aw*), repeated phrases (*I wasn't, you weren't*), vague nouns (*stuff*), and sentence fragments (*Aw, really?*). However, this excerpt is clearly different than the first one, especially in terms of delivery. The conversational inserts *you know, I mean, and um* are completely absent, and there aren't any mis-starts, interruptions, or dangling coordinators.

In this conversation, function words still outnumber content words, but the ratio is much closer: about 85 function words compared to 70 content words. Another difference is the use of vocatives; in the first excerpt, there are no vocative noun phrases between the two speakers because speakers in naturally-occurring conversations don't tend to insert the addressee's name into utterances outside of salutations, especially when there are only two speakers involved. However, in the simulated conversation from the novel, not counting the initial greetings, Lena uses three vocative noun phrases to address Effie, and Effie uses one to address Lena. This overuse of vocatives happens often in simulated speech.

Natural conversations are pragmatically-driven while simulated conversations in texts are highly edited and content-driven. In the conversation between Ivy and Mia, Ivy attempts to explain why she hasn't been in touch with Raini, something that could realistically be done in a short sentence: "We're in different places in life, so it's difficult to relate to her right now." However, natural conversations are rich with pragmatic cues, and Ivy's difficulties in expressing her reason indicate how delicate the situation is. She's speaking with someone who is a close friend, yet that friend knows Raini, too, so Ivy doesn't want to sound rude or judgmental. She's

trying to carefully frame her thoughts in a way that respects both Mia and Raini, especially since Mia herself is a mother and, therefore, in a different place in life than Ivy, who is single (a fact not mentioned in the conversation but obviously known by both participants).

On the other hand, the purpose of Effie's phone call to Lena is clear from the beginning to end: she apologizes to Effie, and Effie accepts the apology, returning with an overdue apology of her own. Even without any additional narrative or knowledge of the larger story, readers could gather that the two are sisters because Effie mentions *Mom and Dad*, indicating they share parents, and the content indicates that both have made mistakes and now regret those mistakes. Effie and Lena's conversation is content-driven.

This comparison isn't meant to argue that authors should use more realistic dialogue in their novels; in fact, trying to read a book filled with dialogue like Ivy and Mia's conversation would be difficult. Instead, it's meant to point out differences between spoken and written modes of communication, which have different expectations. Recipients of spoken language don't question the fillers, inserts, interruptions, or other disfluencies because they expect them, and they pull out the important information to create pragmatically rich meaning out of the entire context. In reading simulated speech in dialogue or hearing it in plays, TV shows, or movies, readers expect the dialogue to create a content-rich storyline for them to follow, expecting features of written language to creep into the simulated dialogue.

Many authors are able to mimic some features of speech within dialogue, as indicated by the inserts, repetition, and fragments in Effie and Lena's conversation. As another example, Renée Williams (2015) examines dialogue in young adult dystopian novels and finds that the authors accurately incorporate features of speech that are typical for three social groups: oppressors, the oppressed, and rebels. Her analysis is based in James W. Pennebaker's (2011) work and focuses on the use of pronouns, and she demonstrates that, as characters who are oppressed begin to rebel, their speech style shifts to reflect their state of rebellion. Furthermore, she shows how pronoun use in groups with delicate dynamics reflect how characters view themselves, whether they view themselves as leaders or followers. Williams's analysis further supports that while authors may not fully replicate features of everyday spoken language, they replicate enough features of language use to reflect characters' social standings and relationships.

The same measures of lexical density and vocabulary frequency ranges can be applied to spoken language to identify features of a person's speaking style or of a particular type of speech event. For instance, consider the stylistic differences in the two excerpts provided on the next page, which are taken from news conferences: (1) President Obama's last news conference as President on January 18, 2017, and (2) Donald Trump's news conference as President-Elect just one week before. Both transcripts are available online and have been prepared by the Federal News Service (2017).

I selected the portions of the conference where they directly address the press to thank them, and Trump's excerpt contains additional content beyond the thanks to keep the word counts roughly similar. I chose to use news conferences rather than speeches for this analysis because speeches are heavily pre-planned, written by speech writers, and often rehearsed. News conferences, on the other hand, allow for more personal style and more instances of spontaneous speech. The analysis of the excerpts focuses on identifying key grammatical features that distinguish Obama's speaking style from Trump's.

Obama	Trump
Second thing I want to do is to thank all of you. Some of you have been covering me for a long time. Folks like Christie ... and Lynn.... Some of you I've just gotten to know. We have traveled the world together. We did a few singles, a few doubles together. I've offered advice that I thought was pretty sound, like don't do stupid stuff. And even when you complained about my long answers, I just want you to know that the only reason they were long was because you asked six-part questions. But I have enjoyed working with all of you. That does not, of course, mean that I've enjoyed every story that you have filed, but that's the point of this relationship. You're not supposed to be ... fans, you're supposed to be skeptics, you're supposed to ask me tough questions. You're not supposed to be complimentary, but you're supposed to cast a critical eye on folks who hold enormous power and make sure that we are accountable to the people who sent us here, and you have done that. And you have done it for the most part in ways that I could appreciate for fairness, even if I didn't always agree with your conclusions. And having you in this building has made this place work better. It keeps us honest, it makes us work harder. You have made us think about how we are doing what we do and whether or not we're able to deliver on what's been requested by our constituents. And for example, every time you've asked why haven't you cured Ebola yet or why is there still that hole in the Gulf, it has given me the ability to go back and say, "Will you get this solved before the next press conference?" I spent a lot of time on my — in my farewell address talking about the state of our democracy. It goes without saying that essential to that is a free press. That is part of how this place, this country, this grand experiment of self-government has to work. It doesn't work if we don't have a well-informed citizenry, and you are the conduit through which they receive the information about what's taking place in the halls of power. So America needs you and our democracy needs you. We need you to establish a baseline of facts and evidence that we can use as a starting point for the kind of reasoned and informed debates that ultimately lead to progress. And so my hope is is that you will continue with the same tenacity that you showed us, to do the hard work of getting to the bottom of stories and getting them right and to push those of us in power to be the best version of ourselves and to push this country to be the best version of itself. I have no doubt that you will do so, I'm looking forward to being an active consumer of your work, rather than always the subject of it. I want to thank you all for your extraordinary service to our democracy.	Thank you very much. It's very familiar territory, news conferences, because we used to give them on an almost daily basis. I think we probably maybe won the nomination because of news conferences and it's good to be with you. We stopped giving them because we were getting quite a bit of inaccurate news, but I do have to say that — and I must say that I want to thank a lot of the news organizations here today because they looked at that nonsense that was released by maybe the intelligence agencies? Who knows, but maybe the intelligence agencies which would be a tremendous blot on their record if they in fact did that. A tremendous blot, because a thing like that should have never been written, it should never have been had and it should certainly never been released. But I want to thank a lot of the news organizations for some of whom have not treated me very well over the years — a couple in particular — and they came out so strongly against that fake news and the fact that it was written about by primarily one group and one television station. So, I just want to compliment many of the people in the room. I have great respect for the news and great respect for freedom of the press and all of that. But I will tell you, there were some news organizations with all that was just said that were so professional — so incredibly professional, that I've just gone up a notch as to what I think of you. OK? All right. We've had some great news over the last couple of weeks. I've been quite active, I guess you could say, in an economic way for the country. A lot of car companies are going to be moving in, we have other companies — big news is going to be announced over the next couple of weeks about companies that are getting building in the Midwest. You saw yesterday Fiat Chrysler; big, big factory going to be built in this country as opposed to another country. Ford just announced that they stopped plans for a billion dollar plant in Mexico and they're going to be moving into Michigan and expanding, very substantially, an existing plant. I appreciate that from Ford. I appreciate it very much from Fiat Chrysler. I hope that General Motors will be following and I think they will be. I think a lot of people will be following. I think a lot of industries are going to be coming back. We've got to get our drug industry back. Our drug industry has been disastrous. They're leaving left and right. They supply our drugs, but they don't make them here, to a large extent. And the other thing we have to do is create new bidding procedures for the drug industry because they're getting away with murder. Pharma, pharma has a lot of lobbies and a lot of lobbyists and a lot of power and there's very little bidding on drugs. We're the largest buyer of drugs in the world and yet we don't bid properly and we're going to start bidding and we're going to save billions of dollars over a period of time.

Figure 17.11 Excerpts from news conferences given by Obama and Trump in January 2017

These excerpts provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate the importance of grammatical structures because, in many ways, the two excerpts are similar. For instance, the two excerpts are comparable in terms of vocabulary and lexical density.

		Obama	Trump
Word count for excerpt		525	546
Lexical density		5.1	4.2
Vocabulary: frequency ranges	Range 1	82%	79%
	Range 2	11%	10%
	Range 3	7%	10%

Table 17.5 Results for comparing features of vocabulary across the Obama and Trump excerpts

A general expectation is that spoken language—even in the most formal registers—tends to lean toward lower lexical densities than written language, reflecting the fact that speech requires more pragmatic awareness than education and content knowledge. Halliday (1989) uses the term “density” for measuring written language and “intricacy” for measuring spoken language, reminding readers that both systems are complex but for very different reasons. The lexical density results above indicate that Obama’s speech is slightly more structurally complex, and the vocabulary ranges indicate that Obama is slightly more likely to use more Range 1 words while Trump is slightly more likely to use Range 3 words.

Many of the Range 1 words are repeated throughout the excerpts, and analyzing those repetitions reflects distinguishing tendencies of the speakers. *Word and Phrase* provides lists of the most frequent words in each excerpt, and the ten most frequent words for each are provided in the table below; Trump’s column has 11 words because the final three words are each used 10 times.

Obama		Trump	
you	28	of	20
to	25	and	19
of	20	the	19
the	19	I	18
that	18	to	18
and	17	a	17
I	13	that	16
have	10	we	12
a	9	be	10
we	9	news	10
		they	10

Table 17.6 Ten most frequent words for each excerpt

While top ten most frequent words in Obama's transcript are all function words,¹³⁹ the content word *news* makes it into Trump's list because he places a heavy emphasis on news and the organizations responsible for reporting the news. Even though both speakers are thanking the press in these transcripts, Trump uses the pronouns *I*, *we*, and *they* more frequently than *you*; Obama, on the other hand, uses *you* more frequently than any other word. These results reflect Trump's tendency to differentiate between *us* and *them* without necessarily directly addressing the recipients.

Analyzing the Range 2 and 3 words provides more distinctive features for each speaker, and screenshots from *Word and Phrase* are provided below for each excerpt:

Obama	Trump
RANGE 3 (COCA LIST > 3000) WORDS 1: accountable, baseline, citizenry, complained, complimentary, conduit, constituents, cured, enormous, extraordinary, fairness, farewell, honest, informed, self-government, six-part, skeptics, stupid, tenacity, well-informed	RANGE 3 (COCA LIST > 3000) WORDS 3: bidding 2: blot, pharma, tremendous 1: bid, buyer, compliment, disastrous, factory, fake, inaccurate, incredibly, lobbies, lobbyists, nomination, nonsense, notch, opposed, primarily, properly, strongly, substantially, territory
RANGE 2 (COCA LIST 501-3000) WORDS 5: supposed 3: democracy 2: enjoyed, folks, press, push, version 1: ability, active, address, advice, agree, appreciate, bottom, cast, conclusions, conference, consumer, critical, debates, deliver, doubles, doubt, essential, establish, evidence, experiment, fans, filed, forward, grand, halls, hole, itself, ourselves, pretty, progress, receive, requested, singles, solved, stuff, subject, tough, traveled, ultimately	RANGE 2 (COCA LIST 501-3000) WORDS 3: couple, industry, organizations 2: agencies, announced, appreciate, conferences, intelligence, plant, professional, quite, released, respect 1: active, basis, billion, billions, bit, certainly, daily, dollar, dollars, existing, expanding, extent, familiar, freedom, guess, industries, murder, particular, period, press, procedures, save, station, supply, television, treated, whom, yesterday

Figure 17.12 Results from *Word and Phrase* for Range 2 and Range 3 words

Some of these words are characteristic of their styles, such as *folks* being part of Obama's repertoire and multisyllabic adjectives being a feature of Trump's speech (e.g., *tremendous*).

These lists provide a distinction between the two speakers, specifically how frequently they repeat words from these higher ranges. In general, you expect to see fewer repetitions of words from these lists since the most-repeated words are those in Range 1. While Obama doesn't repeat any of the Range 3 words, Trump repeats four of them: *bidding*, *blot*, *pharma*, and *tremendous*. One hallmark of Trump's style is his tendency to repeat words and entire phrases (e.g., *news conferences*, *news organizations*, *a tremendous blot*, *the intelligence agencies*, *great*

¹³⁹ I counted *have* as a function word because it is used as a primary auxiliary 8 out of the 10 times it appears in Obama's transcript.

respect, so professional), often back-to-back or very close in context. These repetitions often serve to underscore the same idea, as in the following example:

(17.41) I hope that General Motors will be following and I think they will be. I think a lot of people will be following. I think a lot of industries are going to be coming back.

Trump repeats the predicate *will be following* in sentences occurring back to back, and each repetition states the same claim: he predicts companies will bring more business back to the U.S. The excerpted statements in (17.41) follow the same grammatical structure:

(17.42) I think
 ((DObj (Subj a_lot_of^{Det} noun^{CN})
 : ||Pred |ModProg (semi-)modal be verb^{ltV} ||
))

Not only are the structures the same, but the ideas being expressed are, too. This repetition is a key feature of Trump's style that you can find it in his earliest debates, current news conferences, and even old episodes of *The Apprentice*.

Obama, on the other hand, is more likely to repeat key words to create parallel structures, as in the following example:

(17.43) You're not supposed to be fans, you're supposed to be skeptics, you're supposed to ask me tough questions. You're not supposed to be complimentary, but you're supposed to cast a critical eye on folks who hold enormous power and make sure that we are accountable to the people who sent us here...

Obama uses repetitions of *you're* and *supposed to* to create a parallel structure—one that he repeats across two sentences: a *not supposed to... supposed to* dichotomy. The repetitions of the structure do not repeat the same ideas but expand what he feels is the definition of the press's duty. While repetition of the same sentiment is a common feature of conversational speech or an informal style, repetition for parallelism is a rhetorical strategy taught in public speaking classrooms across the country.

Performing these kinds of grammatical comparisons can help you identify linguistic tendencies of particular speakers to better understand not only how they reflect purpose and audience but also how they might affect the audience.

Terms introduced in Chapter 17

Sentence structure

complex (CX)
 compound (CD)
 compound-complex (CC)
 fragment (frag)
 simple (SM)

Concepts

discourse
 genre
 hypotaxis
 lexical density
 parataxis
 readability
 reader-based strategy
 register
 sentence
 speech event
 text
 utterance
 vocabulary frequency range
 writer-based strategy

Chapter 17 Exercises

Exercise 17.1

Fully annotate the sentences provided below; the sentences are taken from three different genres covering the same topic: Amelia Earhart's disappearance.

Fiction: Jane Mendelsohn's *I Was Amelia Earhart* (1996: 3)

1. The sky is flesh.
2. The great blue belly arches up above the water and bends down behind the line of the horizon.
3. It's a sight that has exhausted its magnificence for me over the years, but now I seem to be seeing it for the first time.
4. More and more now, I remember things.
5. Images, my life, the sky.

News writing: Eric Levenson's (2017) article "All the theories of Amelia Earhart's mystery disappearance"

6. Amelia Earhart disappeared over the Pacific Ocean 80 years ago, but those decades have done little to satisfy the appetite of investigators still searching for her true fate.
7. The latest piece of possible evidence in Earhart's disappearance came on Wednesday when a History Channel documentary released a newfound photo from the US National Archives of several blurry figures.
8. Investigators claim the photo depicts Earhart, her navigator, Fred Noonan, and her plan on the Marshall Islands after their disappearance.

9. The theory, explored further in the documentary, argues that Earhart and Noonan crashed near the Marshall Islands, about 1,000 miles away from their intended target of Howland Island, and were captured by the Japanese.
10. But that theory is dismissed by other Earhart investigators, and it's just one of a number of possible ideas speculating what happened to Earhart.

Academic: P.A. Hancock's (2009) article "HF/E issues involved in the disappearance of and search for Amelia Earhart"

11. The disappearance of the aviatrix Amelia Earhart, the subject of a recently released Hollywood movie, is one of the greatest ongoing mysteries of the 20th century.
12. Indeed, Earhart has been described as "America's favorite missing person."
13. The story, in outline, is well known.
14. As the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, and arguably the most famous woman in aviation history, Earhart disappeared during one of the final homeward legs of her 1937 flight around the world.
15. She and her navigator, Fred Noonan, failed to complete the flight between Lae in New Guinea and the small atoll of Howland Island in the Pacific, where she was to refuel her customized Lockheed Electra 10E for the penultimate segment of the flight.

Exercise 17.2

Find the following sentence structures in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents.

1. simple sentences (x3)
2. compound sentence
3. complex sentences (x4)
4. compound-complex sentence
5. sentence fragment

Exercise 17.3

Select a text that belongs to one of these written genres: fiction, news writing, or academic. The one restriction is that the full text needs to have at least 1000 words. Pull out three excerpts from the text you've selected:

- the first 100 words
- 100 words taken from the middle
- the final 100 words

For each excerpt, find the number of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, post-modifiers/non-restrictive modifiers, and *of*-preposition phrases. Also identify the number of present-tense verbs, past-tense verbs, and verbs with modality.

Create a chart like the ones throughout this chapter to compare the linguistic features three excerpts. In a paragraph answer the following questions:

- Do all three excerpts roughly match in terms of linguistic features? If not, why do you think that is? If so, what might that suggest about the genre and/or text you selected?
- Do all three excerpts roughly match the expectations for the genre, as they are identified in this chapter? Why, or why not?
- Identify any outliers and provide a reason for why those outliers may be there, connecting the reason to genre, organization of the full text, and/or author's purpose.

Chapter 18: Prescriptive grammar

... writers cannot depend on the doctrine to save their documents—they must craft unambiguous phrases to avoid the lottery of misinterpretation. —Terri LeClerc (1995: 91)

The time is right to mix sentences with dirt and the sun with punctuation and rain with verbs. —Richard Brautigan

18.1 Prescriptivism

Linguists generally take a descriptive approach to studying language, and the text thus far has focused on providing a descriptive account on what occurs in written English sentences. However, not all approaches to studying grammar are descriptive in nature, and this chapter explores issues related to prescriptive approaches. This section specifically explores the differences between “armchair prescriptivists” and formal prescriptivism in academia.

“Armchair linguistics” generally refers to the practice of drawing conclusions about language use without finding data to support them, relying instead on intuition. Recently, online discussion boards have also used the term to refer to uninformed discussions on language and language use. I use the term *armchair prescriptivists* in this section to refer to people who make claims, which are often in the form of complaints, about language use based on their own feelings or perception of how language *should* be used without being able to provide a reason other than “I don’t prefer it” or “This is how I’ve always done it, so it must be the best way.”

Armchair prescriptivists tend to emotionally respond to language use they feel is “bad” and judge speakers or writers who use that type of language with the sole goal of persuading another person to say or write a message in a way that is more pleasing to the judge. Social media is a place where strong-handed prescriptivists post how they feel about language use. For instance, in 2006, Raymond Chen wrote a blog post comparing verb/particle pairs to their related compound nouns (e.g., the verb *shut down* versus the noun *shutdown*). In the comments on the article, one user, Mark Steward, wrote that “run over” and “overrun” take different meanings, and he has “no problem with the verb to setup, because it carries different meaning to set up.” Dr. Helen Haridon took a strong disliking to that comment and wrote:

“Setup” is another example of the filthy and repulsive practice of verb/particle merging. A special place in Hell is reserved for people who write that way.

Haridon’s response takes prescriptivism to a level on par with religious zeal.

As another example, after dictionaries released an updated word list in 2013 that included words like *phablet*, *twerk*, and *selfie*, people around the globe joined discussions about whether such words should be included in a self-respecting dictionary. One Facebook user writes:

Phablets has got to b the dumbest word ever invented.... dear webster please disregard. File along with twerk and cray. Yours truly, a guy that still speaks english

The user takes offense to three words in particular, yet the rest of the post is not written in prescriptive standard English (e.g., *b*, *webster*), demonstrating that the writer is not concerned with formal prescriptivism but with judgmental reactions to language use.

Another word that tends to offend people's linguistic sensibilities is *literally* in its figurative sense. What most speakers don't realize is that the figurative use of *literally* dates back to at least 1769, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that the figurative sense is "[n]ow one of the most common uses, although often considered irregular in standard English since it reverses the original sense of literally ('not figuratively or metaphorically')." Its metaphorical sense is the most common use, yet some prescriptivists still take offense when they hear it.

The war on *irregardless* is also ongoing: in Brian Garner's (2016) fourth edition of *Garner's Modern English Usage*, he explains his take on *irregardless*:

a semiliterate PORTMANTEAU WORD from 'irrespective' and 'regardless,' should have been stamped out long ago... Perhaps the most surprising instance of this barbarism occurs in a linguistics text, four times on a single page... Although this widely scorned NONWORD seems unlikely to spread much more than it already has, careful users of language must continually swat it when they encounter it. (529)¹⁴⁰

Garner is not shy about stating his blunt opinions on *irregardless*, calling it 'semiliterate,' a 'barbarism,' and 'widely scorned.' He compares it to an insect, calling for people to 'swat it' and perhaps squish it into oblivion.

The use of singular *they* is another topic of debate among prescriptivists, and Twitter user Andy Smarick tweeted Merriam-Webster about his disgust of the singular *they* in July 2016, and Merriam-Webster responded:

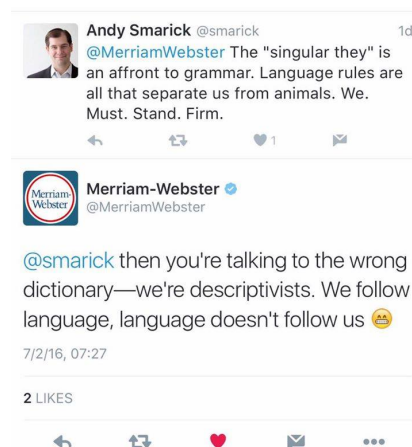


Image 18.1 Negative feedback for singular *they* on Twitter

Merriam-Webster's response that "they follow language" reflects that modern dictionaries are compiled descriptively, and lexicographers attempt to define words in ways that reflect their current usage, relying on tools such as large corpora to find instances of specific words and composing their definitions to fit how society currently uses them. What Merriam-Webster doesn't mention is that it took them nearly 600 years to follow this particular language trend: the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides examples of singular *they* dating back to the 1300s.

¹⁴⁰ The words in all capital letters refer to essay entries in his book (i.e., you can go to specific entries on portmanteau words and nonwords).

Linguistic insecurities often make people emotional when talking or writing about language use because our language—and the ways we use our language—is integral to our perception of ourselves and our identities. Seeing or hearing language use that differs from our own can cause an “us versus them” mentality, where we see our own language use as “good” and their language use as “bad.” This tendency is not a new one. In John of Trevisa’s (1385) translation of Ranulph Higden’s *Polychronicon*, he notes:

in menye þe contray longage ys apeyred and some vseþ strange wlaffyng, chyteryng, harryng, and garryng, grisbittyng.

MODERN ENGLISH: in many, the language of the land is impaired and some use strange, stammering, chattering, snarling, and harsh gnashing.

Trevisa’s message, written in 1385, is clear: he doesn’t care for the way “they” speak his language.

In 1755, Samuel Johnson discussed his feelings about language change in the preface to his dictionary:

tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language.

The entire preface is lengthy, and Johnson continues to bemoan language change, even indicating that providing a “good” standard of English was a key reason he compiled his dictionary.

Johnson’s thoughts on language change are mirrored in many current complaints from armchair prescriptivists who believe that young speakers are degrading modern English. In his book *Txting: The gr8 db8*, linguist David Crystal writes that abbreviations and “shorthand” language in texting has caused “extraordinary antipathy” and “attracted ... adult antagonism” (viii). He further describes the furor caused by judgments about “textese,” and asks, “Has there ever been a linguistic phenomenon which has aroused such curiosity, suspicion, fear, confusion, antagonism, fascination, excitement, and enthusiasm, all at once?” (3) Crystal further notes that the modern outrage over textese is baseless. As people worry about how abbreviations in texting might affect cognitive skills in younger generations, they are forgetting that abbreviated language is not new by any standard.

For example, when sending messages by telegraph,¹⁴¹ users paid by the character, so they deleted every word and character they deemed unnecessary, resulting in messages like WHEN YOU ARRIVE, meaning *When do you arrive?* Orville Wright sent this telegram to his father in 1903 after successful flights:

¹⁴¹ While *telegraph* refers to the system used to submit messages, *telegram* refers to the written message sent by telegraph.

Form No. 168.

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.
INCORPORATED
23,000 OFFICES IN AMERICA. CABLE SERVICE TO ALL THE WORLD.

This Company TRANSMITS and DELIVERS messages only on conditions limiting its liability, which have been assented to by the sender of the following message. Errors can be guarded against only by repeating a message back to the sending station for comparison, and the Company will not hold itself liable for errors or delays in transmission or delivery of Unrepeated Messages, beyond the amount of tolls paid thereon, nor in any case where the claim is not presented in writing within sixty days after the message is filed with the Company for transmission.
This is an UNREPEATED MESSAGE, and is delivered by request of the sender, under the conditions named above.

ROBERT C. CLOWRY, President and General Manager.

RECEIVED at 170

176 C KA GS 33 Paid. Via Norfolk Va
Kitty Hawk N C Dec 17
Bishop M Wright
7 Hawthorne St

Success four flights thursday morning all against twenty one mile
wind started from Level with engine power alone average speed
through air thirty one miles longest 57 seconds inform Press
home ~~press~~ Christmas. Grevelle Wright 525P

Image 18.2 Wright's 1903 telegram

In many telegrams, like Wright's above, no punctuation marks the beginning or ending of sentences or clauses, so multiple ideas appear one after another with no separation. Furthermore, none of the clauses are fully complete because the telegram focuses on providing the necessary information, mostly in noun phrases (e.g., *success, four flights Thursday morning, average speed through air*). In the 32-word message, only two verbs appear: *started* and *inform*.

Other telegrams include *stop* to indicate the end of a clause, as in Curtis Welch's telegram sent in 1925 to Governor Bone. This telegram was sent during the Serum Run in Alaska, which made the dog Balto famous.

Signal Corps, United States Army.
Telegram.

Received at 41 191

40 KC 39 08 RUSH
NOMEALS JAN 27 1925
GOV BONE
JUNEAU

REPLYING YOUR WIRE TWENTY SIXTH PLEASE ADVISE INSPECTOR WETZLER HAVE
DOG TEAM CARRY BEYOND RUBY IF NECESSARY UNTIL OUR TEAM IS MET THUS
AVOIDING DELAY STOP OUR TEAM LEAVING NOME TODAY WITH LEONARD SEPPALA
SWEEPSTAKES RACE WINNER DRIVING LIGHT
CURTIS WELCH
232PM

Image 18.3 Welch's 1925 telegram

Welch's telegram uses *STOP* between *DELAY* and *OUR TEAM* to indicate the ending of one clause and beginning of the next. However, the practice is not used throughout the telegram. The telegram opens with what appears to be two sentences without an intervening *STOP*: (1) *replying your wire twenty sixth*, and (2) *please advise Inspector Wetzler have dog team carry beyond Ruby if necessary until our team is met thus avoiding delay*. Throughout the telegram, many function words are omitted, thus leaving the focus on the content words that carry the main message. These two telegrams are historically significant and demonstrate that abbreviated language is not a new trend.

Another feature of textese that armchair prescriptivists fret about is the use of numbers to stand in for words (e.g., 2 for *to*) and single letters to represent words (e.g., *r* for *are*), yet consider the following opening stanzas of a poem titled "Essay to Miss Catharine Jay:"

(18.1) An S A now I mean 2 write
 2 U sweet K T J,
 The girl without a ||,
 The belle of U T K.

I 1 der if U got that 1
 I wrote 2 U B 4
 I sailed in the R K D A,
 And sent by L N Moore.

This poem dates back to the 1800s and was published in Charles Bombaugh's (1867: 69) collection of linguistic curiosities. You can even find written abbreviations in documents written by Anglo-Saxon monks in the eighth century—abbreviating words has been a common practice in written English for over a thousand years.

The basis of these language fears is rooted in the general fact that people don't like change, especially when they aren't an integral part of it. In an interview with Frank Rose (2014), David J. Peterson noted,

There's never been a time in history where older speakers didn't complain about the speech of younger speakers. ... Fear is stronger than logic. This fear of how younger people are different seems to naturally take hold of all human beings as they age.

Peterson sums up the typical cycle of linguistic insecurities: younger generations start new trends with language use, older generations disapprove of those changes, and speakers in the older generation complain about how these youngsters are degrading the language and how it used to be spoken so purely back in the good old days while ignoring the fact that English has never been "pure" or "perfect" in its complicated history. Language change is not bad—it is inevitable and necessary because a living language must change to meet the ever-changing needs of the communities who use it. The only languages that do not change are dead languages.

Language matters very much to people, and some armchair prescriptivists unfortunately utilize their own assessments about language use to make judgments about intelligence, socio-economic status, or even political beliefs of others. As Robert Lane Green (2011) aptly notes:

Too many people are too angry about language too much of the time. ... Listening to the languages of the world, not with an ear for mistakes but with a curiosity for the new, the world begins to be a much more interesting place.

And, indeed, many people are angry, often passing judgments on a speaker or writer due to disagreements over language use.

Of course, even descriptive linguists have language preferences or pet peeves, but a descriptive approach means moving beyond an initial reaction to the pet peeve and attempting to understand how the usage came to be and what its use means. In 1973, R.W. Langacker noted,

Linguists are no different from any other people who spend more than nineteen hours a day pondering the complexities of grammar and its relationship to practically everything else in order to prove that language is so inordinately complicated that it is impossible in principle for people to talk.

Asking why people compose messages in the way they do opens the doors for linguistic discovery, and there is always more to learn about English and its use. In a 2014 Facebook exchange, Tim O'Reilly aptly describes English as “a language of hidden gems.”

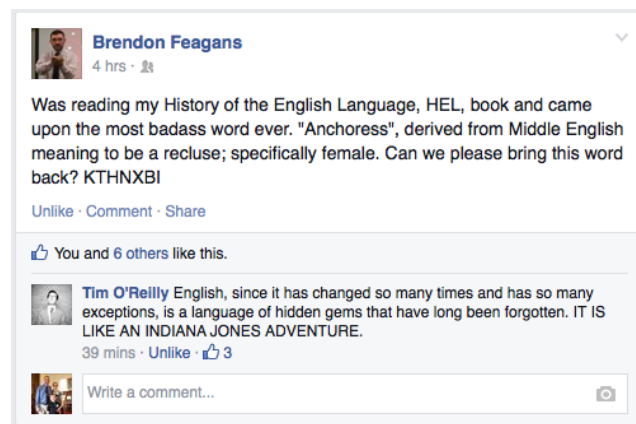


Image 18.4 Facebook discussion on English

Descriptivists focus on discovering the complexities and hidden gems of English and appreciate the range in diversity of language use.

Even the most die-hard descriptivists admit that **formal genres**, such as academic, legal, and news writing, have prescriptive standardized conventions that, while arbitrary, provide expectations for its readers and critics. The practice of teaching or learning genre-specific conventions is what I refer to as *formal prescriptivism*. Learning to write for these genres requires the writer to learn a new written dialect because formal writing has strict conventions and rules that are not necessarily followed or even needed in other genres. Since formal writing is meant to be read and understood by large, diverse audiences over a long period of time, it

needs to adhere to particular standards that allow readers to decode the meaning with as little ambiguity as possible. These conventions are so strict that, in early 2018, a dairy company in Maine lost \$5 million due to a missing Oxford comma. In other words, formal genres require more writer-based strategies.

A common feature associated with formal writing is complex sentence structures with multiple embedded constituents. Academic and legal genres are well-known for their use of overly intricate sentence structures—a feature that has been the source of irritation for some readers and writers for hundreds of years. In 1817, Thomas Jefferson wrote the following passage:

I should apologise perhaps for the style of this bill. I dislike the verbose & intricate style of the modern English statutes, and in our revised code I endeavored to restore it to the simple one of the ancient statutes, in such original bills as I drew in that work. I suppose the reformation has not been acceptable, as it has been little followed. you however can easily correct this bill to the taste of my brother lawyers, by making every other word a ‘said’ or ‘aforesaid,’ and saying every thing over 2. or 3. times, so as that nobody but we of the craft can untwist the diction, and find out what it means; and that too not so plainly but that we may conscientiously divide, one half on each side.

The “verbose & intricate style” has continued to be a feature of legal writing, which is noted by Assistant Federal Defender Angela Halim in a 2019 response to a government motion:

The government’s motion and accompanying memorandum of law does nothing more than reargue its position and express its dissatisfaction with the Court’s ruling. ... The government devotes a great deal of pagination to circular arguments, flawed reasoning, rank speculation and hyper technical parsing of testimony, but misses the essential point entirely. (United States v. Akanmu Akindele 2019)

As she notes, legal writing can be verbose without making a valid legal argument.

An example of “verbose & intricate style” is the opening sentence of a letter written from Sheriff Bill Decker to Honorable Waggoner Carr, who was the Attorney General of Texas; the letter accompanied a large file of witness statements, taken the day of John F. Kennedy’s assassination.

(18.2) Reference is made to your letter to me sometime back requesting me to report to you any additional information gained by this department upon the assassination.
(Decker)

A complex noun phrase begins after *is made to* and continues to the end of the sentence, with each embedded constituent providing more detailed information to specify the reference and the particular letter in question.

The preposition phrase beginning with *to your letter* is a complement to the noun *reference*, which serves as the subject of the passive sentence. The noun *letter* has three distinct post-modifiers, each one providing its own piece of information: (1) the letter was written *to me*; (2) the letter was written *sometime back*; and (3) the letter specifically requested information

about the assassination. The final post-modifier is the most complex one that, in turn, incorporates embedded constituents, including a non-finite clause as a direct object for the verb *requesting* and a non-finite clause as a post-modifier for the noun *information*. A more plainly worded sentence might be *Last month, you wrote a letter to me and requested a report with any additional information this department had gathered about the assassination*.

Legal language, especially, is often filled with these kinds of embedded constituents. As another example, in Stephen F. Austin State University's Policy Manual, section 5.4 "Credit and Contact Hours" defines the term *credit hour* as the following:¹⁴²

- (18.3) The federal definition of a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates:
1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, or;
 2. At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

That definition is grammatically constructed as one sentence, though it is broken down into two sub-points for easier reading. The subject of that sentence is *The federal definition of a credit hour*, and the head verb is the copular *is*. The words *an amount* begins the subject predicative, and all constituents that follow are grammatically embedded into the noun phrase headed by *amount* and serve as post-modifiers to distinguish the amount of work necessary to fulfill the requirements of a credit hour.

Sentences with a lot of embedded constituents can be difficult for readers to untangle as they decode the text to create meaning, and linguistic and written clues, such as subject-verb agreement, semantic context, and punctuation, aid the reader in creating that meaning. Three common issues result from complex sentence structures with multiple layers of embedded constituents.

The first problem is that writers can inadvertently create a sentence with so many embedded constituents that it loses the reader. Arika Okrent (2015) provides seven examples of sentences that seem like they should be ungrammatical but are not, and one of those examples features multiple embedded constituents and is difficult to follow for most readers:

¹⁴² The document cross references the following state policy: 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 4.6 (2003); 34 CFR § 600.2; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, "Credit Hours Policy Statement."

- (18.4) Anyone who feels that if so many more students whom we haven't actually admitted are sitting in on the course than ones we have that the room had to be changed, then probably auditors will have to be excluded, is likely to agree that the curriculum needs revision.

Even the most dedicated reader will probably need to re-read that sentence several times to construct meaning from it.

The head pronoun of the subject noun phrase is *anyone*, and the predicate for that subject is *is likely to agree that the curriculum needs revision*. The post-modifying relative clause beginning with *who* incorporates a nominal clause as the direct object of *feels*, and inside that nominal clause is an initial adverb clause beginning with *if*. The partial annotation below demonstrates the multiple levels of embedding within this sentence:

(18.5) S (Subj anyone
: <<PostM(Subj who
: : ||Pred feels
: : : ((DObj that
: : : : //Avl if
: : : : : (Subj so many more students
: : : : : <<PostM whom we haven't actually admitted>>
: : : : :)
: : : : : ||Pred are sitting in on the course
: : : : : [Avl than
: : : : : : (ObjP ones
: : : : : : : <<PostM we have>>
: : : : : : :)
: : : : : : :]
: : : : : : ||
: : : : : //
: : : : : then probably
: : : : : (Subj auditors)
: : : : : ||Pred will have to be excluded||
: : : : :))
: : : ||
: : >>
:)
||Pred is
: <SPred likely
: : #Comp to agree
: : : ((DObj that the curriculum needs revision))
: : : #
: : >
||

In the first half of the sentence alone, there are two relative clauses inside an adverb clause, which is inside a nominal clause, which is inside another relative clause. Sentences that have these types of multiple embeddings can be cumbersome for readers to decode.

A second potential problem is that writers can lose sight of the head word in a phrase and end up creating a sentence with an unintended meaning. For instance, the following sentence is taken from COCA, and its original source is news writing.

- (18.6) An Atlanta break-in captured by home cameras and then put up on YouTube helped police catch several suspects last month. (COCA)

To more clearly demonstrate the problem, the sentence is partially annotated below:

- (18.7) (Subj An Atlanta **break-in**
 : #PostM #captured by home cameras#
 : : and then
 : : #put up on YouTube#
 : #
)

 ||Pred helped
 : #DObj police catch several suspects last month#
 ||

Lengthy post-modifiers, like *captured by home cameras and then put up on YouTube*, can make an author lose sight of the head noun. In this case, the head noun, *break-in* serves as the subject for the verb *helped*, which means the break-in helped police, which is not the intended meaning. Furthermore, the *-ed* clause is situated in a location to modify the noun *break-in*, creating the meaning that a break-in was put up on YouTube, rather than a video of the break-in. A better wording of this sentence requires a new head noun, such as placing *A video of* before *an Atlanta break-in* to make it clear that the video helped police.

The third problem is that writers can create instances of **faulty parallelism**, where a coordinator holds together forms that are not matched or are unequal. Faulty parallelism isn't always bad or even noticeable. When an author uses it well to create a particular flow, tone, or style for a sentence, it can read beautifully. For instance, the following example is taken from Esther Friesner's (1999) short story, "How to Make Unicorn Pie."

- (18.8) He was an aspiring author, scion of a proud old New England family, almost attractive in a tweedier-than-thou kind of way, well-bred, well-read, pumped full of the Wisdom of the Ancients at the ivy-covered tit of Mother Princeton, raging to put pen to word processor and make his genius known to the fortunate masses. (Friesner 1999: 18-19)

Friesner uses faulty parallelism to connect confusing, conflicting thoughts about a man when he approaches the main character at a writer's convention, and those disconnected, muddling thoughts result in her agreeing to work with him even though she shouldn't have. An abbreviated annotation of the sentence is included below:

- (18.9) (Subj He)
 ||Pred wasⁱ CopV
 : (SPred (an aspiring author)
 : : (scion of a proud old New England family)
 :)
 : <SPred <almost attractive in a tweedier-than-thou kind of way>
 : : <well-bred>
 : : <well-read>
 : >
 : GAPⁱ PriAux pumped^{CtV}
 : <SPred full of the Wisdom of the Ancients>
 : [Avl at the ivy-covered tit of Mother Princeton]
 : GAPⁱ PriAux raging^{MtV}
 : #DObj to put pen to word processor
 : : and
 : : make his genius known to the fortunate masses
 : #
 ||

The faulty parallelism lies in the predicate, where multiple forms and functions work together to complete *was*.

The predicate begins by joining two noun phrases functioning as a subject predicative and then continues to join three adjective phrases to those noun phrases, also functioning as a subject predicative. Technically, joining different phrase types (e.g., NP with AjP) is an example of faulty parallelism, and they are not visually joined in the annotation above because there is not symbol for a half-NP, half-AjP combination. Because they share the same function, though, readers usually don't struggle with these types of faulty parallelism—and they may not even notice the coordination of different forms. As the predicate continues, *was* is no longer treated as a copular head verb but as a primary auxiliary for the passive *was pumped* and progressive *was raging*. Friesner joins together three distinct types of constituents within the predicate and, by relying on commas, doesn't provide a single coordinator when doing so. The result reads like a jumble of thoughts, which reflects the narrator's inner turmoil.

Writers often coordinate unmatched constituents with a form of *be*, where one constituent is a subject predicative, treating *be* as a copular main verb, and the other treats the *be* as an auxiliary verb within its short verb phrase, as in the following COCA examples:

- (18.10)a. her arm, I now noticed, was <thin> and interrupted by bruised veins.
 b. it was said that he was <stupid> and controlled by his staff
 c. I was flattered by the effort and <sad to see Troilus go>.
 d. But Monty was <mad> and taking the zing out of everything.
 e. she was <hungover> and regretting the promises she'd made

While some teachers, editors, and creators of style guides may frown on that practice, this type of faulty parallelism is generally easily decoded and understood by readers.

However, some instances of faulty parallelism create awkward sentence structures or sentences that are not as easily understood. For instance, the following three sentences are from student essays, and the constituents being coordinated are marked:

- (18.11) a. The NCAA tends to fall short on the well-being of the athletes when it comes to (**education**), (the **injustice** of student athletes) and^{CoConj} /if student athletes should be paid for their performance/.
- b. In order for people to change their eating habits and lower their sugar intake they need facts, starting with the truth about (**over-consumption** of sugar), (false **advertising**), and^{CoConj} #how to start eating healthy#.
- c. A few of the ways that urban sprawl has lifted Dubai's economy would be by #establishing new companies#, #creating positions#, and^{CoConj} (**workers** that are needed to construct buildings).

While sentences (a) and (b) are understandable for most readers, they create an awkward sentence flow because of the faulty parallelism. In (a), *and* joins two noun phrases (*education* and *the injustice of student athletes*) to a nominal clause (*if student athletes should be paid for their performance*). A parallel wording requires shifting the nominal clause to another noun phrase (e.g., *fair compensation for their performance*). In (b), *and* joins together two noun phrases (*over-consumption of sugar* and *false advertising*) to an infinitive clause (*how to start eating healthy*). Changing the clause to a noun phrase creates a parallel coordinated structure (e.g., *healthy eating habits*). The faulty parallelism in sentence (c) creates such an awkward sentence structure that it is difficult to follow because it joins two non-finite *-ing* clauses with a noun phrase that doesn't grammatically fit as an object of the preposition *by*. Adding an *-ing* verb before *workers* (e.g., *bringing in workers...*) creates a parallel—and more semantically sound—structure.

Even though these kinds of non-parallel structures happily occur in many genres, faulty parallelism in some formal genres is considered a “sin.” Richard Nordquist (2018) goes so far as to say the following:

Faulty parallelism is one of the major grammatical sins in the English language. When you come across faulty parallelism, it clangs off the ear, destroys written sentences, and muddies any intention the author may have had.

As Nordquist points out, faulty parallelism can lead to miscommunication by potentially creating confusion for readers. In genres that rely on the written form to communicate specific messages to a diverse audience, avoiding faulty parallelism can help authors compose their messages with more clarity.

Practice Set 18.1 Analyzing sentences with embedded constituents

In each of the following sentences, identify the following information: (1) sentence type; (2) subject(s) and predicate(s) within the sentence; (3) any embedded constituent, indicating also the larger constituent in which they are embedded; and (4) any non-restrictive modifiers and/or parenthetical clauses.

1. A sentence from “Story of Your Life” by Ted Chiang (2002: 112):

I can’t believe that you, a grown woman taller than me and beautiful enough to make my heart ache, will be the same girl I used to lift off the ground so you could reach the drinking fountain, the same girl who used to trundle out of my bedroom draped in a dress and hat and four scarves from my closet.

2. A sentence from the introduction to an academic article by Randall Rose and Stacy Wood (2005: 284):

Faced with the commonplace criticism of reality television viewers as passive voyeurs, however, we find more insightful perspective on the phenomenon in Boorstin’s (1961) conclusion that life has become stagecraft—a blending of reality and mass mediated experience that evokes life as a movie in which people play themselves (Gabler 1998).

3. A sentence from “The rise and fall of the English sentence,” an article that appeared in *Nautilus*, by Julie Sedivy (2017):

This pattern raises the possibility that the invention of writing, a very recent innovation tagged on to the very last millennia of human evolution, can dramatically alter a language’s linguistic niche, spurring the development of elaborate sentence structure, and leading to the shedding of other features, on a timescale that cannot be achieved through biological evolution.

4. A sentence from “Hubble vision: Raising heaven,” an article that appeared in *National Geographic*, by Timothy Ferris (2007: 146):

They used Hubble to follow the string of impacts—each more powerful than all this world’s combined nuclear warheads—of the disintegrating comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 into the upper atmosphere of the giant planet Jupiter in 1994, a sobering spectacle that helped build a political consensus that NASA ought to inventory asteroids that might one day strike Earth (an effort that is itself threatened by budget constraints, even though most of the potentially dangerous asteroids remain uncharted).

Select one of the challenge sentences below, following the same instructions provided above.

5. The opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence (US 1776):

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

6. The opening sentence of *War and Peace, Volume III* by Lev Tolstóy, translated by Leo Wiener (1904: 3)

Toward the end of the year 1811 the Powers of Western Europe began a more active tournament and concentration of their forces, and in 1812 these forces, consisting of millions of people (including those who transported and fed the army), moved from the West to the East, toward the boundaries of Russia, where, since the same year 1811, the Russian forces had been concentrating.

18.2 Sentential punctuation

Along with structuring sentences in a way that reflects the intended meaning, writers use punctuation, which exists as a convention for written language to make it easier for the reader to parse the text and to create meaning out of it. Written language has not always had punctuation, and even when punctuation was introduced, it wasn't always systematically or consistently employed. Now, though, many readers rely on punctuation to aid in the decoding and interpretation of the text. Terri LeClerc (1995: 147) writes, "Punctuation should signal the intended meaning, emphasis, and relationships among the words of the sentences and paragraph." Because punctuation serves to divide constituents while showing their level of connection, the use of punctuation is a writer-based strategy: the writer uses punctuation to clarify meaning and provide explicit connections. LeClerc (1995: 165) further notes that punctuation can "dictate reader speed," so while punctuation marks may be tiny, they can fulfill powerful roles.

The punctuation used in everyday communication doesn't always match the prescriptive rules for punctuation in formal writing, which is why punctuation conventions must be learned and memorized for formal genres. One reason academic genres and other types of formal writing have such strict prescriptive rules regarding punctuation is that if a writer uses punctuation differently than the intended reader does, it can cause a disconnect between the intended message and the message decoded by the reader. The punctuation marks discussed in this and the next two sections are divided into five categories: sentence-final punctuation, sentence-internal dividers, quotation marks, word-internal punctuation, and parenthetical

indicators. For each category, I present the formal prescriptive uses and compare those to uses of punctuation in everyday communication.

Sentence-final punctuation marks the end of an independent clause and includes three punctuation marks that indicate illocutionary force:

Punctuation	Typical uses
.	A period marks the end of a declarative independent clause.
?	A question mark ends an interrogative independent clause.
!	An exclamation point indicates an exclamatory independent clause.

Table 18.1 Sentence-final punctuation

Imperative independent clauses can end in either a period or exclamation point, often depending on the urgency or emotion behind it.

The only sentence-final punctuation that appears in many pieces of formal writing is the period, which reflects a general formal preference for the declarative illocutionary force, so question marks and exclamation points are used sparingly in formal genres, with exclamation points appearing less frequently than question marks. Furthermore, in these formal genres, it is expected that compound sentence structures combine clauses with the same illocutionary force, and embedded dependent clauses are declarative structures. For example, the sentence “And it’s crazy, and then you wonder why are they angry?” (COCA) is prescriptively ungrammatical because *it’s crazy* is declarative and *you wonder* begins a declarative clause, but the embedded clause *why are they angry?* is in an interrogative word order. A prescriptively correct rewording is “... you wonder why they are angry.” Major exceptions to this expectation are parenthetical clauses and direct quotations, which may differ in illocutionary force.

In everyday uses, **ellipses**, which usually appear as three periods (...), can indicate the end of a thought that trails off or remains incomplete; ellipses are not included in the table above because, in formal writing, they don’t tend to mark ends of thoughts that trail off but instead indicate omitted information from direct quotations. Ellipses can appear as two periods or as more than three, with a potential shift in interpretation due to the number of periods. In the episode “After Hours” of *The Office* (S8:E16), the characters discuss the meaning differences of the length of an ellipsis. Right before this interaction, Brandon accuses Darrell of sending questionable text messages to his girlfriend, Val. Kelly, a co-worker of Darrell’s, tells Darrell to read the texts out loud so the group could decide if Darrell had, indeed, sent Val any inappropriate texts.

- (18.12) DARRELL “You’re such a great friend.”
 BRANDON With the dots.
 DARRELL “You’re such a great friend dot dot dot dot dot”
 KELLY Five dots, Darrell? Are you kidding me? Three dots means “to be continued,” four dots is a typo, but five dots means “Woah. Do not

make me say what I want to say, baby, but if I did, it would blow your mind.” Dot dot dot dot dot.

This humorous interaction reflects the fact that ellipses are often used in texts to indicate that the recipient needs to read between the lines or is invited to continue the conversation.

A more recent shift in the use of sentence-final periods has resulted in some readers interpreting a sentence-final period at the end of a text message as an indication of dismay, frustration, or even anger. To avoid that, some texters prefer to leave the period off the end of a message, as in the following examples:

- (18.13)a. Omg!! It looks like it. That’s so funny
- b. Your niece she wanted to order sushi and watch a movie. A cheesy Christmas movie. So we are watching a Christmas prince. So much fun :)
- c. Omg!!! We ARE old ...
- d. do you still need Pulse III song order??
- e. no reason I’m asking.. but good to know
- f. I’m so glad your computer is up and running!!

While sentences are punctuated with periods within the text messages, the only pieces of punctuation this texter uses at the end of a message are ellipses, question marks, and exclamation points. These text messages demonstrate another trend: the common use of multiple punctuation marks, such as double question marks or triple exclamation points, which would be frowned upon in formal writing. The same pieces of punctuation can create meaning in different ways across genres.

Sentence-internal punctuation, such as commas, semicolons, and colons, can indicate visual separation of constituents, and the specific punctuation used reflects a particular type of connection among the constituents being simultaneously divided yet joined together. A table that describes the typical uses for commas, semicolons, and colons in formal writing is provided on the following page.

While commas are one of the most-used pieces of punctuations, composition teachers would argue they are also among the least understood. For instance, instructors bemoan how some students were taught to place commas where they’d pause if reading the sentence aloud, leaving commas in unlikely and unnecessary places. For instance, in the following sentences, unnecessary commas appear between the subject and its verb:

- (18.14)a. Advocates for Youth.org, suggest ways for assisting children.
- b. McElwee’s article on “voter turnout”, sheds light on the importance of the involvement of American voters.

In both these sentences, the comma should be deleted. Prescriptively, commas should not separate a subject from its verb or a verb from its direct object unless a non-restrictive modifier, discourse marker, discourse adverb, or adverb clause that requires commas appears between them. For instance, in these rewordings, the commas are necessary:

- (18.15) a. Advocates for Youth.org, an online community for supporting student success, suggest ways for assisting children.
- b. McElwee's article on "voter turnout," however, sheds light on the importance of the involvement of American voters.

In these sentences, the commas surround the additional constituents rather than separate the verb from one of its arguments.

Punctuation	Typical uses
,	A comma serves many purposes, including the following: • separating individual items in a series of three or more options. • separating two independent clauses, typically with a coordinator following. • separating discourse markers and discourse adverbs from the rest of the sentence. • following an introductory adverb clause or surrounding a medial adverb clause. • separating a quotative from a direct quotation. • setting off non-restrictive modifiers.
;	A semicolon is the love child of a period and comma and has two primary uses: • holds together two related independent clauses. • separates constituents in a series, especially when the individual units are complex and/or have commas in them (e.g., <i>I met with Sarah, an epidemiologist; Angie, a lawyer; and Will, an artist</i>).
:	A colon is primarily a piece of punctuation that signals more descriptive information will follow and is used in two main environments: • in between two complete sentences, where the second sentence provides more information about the first. • between an introductory sentence and a list of items that specify more information (e.g., <i>I bought three types of nuts: cashews, almonds, and pecans</i>).

Table 18.2 Linking punctuation within sentences

As discussed in Chapter 14, the use of commas with relative clauses can change the interpretation of the modifier, changing a potential post-modifier to a non-restrictive modifier; furthermore, commas are not used with complement clauses. In the two sentences below, the commas should be deleted:

- (18.16) a. The African Americans, who are actually criminals, are more likely to be arrested or penalized for their crimes than criminals of other races.
- b. One more way, the witnesses avoided taking full responsibility for not helping Genovese was by coming up with excuses on why not to save her.

In example (a), the author is saying that all African Americans are criminals, though that was not the intention. By removing the commas, the relative clause *who are actually criminals* becomes a post-modifier and changes the interpretation so that only some African Americans are criminals. In (b), the comma between the head noun *way* and its complement clause is unnecessary.

At the beginning of this section, I mentioned the lawsuit that hinged on a missing **Oxford comma**, which is the comma that appears after the next-to-the-last option in a series and before the coordinator, as in the comma that occurs after *green* in this phrase: *pink, green, and purple*. People who argue against the Oxford comma point out that, in most cases, readers don't need the comma, so requiring its use in all lists or series is inefficient. Arguments for the Oxford comma focus on potential ambiguities that could be resolved by using the comma. A well-known example of such an ambiguity is a supposed book dedication that reads *I would like to thank my parents, Ayn Rand and God*. Without the Oxford comma, a potential interpretation is that Ayn Rand and God are the author's parents. However, readers would likely not waste time with such an interpretation and instead decode the meaning that the author is thanking (1) their parents, (2) Ayn Rand, and (3) God.

For all its praise, the Oxford comma cannot solve all potential ambiguities. For instance, the following sentence reportedly appeared in a TV listing in *The Times* about a documentary:

(18.17) By train, plane and sedan chair, Peter Ustinov retraces a journey made by Mark Twain a century ago. The highlights of his global tour include encounters with Nelson Mandela, an 800-year-old demigod and a dildo collector.

The opening introductory PP includes the series *train, plane and sedan chair*, which lacks an Oxford comma without causing any potential confusion. The focus here is on the end of the description after the words *encounters with*. Without the Oxford comma, a potential reading of this sentence is that Nelson Mandela is both *an 800-year-old demigod* and *a dildo collector*. Fans of the Oxford comma everywhere delight in examples like this one, but they can't argue their way out of this fact: in this case, the Oxford comma could resolve one point of ambiguity but not another. The phrase is revised below with an Oxford comma:

(18.18) encounters with Nelson Mandela, an 800-year-old demigod, and a dildo collector.

Even with the additional comma, potential ambiguity still exists. This phrase could include a list of three separate entities, or the noun phrase *an 800-year-old demigod* could be read as a non-restrictive modifier for *Nelson Mandela*. And so while we can no longer reach the interpretation that Mandela is a dildo collector, there is still ambiguity as to whether he is a demigod. Examples like these demonstrate that while punctuation can help clarify intended meaning, English's punctuation system—like the language itself—leaves room for potential ambiguities.

When commas separate full sentence structures in formal writing, they require the assistance of a coordinator, as these examples from COCA demonstrate.

(18.19) a. He created dozens of actions in form of written notes placed in numbered envelopes, and MoMA has his entire file.

- b. For the better part of a century, the elder god known as Cthulhu has been an icon of horror fiction, but now his might is being unleashed in a new Lovecraftian video game.
- c. Was there any truth to these sensational-sounding stories, or had Blackbeard actually gone somewhere to lay low until he figured out the safest way to receive the king's pardon?

In each example, two complete sentences are held together by both a comma and a coordinator.

If no coordinator is present, the lone comma creates a **comma splice**. Even though comma splices are generally frowned upon in formal written genres, in everyday writing, comma splices are prevalent. For instance, the following are taken from Twitter:

- (18.20) a. okay this is hilarious to me, it's Dr. Seuss Day at Powell's? [*this tweet is accompanied by a picture of Powell's bestsellers list, which is topped by five Dr. Seuss books*] (Nicole Chung, @nicole_soojung, Mar. 4, 2018)
- b. I hate sleeping, I always have the worst dreams and they always feel so real. (C9 Squishy, @SquishyMuffinz, Mar. 2, 2018)
- c. use headphones, you will be grateful (ljf, @laurenjfetus, Mar. 4, 2018)

Prescriptively, (a) requires a comma after a capitalized *Okay*, and the comma between *me* and *it's* needs to change to stronger punctuation, such as a period or semicolon. Example (b) uses a comma instead of a colon or a subordinator like *because*, creating a comma splice. Furthermore, a comma is prescriptively expected between *worst dreams* and *and they* because *I always have the worst dreams* and *they always feel so real* are two complete sentence structures. Finally, (c) prescriptively requires a coordinator alongside the comma among other minor changes: *Use headphones, and you will be grateful*.

A comma takes on many duties in written English and, thus, is an important mark to master. LeClerc (1995: 148) writes, “commas carry a certain power—they pull readers through difficult material, they delineate between pieces of ideas, they stop the eye at appropriate moments.” Prescriptively, her statement contains a comma splice because commas hold three independent clauses together without the aid of coordinators. Descriptively, though, LeClerc's description reminds us that commas don't have to adhere to prescriptive rules to have power in constructing subtle nuances within our messages.

Semicolons and colons are generally relegated to more formal genres and so require explicit instruction for proper prescriptive use. For many people, semicolons and colons don't appear in their everyday writing at all. In fact, Greenspan (2011) tells his readers, “A semicolon in a text message is the equivalent of putting on makeup to go to the gym.” And, indeed, these pieces of punctuation aren't used as often in informal or daily writing. When using semicolons and colons in formal writing, the biggest prescriptive problem is that they can create unintentional sentence fragments.

Visually, a semicolon is the combination of a period and a comma, which reflects its main use: a semicolon typically links together two independent clauses, with the second clause being semantically relevant to the first one, as in these COCA examples:

- (18.21) a. Out-of-level testing has been shown to be an effective assessment strategy with high-achieving students; however, out-of-level testing has not been shown to work well with low-achieving students.
- b. Here, of course, it is not innocence that is at issue, but dangerousness; nevertheless, the point remains that the nonlawyer may not be trained to argue for a particular outcome.
- c. A few years ago, it received only a few requests each year; this year, it got about 85.
- d. Just remember, craps is chancy; this spa investment is a sure bet.
- e. But there is a small (not zero) probability that the proton will breach the wall and find itself on the other side, mated with another proton; this quantum tunneling, strange as it seems, must be called into our explanations of why the Sun and other stars shine.
- f. Things were chaotic; several days passed before someone realized that what we had in the lab was actually the replica.

Examples (a) and (b) demonstrate the use of a linking adverb alongside the semicolon, where the linking adverb explicitly provides the relationship between the two independent clauses being linked together. When a linking adverb appears alongside a semicolon, the expectation is for the semicolon to appear before the adverb, which is then followed by a comma. Examples (a) and (b) follow those prescriptive expectations.

Without a linking adverb, as in examples (c)-(f), the reader is left to interpret the relationship between the two clauses, making those examples more reader-based. In (c) and (d), the independent clause after the semicolon provides information that contrasts the information presented in the clause prior to the semicolon. The use of a semicolon rather than a period highlights the contrast presented; for instance, in (c), the writer calls attention to the contrastive connection between the few requests received a few years ago and the 85 received this year. The way example (e) is grammatically set up indicates that *this quantum tunneling* refers to the information in the first independent clause about protons mating with protons outside their wall, which helps clarify why *stars shine*. Example (f) provides a cause and effect relationship: because *things were chaotic*, people didn't realize they had a replica, rather than the original, in the lab. As in these examples, semicolons are often used to create compound and compound-complex sentence structures.

Semicolons can also be used to separate constituents in a list, especially if other constituents in the list require a comma. For instance, the COCA examples below use semicolons to separate constituents:

- (18.22) a. Her Rolodex of personal friends also is peppered with top donors to the Democratic Party, including Susie Tompkins Buell, co-founder of the Esprit clothing company; former ambassador to Luxembourg James Hormel; Bay Area attorneys John Keker and Joe Cotchett; financier

Warren Hellman; and members of the Haas, Fisher, Getty and Swig families.

- b. Retaliation from your employer may come in any form: demotions; workplace sabotage; emotional terrorism; monitoring of your calls, E-mail or trash; and efforts to slander you.

The first constituent in the list of people in example (a) includes a non-restrictive modifier that requires commas, and the final constituent includes a series of family names that require commas to separate them. The use of semicolons helps readers to distinguish the constituents being joined as part of the larger list of top donors even when those constituents feature internal commas. The same happens in (b), where the list following the colon includes a constituent that requires commas, so each listed item is separated by a semicolon.

When a colon links two independent clauses, creating a compound or compound-complex sentence structure, the second independent clause explains or specifies information presented in the first independent clause, as in these COCA examples:

- (18.23) a. Here then is the Achilles heel of so many universities: most reality is seen primarily in terms of theory, stand-offishly and sterilely, with too little input from practicality.
- b. But that raises another question: What kind of economy is it in which the numbers of both the highest-earning and lowest-earning people are expanding while the middle class is shrinking?

In (a), the clause following the colon defines *the Achilles heel* being talked about in the first clause; in (b), the independent clause following the colon specifies a question that is raised.¹⁴³ My writing teacher once told me that if you cannot replace the colon semantically with *that is* or *namely*, then a colon should not be used. That advice reflects the semantic connection a colon provides.¹⁴⁴

In prescriptive grammar, the clause before the colon must be a complete sentence; otherwise, it creates a sentence fragment. The COCA examples below demonstrate a common use of a colon to introduce a list that describes, defines, or specifies information from the opening independent clause, which is a complete sentence:

¹⁴³ Style guides differ as to whether the independent clause after the colon should be capitalized; some require a capital letter, as in example (b), while others do not, as in (a). One problem with prescriptive grammar is that even the so-called experts can't agree on simple decisions like capitalization following a colon.

¹⁴⁴ Because a colon provides a specifying or defining relationship, a popular practice in academic writing is to use a colon to separate a title from its subtitle, as in these examples, which are cited in this book:

- a. That straight talk: Sarah Palin and the sociolinguistics of demonstratives (Acton and Potts 2014)
- b. Very Austen: Accounting for the language of *Emma* (Barchas 2007)
- c. A corpus-driven approach to formulaic language in English: Multi-word patterns in speech and writing (Biber 2009)

For each title, the opening phrase gives an overview of the topic of the paper, and the phrase following the colon provides more specific information. Of course, within the realm of titles, a full clause-like structure on either side of the colon is neither expected nor commonly used.

- (18.24) a. In a street market the ponchos hang like banners of all colors: red, beige, blue, and pink.
- b. Behn spent the 1680s writing, not the plays that had established her reputation, but prose fiction of all kinds: short, parodic anecdotes, a three-volume epistolary scandal chronicle, and the narrative Oroonoko.
- c. So I wrote her back in the same vein: cheerful, chatty letters about boys.
- d. There were three of them in that room: Flynn; Erben; and an unknown, short and olive-skinned man with black hair.

In these examples, the colon is preceded by a complete independent clause, and the list after the colon provides more specific information about the head noun of a semantically salient noun phrase presented before the colon. In (a), the list of colors provides examples of *all colors*; the list in (b) specifies *prose fiction of all kinds*; the noun phrase after the colon in (c) defines *the same vein*; and the *three of them* are identified in the list following the colon in (d). If you delete everything after the colon in these sentences, you are still left with a complete sentence (e.g., *So I wrote her back in the same vein* is a complete sentence on its own).

While the preference is for a colon to follow a complete sentence structure, you don't have to look too far to find examples of an incomplete clause before a colon—even in formal writing. The following COCA examples are taken from academic writing and demonstrate that practice:

- (18.25) a. Among other insights, he enunciated the powers of sovereignty, including: the power to initiate and end war, appoint judges, pardon those convicted of crimes, remove high officers, and impose taxes, among others.
- b. The features used are: the probability of the hypothesis, the logit of the probability, and the rank of the answer among the multiple-choice answers.

Many style guides tell you to omit the colon in instances like these examples because the colon is unnecessary and creates a sentence fragment by dividing an independent clause. For instance, if you delete the information after the colon in (b), you are left with *The features used are*, which is a sentence fragment.

The more complex the constituents are that follow the colon, the less strict the constraint on sentence structure before the colon becomes. Placing a colon after a partial sentence structure is commonly seen and widely accepted when introducing bulleted or numbered lists. For instance, the template for the course syllabus for Stephen F. Austin State University's ENG 131 Composition and Rhetoric course includes a colon between an incomplete sentence and a complex bulleted list. Because this focus is on the introductory phrasing, four of the bulleted goals have been removed, with only the first and last presented in the example below:

(18.26) At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze texts with the goal of examining the rhetorical structure, veracity of claims, sufficient use of accurate and credible evidence, as well as possible use in creative analytical, and persuasive components;
- Compose texts in response to variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure.

Even though the clause structure leading up to the colon is incomplete, examples like (18.28) are frequently found in even the most formal writing situations.

18.3 Quotation marks

When directly quoting information from another source in formal writing, authors can incorporate these four pieces of punctuation for the quotation: double quotation marks, single quotation marks, square brackets, and ellipses. These four pieces of punctuation are introduced and outlined in the table below.

Punctuation	Typical uses
“ ”	Quotation marks serve two main purposes: • enclose direct quotations or dialogue. • indicate doubt or draw attention when used as scare quotes (e.g., <i>She's a "friend"</i>).
‘ ’	Single quotation marks often surround • words or definitions being discussed (e.g., <i>The word 'cat' is a noun</i>). • a quotation within a quotation (e.g., <i>Mary said, "I heard him say, 'You need to leave now.'"</i>).
[]	Square brackets are not as frequently used and are generally used to show information has been changed inside a direct quotation, with any changes made placed inside square brackets, whether it's changing capitalization, shifting an inflectional suffix, or adding in an additional word. Placing <i>[sic]</i> inside a direct quotation indicates that the word or typo directly before the <i>[sic]</i> was in the original document.
...	Ellipses indicate information has been removed from an original quotation. Three dots are used within a sentence while four dots indicate the end of a sentence was removed; the fourth period represents the original period at the end of the sentence in a quotation.

Table 18.3 Punctuation for quoting

The most frequent use of quotation marks, whether double or single, is to surround dialogue in narrative texts or direct quotations in texts citing original works. The following examples are taken from novels:

- (18.27) a. “I noticed your station’s empty,” she remarked, throwing the towel away. (Roth 2007: 132)
- b. “Actually,” Miss Macintosh said, moving to Lucy’s side, “these girls are our two Iris Scholarship recipients. They expressed a desire to meet you and um...” (Goodman 2002: 190)
- c. ‘It was because you disliked Mr Heathcliff,’ she answered. (Brontë 1995[1847]: 222)
- d. ‘No,’ said Shona, and then deciding that her curtness could be mistaken for out and out rudeness, which she was well mannered enough to avoid, added, ‘I’m afraid I don’t. Is it nice?’ (Farooki 2007: 156)

The standard American practice is to use double quotation marks for any quotation, including dialogue in novels, and examples (a) and (b) demonstrate that practice. However, in non-American English writing, dialogue is often surrounded by single quotation marks, as in (c) and (d). As Andrew Heisel (2014) aptly writes in an article on *Slate*’s website,

If you are an American, using quotation marks could hardly be simpler: Use double quotation marks at all times unless quoting something within a quotation, when you use single. It’s different in the greater Anglosphere, where they generally use singles in books and doubles in newspapers.

As more publishers strive to reach international audiences, the preferences for single or double quotations are no longer strictly aligned by country, so authors have to carefully read and abide by in-house style guides provided by each publisher.

Regardless of the convention used, any punctuation at the end of dialogue in narrative texts appears within the confines of the quotation marks, whether it’s a comma, period, or question mark. The ellipsis in (18.27b), which also appears inside the quotation marks, is meant to be read as a trailing off since it occurs within spoken narrative dialogue rather than within a direct quotation from a cited source.

However, when citing sources in academic writing, the preference for final punctuation depends on publisher preferences. Many American-based publishers prefer double quotation marks with final punctuation inside the quotation marks, as in the following two examples, taken from Gablasova, Brezina, and McEnery (2017).

- (18.28) a. A number of factors conditioning variation in language attainment and use can be examined using L2 corpora; as Evert (2009) states, “many linguistic questions can be operationalized as a frequency comparison.” (133)
- b. As Leech (2011, p. 5) stated, “if asked what is the one benefit that corpora can provide and that cannot be provided by other means, I would reply ‘information about frequency.’” (131)

In both cases, the quotation ends the sentence, and the final period appears inside the quotation marks. Example (b) demonstrates that single quotation marks indicate a quotation within a

quotation: Gablasova, Brezina, and McEnery (2017) quote Leech quoting an answer he would provide about the benefits of corpora.¹⁴⁵

Other publishers prefer single quotation marks, and when they do, they also tend to prefer having final punctuation *outside* the quotation marks. The following two examples are taken from Archer and Lansley (2015):

- (18.29) a. This work thus builds on that of McQuaid *et al.* (2015: 21), who recently sought to ‘enhance our understanding of verbal elements’ of seventy-eight press appeals using the same content-analysis tool. (233)
- b. In line with previous research, Vrij and Mann (2001: 124) suggest that this may be because ‘men are usually more suspicious than women’, and that ‘women are better than men in decoding information that someone wants to convey’. (234)

The quotation in example (a) appears inside the sentence structure without any other punctuation marks, but the quotation in (b) occurs at the end of the sentence with the sentence-final period outside the quotation marks.

When directly quoting an original source, authors may need to alter the original wording to fit within their own sentence structure or content. Square brackets indicate that information has changed from the original to the cited quotation, as in the example below, taken from Bennett, Levinson, and Hioki (2017: 946-947):

- (18.30) “[W]ith the [creation] of parole, Congress moved toward a ‘three-way sharing’ of sentencing responsibility [between the three branches of government] by granting corrections personnel in the Executive Branch the discretion to release a prisoner before the expiration of the sentence imposed by the judge.”

The source is *Mistretta v. United States* (1989: 364-365), a U.S. Supreme Court document, and the original sentence in that document is provided below.

- (18.31) Also, with the advent of parole, Congress moved toward a “three-way sharing” of sentencing responsibility by granting corrections personnel in the Executive Branch the discretion to release a prisoner before the expiration of the sentence imposed by the judge.

In the original, *with* is not the first word of the sentence, so it is not capitalized; however, Bennett, Levinson, and Hioki used it as the first word of their sentence, so the *w* is capitalized in square brackets to show that a change has been made. Furthermore, they changed the word *advent* to *creation*, and they added in the clarifying phrase *between the three branches of the government*. The only change that does not need to be marked in square brackets is the shift from

¹⁴⁵ These layers of quotation can continue, alternating among double and single quotation marks. For instance, Smith writes, “Quotations can become very complicated, and, according to Jones, ‘may even be so thoroughly embedded that, as Henry notes, “readers get lost as to who said what.”””

double to single quotation marks; because *three-way sharing* is a quote within a quote, it takes single quotation marks in the Bennett, Levinson, and Hioki article. That shift is required to mark a quote within a quote, and readers understand that to mean that the original source used quotation marks, too, even if the original quotation marks were double rather than single.

At times, a grammatical error or typo is in the original source. Authors citing quotations with those kinds of errors can mark them by placing *[sic]* after the error as a way of saying, “This error was in the original—it is not my own.” Bennett, Levinson, and Hioki (2017: 942) block quote part of prosecutor Lisa A. Baroni’s closing statement during Bernie Madoff’s trial in 2009:

(18.32)For more than 20 years he stole ruthlessly and without remorse.... [H]e destroyed a lifetime of hard work of thousands of victims. And he used that victims’ [sic] money to enrich himself and his family, with an opulent lifestyle, homes around the world, yachts, private jets, and tens of millions of dollars of loans to his family, loans of investors’ money that has [sic] never been repaid.

Baroni’s original closing statement, taken from the court transcript for United States of America v. Bernard L. Madoff (2009: 39, lines 5-9), is provided below.

(18.33)For more than 20 years he stole ruthlessly and without remorse. Thousands of people placed their trust in him and he lied repeatedly to all of them. And as the Court heard from all of the victims, in their words and in their letters, he destroyed a lifetime of hard work of thousands of victims. And he used that victims’ money to enrich himself and his family, with an opulent lifestyle, homes around the world, yachts, private jets, and tens of millions of dollars of loans to his family, loans of investors’ money that has never been repaid.

When quoting Baroni’s statement, the authors remove the second sentence (*Thousands of people ... all of them*) and the opening of the third sentence (*And as the Court ... in their letters*) and then capitalize *he*, which begins their newly reduced sentence.

They mark the omission with ellipses, which generally indicates an entire sentence or an end of a sentence has been omitted; when the middle portion of a sentence is omitted, it only requires three periods, but the authors use four to indicate they omitted the end of the sentence. Baroni’s original closing statement includes two errors: *that victims’* and *loans of investors’ money that has never been repaid*. The word *that* in *that victims’* is a singular demonstrative determiner, but it needs to be the plural *those* to match the plural *victims’* and to refer to the thousands of victims mentioned in the preceding clause. In the second error, the verb *has* is singular but should be the plural *have* to agree with the plural subject *loans*. When quoting Baroni, Bennett, Levinson, and Hioki include *[sic]* after both these instances to show that these errors were in the original document.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Some readers might be surprised to see these kinds of errors in a formal legal court document; however, Baroni was speaking, and these errors occur much more frequently in speech—even very formal speech—than in writing, where authors can read back through and edit for those errors.

Quotation marks don't always indicate dialogue or quoted information; the example below is the opening sentence of Bennett, Levinson, and Hioki (2017: 941):

(18.34) Let's play an easy word-association game: "Bernie Madoff"—what comes to mind? We think for most it is likely some form of "massive fraud scheme."

In this sentence, *Bernie Madoff* appears within quotation marks to indicate the authors are talking about the name rather than quoting it. At the end of the sentence, *massive fraud scheme* is provided as a possible answer to their hypothetical game, not as a quotation or instance of dialogue. The quotation marks indicate that the authors believe that particular group of words would be the most frequent answer they would encounter if they ask people to play the game.

Style guides and publishing houses use different conventions for writing about a word or phrase (i.e., to indicate the author is discussing the use of a word or phrase), and the most employed conventions are single quotation marks, double quotation marks, and italics:

- (18.35) a. The media use the term 'crocodile tears' to describe people's feigning of grief/anguish over crimes that they are found, ultimately, to have perpetrated. (Archer and Lansley 2015: 231)
- b. based on our sample, "tell" functions within loud dialogue as a command 40 percent of the time, while in neutral dialogue it does so only 15 percent of the time. (Katsma 2014: 6)
- c. To find out how notable it was, I decided to compare British and American usage of *bloke* when writers are trying their best to imitate Rowling. (Blatt 2017: 123)
- d. from Latin *felinus*, from *feles* 'cat'. (Stevenson and Lindberg 2010: *feline*)

Examples (a) through (c) demonstrate the uses of those three primary conventions to discuss a word or phrase. For instance, in (c), Blatt writes about how frequently authors use the word *bloke*; in his sentence, he's talking about the word *bloke* and not about an actual physical bloke (i.e., 'man'). When writing about a word, it is treated as a noun within the sentence, regardless of its typical part of speech. For instance, *tell* is a verb meaning to relay information, yet, in (b), it is treated as a noun and functions as the subject of the sentence. In many cases, when authors need to use words in other languages alongside their definitions, the word is italicized while the definition or translation is placed within single quotation marks, as in the case of the etymology presented in (d).

Quotation marks can also serve the function of **scare quotes**, or quotation marks meant to call attention to a word or phrase, especially when casting doubt on its validity, definition, or use. Because scare quotes are semantically similar to placing *so-called* or *supposed* before the word or phrase, style guides warn against using *so-called* or *supposed* alongside scare quotes, citing the redundancy created by using both. However, the use of both scare quotes and *so-called/supposed* does appear in formal writing, as in examples (d) and (e) below.

- (18.36) a. These “loud words” are displayed in Figure 1. (Katsma 2014: 4)
- b. Identity theft is a crime that largely did not exist until the turn of the twenty-first century. However, over the course of the last decade or so, particularly as the so-called Information Age has come into full bloom, this crime has become rampant throughout the country, annually plaguing millions of people. (COCA)
- c. We don’t agree with the supposed dangers cited in the EIR. (COCA)
- d. As noted on Carlin’s World War II draft card, by the time Koistinen’s case was filed the City Court was housed at 52 Chambers Street, the so-called “Boss Tweed Courthouse” (COCA)
- e. Her exposure of the supposed “naturalness” of neo-Greek fashion in this work should be related to her disclosure of the illusionistic premise of painting through motifs such as a broken pane of window glass (COCA)

In example (a), Katsma uses quotation marks to talk about words that are considered loud, such as *shout*, *roar*, and *scream*. The words themselves are not loud, but he’s drawing attention to the fact that readers treat them differently than verbs like *say* or *ask*, which are read with more neutral tones. His use of scare quotes tells readers to treat his use of the phrase *loud words* as if he had written *These so-called loud words* or *These supposed loud words*. Examples (b) and (c) demonstrate how authors can choose to include the descriptors *so-called* and *supposed* rather than using scare quotes, and examples (d) and (e) show that sometimes authors use both methods.

In spoken communication, you can indicate scare quotes by holding up two fingers on each hand and bending them down, creating air quotes. In a classic episode of *Friends*, “The One Where Emma Cries” (S9:E2), Joey’s misunderstanding of how to use these air quotes is a point of humor. Example (a) below is what Ross says to Joey, using quotation marks where Ross uses air quotes, and example (b) is Joey’s reply, again using quotation marks to indicate air quotes.

- (18.37) a. Let’s put aside the fact that you “accidentally” picked up my grandmother’s ring, and you “accidentally” proposed to Rachel.
- b. I’m “sorry.”

When Ross uses the air quotes, he indicates the opposite meaning of what he says: he doesn’t think it’s an accident that Joey picked up his grandmother’s ring and proposed to Rachel. However, Joey doesn’t understand the use of air quotes and uses them around *sorry* as a way of emphasizing how sorry he is, and the result is that it appears he is not sorry at all.

In the same way that Joey misuses the scare quotes, thus indicating the opposite of what he intends, some people use scare quotes in written language to draw attention to a word rather than casting doubt on it; for instance, I once received a card with this message inside:

- (18.38) We “enjoyed” your visit!

A potential interpretation of this message is that the author did not, in fact, enjoy my visit; however, the intended message, made clear through context, was that the author *really* enjoyed my visit and used quotation marks to draw attention to the word *enjoy*.

Heisel (2014) focuses on trying to understand shifting uses of quotation marks, including the general confusion about whether single or double quotation marks should be used and whether quotation marks should ever be used to emphasize a word or phrase. He found that people tout various rules online, including the following: short quotes require single quotation marks, and long quotes require double quotation marks; single quotation marks indicate thoughts while double quotation marks indicate speech; single quotation marks surround scare quotes, and double quotation marks surround dialogue or direct quotations. After finding such diverse “rules,” he turns to linguist Geoffrey Nunberg for an answer:

I asked Geoffrey Nunberg, a linguist at the University of California-Berkeley, about how people could develop this new rule. He explained a long-standing linguistic principle: “People just make shit up. ... [People] make sense of what they often read and type by retrofitting a rule.”

“A large part of what we know of punctuation practice,” Nunberg added, “is just what we’ve sucked up in the course of reading.”

In other words, while style guides can provide detailed information about prescriptive uses of punctuation, those guidelines are only effective for formal genres and published works that adhere to a publisher’s punctuation rules. In everyday communication, writers use what they know and, if pressed, put their own take on the differences in meaning provided by different punctuation marks, which may or may not reflect wider social practices.

18.4 Word-internal and parenthetical punctuation

Another set of punctuation that informal writers often use in varying ways is word-internal punctuation, which is primarily used for three reasons: to mark a possessive inflection on nouns, to follow required spelling conventions, or to indicate options. A table on the following page introduces and describes the apostrophe, hyphen, acute accent mark, and forward slash.

When used with nouns, apostrophes indicate possession. Singular nouns and plural nouns not ending in an <s> generally require an apostrophe followed by an <s> at the end of the word, as in the examples from *GoogleBooks* below:

- (18.39)a. A **butterfly’s** wings are attached to the thorax.
- b. Now, use what you learned about **author’s** purpose.
- c. Not real blood / But the **ink’s** stain: / Words corrupted over time, / Paint dripping off a disordered canvas.
- d. That made **Alex’s** day go sour.
- e. Jets migrated above, flying in **geese’s** formation.
- f. Normally I wouldn’t say anything, except, for example, take the **people’s** choice awards.

Punctuation	Typical uses
'	An apostrophe serves two purposes: - when used with nouns, it signals possession. For a singular noun, an <i>'s</i> follows the noun, and for regular plural nouns that already end in <i>s</i>, the apostrophe follows that plural <i>s</i>. - when used in contractions, it signals that letters are missing (e.g., in <i>isn't</i>, the apostrophe represents the missing <i>o</i> of <i>not</i>).
-	A hyphen is typically used for two purposes: - separate a prefix or suffix from a base, such as <i>half-brother</i>, or separate units within some compounds. Sometimes the hyphen is required for prescriptive spelling, but other times, it is used to separate repeated spellings. For instance, <i>re-election</i> and <i>shell-like</i> are easier to read than <i>reelection</i> and <i>shelllike</i>. - serve as a connector when a word becomes divided over a line boundary.
˘	An accent mark is used with some borrowed words, like <i>résumé</i> and <i>fiancée</i> .
/	A forward slash indicates options, as in <i>You can have cake and/or cookies</i> , or two ways to refer to the same referent, as in <i>my husband/colleague</i> .

Table 18.4 Word-internal punctuation

The majority of singular nouns follow that rule, but some confusion has arisen about what to do when a singular noun already ends in <s>. If the noun is a common noun, the regular -*'s* is usually added:

- (18.40)a. The **bus's** doors cranked open, but no one disembarked.
b. This distant desire is demonstrated further in their subsequent discussion over a **kiss's** value.

Using *Google Books* as a database, I found multiple examples of *bus's* and *kiss's* but could not find any of **bus'* or **kiss'*. When a proper name is used, though, the results become muddled:

- (18.41)a. Guys came walking into the boardroom toward **Chris's** office.
b. Peggy just laughed mildly as they walked off towards **Chris'** office.
c. Ian had come with the excuse that he needed to borrow **Jess's** car.
d. Scott looked down the road in the opposite direction and saw another set of headlights approaching **Jess'** car.
e. It was no sudden whim on Douglas's part to go to **Mr Jones's** house.
f. **Mr. Jones'** house cost thirty-one thousand dollars and the grounds in their development required nine thousand dollars more.

For all three sets, both variants are included in books in the *Google Books* database; however, the first entry of each set, where both an apostrophe and <s> appear, is the most frequent, reflecting the fact that the general expectation is that all singular nouns take the -*'s* inflection, regardless of the last letter or sound of the word. The lack of an <s> with the possessive inflection for a

singular noun is triggered solely by letter—not sound. For instance, even though *Alex* and *fox* end in an [s] sound, no one argues that the possessive forms should be **Alex'* or **fox'*. Furthermore, in pronunciation, *Chris's* and *Chris'* are both pronounced with an additional syllable to reflect the possessive ending. While there is no general grammatical agreement on whether it should be *Jess's book* or *Jess' book*, people often feel very strongly one way or the other.

Plural nouns already ending in <s> only require an apostrophe, which does not affect pronunciation; both the plural and possessive plural forms of these words sound the same, as in the *GoogleBooks* examples below.

- (18.42) a. Everyone knows that the little **kids'** table is the place to be for any holiday or family gathering.
 b. How are the **cows'** spots different?
 c. They laid a trail from the **foxes'** den into the bush.
 d. The romance of the early Victorian era still prevails in the **Joneses'** house.
 e. It was not necessary, however, to refer to these titles in the **Indices'** entries because the volume numbering of the Journal has been continuous.

Even though nouns require apostrophes to show possession, pronouns do not; therefore, *it's* is the contracted form of *it is* while *its* is the possessive form of *it*.

The lyrics of Imagine Dragon's song "Whatever It Takes" defines apostrophes as "a symbol to remind you that there's more to see," referring to the apostrophes in contractions, which appear in the place of deleted letters. For instance, in *I'm*, the apostrophe stands in where <a> is deleted, which is deleted both in writing and pronunciation. The most commonly contracted forms involve a form of *be* (e.g., *he's here*, *they're writing*, *you're sweet*), a form of *have* when it's used as a primary auxiliary (e.g., *she's already left*, *they'd flown before*, *you've got to be kidding*), and *not* when it's used after a form of *be* or an auxiliary of any kind (e.g., *isn't*, *haven't*, *can't*, *couldn't*). Not all modal auxiliaries can take the *not* contraction or can only take it in certain dialects (e.g., *mightn't*, *mustn't*, *mayn't*). Some contracted forms are often confused with homophones, such as *your/you're* and *their/they're/there*. Ross Gellar on *Friends* gets particularly upset about Rachel's misuse of *your* and *you're*, saying the following line:

- (18.43) Oh, oh, oh, and by the way, Y-O-U-apostrophe-R-E means 'you are;' Y-O-U-R means 'your!'

Ross isn't the only one who gets worked up over the homophone confusion.

In British English, *have* can take the negated contraction whether it's used as a main verb or auxiliary while American English writers tend to only use examples like *hasn't* when it's an auxiliary. The following *GoogleBooks* examples likely sound awkward to many American English speakers:

- (18.44) a. What's the use of going to war if you haven't any foe?
 b. What's the use of being able to play the piano if you haven't a piano?

American English speakers would typically add the dummy *do* (e.g., *you don't have a piano*) or add the verb *get*, treating *have* as an auxiliary (e.g., *you haven't got a foe*). Apostrophes can also act as a marker of deleted numbers, especially when writing about years. For instance, 1989 can be written as '89.

While apostrophes do not often create plurality, an apostrophe can serve a third purpose: making abbreviations, numbers, or letters plural (e.g., *She grew up in the 1980s* versus *She grew up in the 1980's*); however, some style guides do not support that practice, preferring plurals such as *CDs* over *CD's*. Both examples below are taken from *GoogleBooks*.

- (18.45) a. If you counted the **As** by using a pencil to cross each one off as it was counted, the process would be a little different from one in which you are expected to read the paragraphs as they are projected on a screen at the front of a classroom.
- b. we learn that if you take the string representing the number of the **A's** and the string representing the number of the **B's** and manipulate them as the algorithm tells you to, you will get a string representing the number you would arrive at if you counted the **A's** and then turned to the **B's**, and, without starting over, continued your counting till you had got through the **B's**.

Again, not everyone accepts the use of an apostrophe to create any plurals, so if you're writing for a particular audience or following a specific style guide, you need to check to find out the best policy for that audience or style guide.

Several years ago, I helped Bill Seamon edit his book, and we debated over whether an apostrophe should be used in the title. He wanted to name it *The Coaches Playbook*, and I argued that it should be *The Coaches' Playbook* with an added apostrophe. However, he pointed out that he belonged to the Missouri High School Baseball Coaches Association, which lacked an apostrophe. Indeed, both forms are attested, and the form lacking an apostrophe is more common:

- (18.46) a. Major Charles D. Daly of West Point was the first president of the **coaches** association.
- b. The **coaches** association supported my idea for a sanctioned travel team event, which at the time was the first sanctioned event in the Midwest.
- c. In this connection it seems that the **Coaches'** Association as such might well have a larger measure of the direction of the tournament.

In the same way, *teachers manual*, *teacher's manual*, and *teachers' manual* are all attested forms, but, for that set, *teachers' manual* is more common. Because he wanted consistency with the way the coaches associations were named, we kept his original title without the apostrophe. Constructions like *the coaches playbook* are examples of cases in which apostrophes are not consistently applied.

Finally, as a spelling convention, some names use apostrophes, such as *O’Keeffe*, *L’Hereux*, *D’Arcy*, and *D’Andre*. Oftentimes, the letter following the apostrophe is capitalized, as in *O’Malley*, but that is not always the case. In some names, an apostrophe takes the place of an accent mark; thus, *Renée* is sometimes spelled as *Rene’e*. In general, apostrophes do not affect pronunciation, but there are examples where it adds a syllable, as in *D’Andre*, which is typically pronounced in American English with three syllables rather than two. How a person chooses to spell and pronounce their name is a personal choice rather than a prescriptive expectation.

The apostrophe is perhaps the single-most problematic piece of punctuation in English, with apostrophes strewn about in informal writing in unexpected ways. Larry Trask (1997) writes the following about apostrophes:

The apostrophe (‘) is the most troublesome punctuation mark in English, and perhaps also the least useful. No other punctuation mark causes so much bewilderment, or is so often misused. On the one hand, shops offer **pizza’s*, **video’s*, **greeting’s cards* and **ladie’s clothing*; on the other, they offer **childrens shoes* and **artists supplies*. The confusion about apostrophes is so great, in comparison with the small amount of useful work they perform, that many distinguished writers and linguists have argued that the best way of eliminating the confusion would be to get rid of this troublesome squiggle altogether and never use it at all.

They are probably right, but unfortunately the apostrophe has not been abolished yet, and it is a blunt fact that the incorrect use of apostrophes will make your writing look illiterate more quickly than almost any other kind of mistake. I’m afraid, therefore, that, if you find apostrophes difficult, you will just have to grit your teeth and get down to work.

As Trask points out, critics tend to judge writers more quickly by their misuse of apostrophes than anything else—even critics who don’t follow prescriptive rules in other ways.

Hyphens are used within words to indicate boundaries, whether it’s a boundary in compound words, a marker between affixes and a base, or an end-of-line division indicator. Within compounds, English has two primary reasons for using hyphens: compounds that require hyphens for spelling conventions (e.g., *mother-in-law*, *forget-me-not*) and created compounds typically used as attributive modifiers. The bolded words in the *GoogleBooks* examples below demonstrate these types of compounded adjectives:

- (18.47) a. For infants who cannot tolerate breast milk or infants of mothers who are not able or willing to breast-feed, **milk-based** formula is recommended over **soy-based** formula, even though there have been no demonstrated advantages of cow’s **milk-based** formula.
- b. There is a certain paradox in attempting to map out experiential learning and **performance-based** assessment.
- c. The **two-tone** car was painted almost exactly as it appeared in real life—at most an inch was added between the front wheel-arch and the door—and small diagrams showed the front suspension (with torsion bars again, as on the Minor), the dashboard (**walnut-veneered**) and boot (with a separate spare wheel compartment).

In examples (a) and (c), two compounds have used hyphens, though they are not required by typical spelling conventions: *breastfeed* and *wheel arch* are the standard forms.

Most affixes do not require hyphens as a general spelling convention unless the affix creates a word difficult to parse, such as *reelection* and *shelllike*. Because the beginning of words like *reelection* can create difficulties for readers, where they see the word *reel* rather than the prefix *re-*, writers often hyphenate the word and write it as *re-election*; however, some use a diaeresis to indicate the second vowel is pronounced on its own, as in *reëlection*.¹⁴⁷ Another example of a prefix doubling a vowel is *cooperate*, which can also be written as *co-operate* or *coöperate*. Prefixes aren't just difficult because of doubled vowels, and in words like *coworker*, a hyphen can be inserted to make sure the reader doesn't see *cow* at the beginning of the word: *co-worker*.

Sometimes a prefix can create ambiguity, as is the case with the verbs *resign* and *re-sign*. Because *resign* exists as its own verb, if a writer wants to attach *re-* to the verb *sign*, it's best to use a hyphen to disambiguate between *re-sign* ('to sign again') and *resign* ('to step down'). Suffixes can be hyphenated, especially when a suffix creates an awkward spelling, such as *shelllike*, which has three *ls* in a row and so almost always appears as its hyphenated *shell-like* form. They can also be hyphenated when a suffix is attached to an unexpected base, as in *Black-ish* or *Dursley-ish*. English also has spellings that are in-flux with regards to hyphens; for instance, both *email* and *e-mail* are potential spellings.

If you look a word up in a dictionary, the bolded headword entry may have dots separating letters in the word, as in **in·ter·po·la·tion** and **Mas·sa·chu·setts**. While many people believe those dots separate syllables, they do not. The dots indicate where you can hyphenate a word if it needs to be broken over the end of a line while writing or typing. For instance, if *interpolation* doesn't entirely fit at the end of a line, it should be hyphenated and broken in one of four ways: *in-terpolation*, *inter-polation*, *interpo-lation*, or *interpola-tion*. Because word processors automatically provide line breaks and hyphenate words when typing in full justification, most writers no longer spend time worrying about how words can or should be hyphenated at the end of a line. As a result, not all modern dictionaries include the separated head words.

The acute accent mark (') is a spelling convention used for some borrowed words, such as *résumé*, *fiancé*, and *fiancée*, as well as for some names, such as *René* and *Fabergé*. The use of this accent mark is not consistently followed even when it helps disambiguate words. For instance, the verb *resume* can be distinguished from the noun *résumé* through the use of the accent marks (though some people only use one accent mark, as in *resumé*). While accent marks help distinguish these words, not everyone uses them; for instance, you could use Nancy Schuman's *The Everything Resume Book*, Joyce Lain Kennedy's *Resumes for Dummies*, or Kim Isaacs and Karen Hofferber's *The Career Change Resume* for career advice. On the other hand, you can turn to David Wood's *Best Résumé Book*, Herman Holtz's *Beyond the Résumé*, and Gayle Laakmann McDowell's *The Google Résumé*. Accent marks may be required by some publishing style guides, yet everyday writers don't always or consistently use them, perhaps

¹⁴⁷ Words like *naïve* are also sometimes written with a diaeresis to indicate the second vowel is pronounced: *naïve*.

because they are not part of the standard English keyboard or perhaps because most words are instantly recognizable even without the accent mark.

The final word-internal punctuation covered in this section is the forward slash, which is often used to represent options.

- (18.48)a. She has written and/or illustrated lots of books (*GoogleBooks*)
 b. you should have your Twitter taken away if you can't spell and/or use incorrect grammar (*Twitter*, hannah michelle huckaby, @yomanitshan, Feb. 18, 2016)

The use of *and/or* in (a) indicates she has done three types of activities: (1) written books without illustrating them, (2) illustrated books that she didn't write, and (3) both written and illustrated books. Example (b) uses *and/or* in a way that incorporates ambiguity because it isn't immediately clear whether the modal and negator are working with both verbs (i.e., *you can't spell; you can't use incorrect grammar*) or only working with the first verb (i.e., *you can't spell; you use incorrect grammar*). Based on context, the author likely means the latter interpretation. Regardless of its interpretation, though, it provides the same types of options as (a); assuming *use* does not work with *can't*, the three options are the following: (1) you can't spell, (2) you use incorrect grammar, or (3) you suffer from both misspellings and incorrect grammar.

Because slashes can be used to represent options, some authors use them to indicate third-person singular pronouns of both genders: *s/he* means the pronoun can refer to either *she* or *he*, depending on the context and situation. However, other authors use parentheses for the same function, as in (*s*)*he*, where the *s* is optional. In certain genres, a slash can indicate missing portions of words within common abbreviations, such as *w/* for *with*, *b/c* for *because*, and *%* for *care of*.

A slash can also indicate that both constituents apply at once. Anne Curzan (2013) began her article "Slash: Not just a punctuation mark anymore" with the following sentence:

- (18.49) In the undergraduate history of English course I am teaching this term, I request/
 require that the students teach me two new slang words every day before I begin
 class.

Curzan uses the slash in *request/require* to indicate that while she requests them to teach her new slang, it's also a requirement before she begins class. Curzan continues her article, noting that younger writers now write out the word *slash* instead of just using the punctuation (/); she includes the following example:

- (18.50) I spent all day in the UgLi [library] yesterday writing my French paper slash
 posting pictures of cats on my sister's Facebook wall.

Here, the writer uses *slash* to separate phrases that are grammatically equal to connect the two phrases: the student indicates she should have been writing a paper but was instead posting cat pictures.

Furthermore, Curzen points out that writers now use *slash* as a conjunction that connects a new clause. She uses the following example:

(18.51) I'll let you know though. Slash I don't know when I'm going to be home tonight.

Here, the *slash* appears to mean something along the lines of “as in,” “oh, and,” or “by the way.” The two clauses are related, but the second clause provides new information. The word *slash* can also change the topic while adding an afterthought, which Curzan observes in the following example:

(18.52) JUST SAW ALEX! Slash I just chubbed on oatmeal raisin cookies at north quad
and i miss you

The afterthought clause added by way of *slash* is on a completely different topic, and the *slash* provides that segue. In other words, what used to be solely treated as a piece of punctuation to separate options or link two closely related and equal constituents is now being used in ways similar to a subordinator or discourse adverb.

Finally, English also has punctuation to mark parenthetical information, or information that's more semantically and/or pragmatically removed than non-restrictive modifiers and discourse markers.

Punctuation	Typical uses
—	A dash separates non-required, additional information from the rest of the sentence. The information after the dash—or between dashes—does not need to constitute a full clause structure.
()	Parentheses function in much the same way as dashes (i.e., they separate non-required, additional information from the rest of the sentence). However, they are also used for in-text citations in academic writing while dashes are not used in that way.

Table 18.5 Parenthetical punctuation

For both dashes and parentheses, the information contained within them is not grammatically required for the overall sentence structure, and the information is extraneous, yet often helpful, for interpreting the larger sentence.

Dashes are visually similar to hyphens but longer and can be referred to as *em-dashes*.¹⁴⁸ In the days of typewriters, dashes were typed as double hyphens, a practice still required to create a dash on a standard keyboard, but word processing programs now typically change two

¹⁴⁸ Dashes come in two varieties: *en-dashes*, meaning the space they take up is roughly the same size as a typed letter *n*, and *em-dashes*, reflecting the fact that they take up about the same amount of space as a typed *m*, which is roughly double in size of an *n*. En-dashes look like hyphens—so much so that many writers opt to use hyphens where en-dashes historically appeared. For en-dash users, they can still appear, typically in ranges of numbers (e.g., *from pages 3–8*) or connected but not compounded words (e.g., *the east–west highway*, *the omnivore–herbivore debate*). These-are-hyphens, but these–are–en–dashes, and these—are—em—dashes.

hyphens in a row into a dash. Dashes often do not have space on either side, as in the examples below, taken from Alice Hoffman's *Nightbird* (2016):

- (18.53) a. Thankfully, most of the recent talk has been about whether the woods will be turned into a housing development—over a hundred acres owned by Hugh Montgomery. (11-12)
- b. We rode our bikes everywhere and visited every ice cream stand in Sidwell—there were four—and decided on our favorite flavors. (94)

Example (a) demonstrates that the information separated by a dash can occur at the end of a sentence and doesn't need a full clause structure following it. In example (b), though, the full simple sentence *there were four* occurs in the middle of a sentence and is separated from the sentence on both sides by dashes. In both cases, deleting the information after the dash or in between the dashes does not affect the grammaticality of the rest of the sentence.

Authors can use dashes to create a flowing together of thoughts, a reading experience that keeps the reader stumbling over the next piece of information to emulate the way a character thinks. For example, in *The 5th Wave*, Rick Yancey (2013) uses dashes in ways that creates urgency:

- (18.54) a. But I could hear whoever—or whatever—it was at the far end, coughing, moaning, and that gurgling sob. (9)
- b. And the silence so—shit—silent, that the beating of your heart is the only sound in the universe. (147)

Yancey's use of dashes recreates how a person's thoughts interrupt each other when they are in intense situations. Likewise, dashes can be used in dialogue to show interruption of speech:

- (18.55) From this distance, his eyes were just pinpricks of reflected light. "So you can either finish me off or help me. I know you're human—"
- "How do you know?" I asked quickly, before he could die on me. (Yancey 2013: 12)

The narrator interrupts the other speaker mid-sentence, which is indicated by the dash after *human*.

Parentheses are pragmatically similar in that they separate information from the rest of the sentence, but they tend to be used in ways that indicate the information within parentheses is background information and not quite as semantically or pragmatically connected to the information in the rest of the sentence. In other words, it's one more step removed. Furthermore, from a reader's perspective, dashes tend to draw attention to the information, interrupting the larger sentence, but parentheses don't have the same interrupted feeling and tend to downplay the information. You could say the dashes provide "high-key" information while parentheses provide "low-key" information. Yancey (2013) uses parentheses to provide an afterthought in the example below:

(18.56) David slays Goliath, and everybody (except Goliath) goes home happy. (1)

The phrase *except Goliath* is not read as an interruption but rather as an added thought. As with the dashes, the sentence around the parentheses does not require what is inside the parentheses for its structure and content.

Alice Hoffman's *Nightbird* (2016) demonstrates more complex uses of parentheses, with full sentence structures and interrupted parenthetical thoughts:

- (18.57) a. We painted our nails in shades we chose because of their names: First Light (silvery pearl), Saturday Night (bright red), Picnic (minty green), Summer (a delicate blue that was the color of the sky in July was my personal favorite, even though anything blue made me think of graffiti). (94)
- b. Julia and I argued over which ones were the best: There was Ice Cream (I pictured vanilla, Julia said it might easily be strawberry) and Bananarama (pale yellow, of course—we both agreed on that) and Have a Heart (Red for love? Green for jealousy? We settled on pink for true love) and Butterfly (I voted for orange, like a monarch butterfly. Julia suggested pale green, like the wings of a cabbage moth). (95)

The first three sets of parentheses in (a) hold simple noun phrases, but the fourth and final set of parentheses incorporate a full sentence structure. Throughout (b), the parentheses incorporate a variety of structures, including a compound-complex sentence structure, a noun phrase with an accompanying parenthetical simple sentence structure, two sentence fragments with final punctuation followed by a simple sentence, and two simple sentence structures separated by final punctuation. In both examples, the larger sentence's punctuation is outside the parentheses to show that no matter how complex the information within the parentheses becomes, the larger sentence's punctuation belongs outside the parentheses. At the end of (b), even though a full sentence structure ends the parenthetical content, it does not take its own period; instead, the period occurs outside the parentheses.

While you don't need two dashes if the parenthetical content occurs at the end of a sentence, you always need two parentheses—they occur in pairs. Furthermore, while dashes need to be used within a larger sentence, parentheses do not. If the parenthetical content is presented as its own unit, outside a sentence structure, the final punctuation belongs inside the parentheses:

- (18.58) Toothbrush and paste. I'm determined, when the time comes, to at least go out with clean teeth.
Gloves. Two pairs of socks, underwear, travel-size box of Tide, deodorant, and shampoo. (Gonna go out clean. See above.) (Yancey 2013: 16)

In this example, the parenthetical content is provided outside another sentence structure, and so the final punctuation is provided within the parentheses after *See above*.

Finally, within formal writing genres, especially academic writing, parentheses are used for parenthetical citations. For instance, the opening two sentences of Juana I. Marín Arrese and Begoña Núñez Perucha's (2006: 225-226) article "Evaluation and engagement in journalistic commentary in news reportage" are presented below:

(18.59) Recent studies within the tradition of Register and Genre Theory (Eggins and Martin 1997), and studies of text types in the media (Ungerer 2000), have aimed to discover and make visible the relation between genres, as goal-oriented and situation-based groupings of texts, and the actual features of the language used in different types of texts (cf. Biber 1988). López García (1996: 232) refers to two main typologies of media texts identified by Vilarnovo and Sánchez (1992, chapter VII): (i) anglosaxon typologies, which make a distinction between *stories* (hard news and soft news) and *comments* (cf. Bell 1991); and (ii) latin typologies, which relate genre to attitude, giving rise to four types of media genres: reporting attitude (reportage), interpretive attitude (society pages), opinion attitude (opinion columns and leading articles), and finally, entertaining attitude (cartoon strips).

Throughout, Marín Arrese and Núñez Perucha provide parenthetical citations. If the source is not explicitly mentioned in the sentence, the parenthetical citation includes the author(s) and year; if the source is explicitly mentioned, only the year and page/chapter number, when necessary, is provided. Style guides have specific methods for incorporating parenthetical citations, including the content required within them and its format. Furthermore, some style guides do not use parenthetical citations at all but instead use footnotes or endnotes. Academic writers need to be able to adjust their citation methods to match the appropriate style guide for the place of publication.

Practice Set 18.2 Punctuation

1. The punctuation from the following two passages has been entirely removed. Reinsert punctuation to create prescriptively grammatical sentences; your punctuation does not need to match the original—it just needs to be prescriptively correct. Within each passage, the only capital letters provided are ones that begin proper nouns, so as you punctuate the passages, you will also need to capitalize the first letter of each sentence you create. The passages were taken from Ellen Raskin's *The Westing Game* (1992[1978]: 8, 80).

(a) someone was spying on the group in the driveway from the front window of apartment 2D fifteen year old Chris Theodorakis watched his brother Theo shake hands it must be a bet with the skinny one pigtailed girl and rush into the lobby the family coffee shop would be busy now his brother should have been working the counter half an hour ago Chris checked the wall clock two more hours before Theo would bring up his dinner then he would tell him about the limper

- (b) the snowplows plowed and a warm sun finished the job of freeing the tenants of Sunset Towers and the figure in the Westing house from their wintry prisons Angela disguised in her mothers old beaver coat and hat and in Turtles red boots was the the first one out following Sydelles instructions she hastily searched under the hood of every car in the parking lot nothing was there nothing that is that didn't seem to belong to an automobile engine
2. Based on the prescriptive guidelines presented in this chapter, evaluate the punctuation used in the following sentence, taken from A.A. Milne's *The World of Pooh* (1957[1926]: 135). For each piece of punctuation, state why you believe it is being used, basing your assessment on grammatical constituents. If you feel any punctuation should be changed, provide a reason why.

In after-years he liked to think that he had been in Very Great Danger during the Terrible Flood, but the only danger he had really been in was the last half-hour of his imprisonment, when Owl, who had just flown up, sat on the branch of his tree to comfort him, and told him a very long story about an aunt who had once laid a seagull's egg by mistake, and the story went on and on, rather like this sentence, until Piglet who was listening out of his window without much hope, went to sleep quietly and naturally, slipping slowly out of the window towards the water until he was only hanging on by his toes, at which moment luckily, a sudden loud squawk from Owl, which was really part of this story, being what his aunt said, woke the Piglet up and just gave him time to jerk himself back into safety and say, "How interesting, and did she?" when—well, you can imagine his joy when at last he saw the good ship, *The Brain of Pooh* (Captain, C. Robin; *1st Mate*, P. Bear) coming over the sea to rescue him.

18.5 Written conventions and interpretation

Because punctuation and other written conventions aid in the creation of meaning in written texts, modern readers often rely on them to interpret meaning. Even a single punctuation mark in one spot can shift the interpretation of a larger document. In her book *Our Declaration: A reading of the Declaration of Independence in defense of equality*, Danielle Allen (2014) questions the use of a period in most modern copies of the Declaration of Independence. The relevant portion of the Declaration is reprinted below in its standard form:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

She compared multiple copies of the Declaration against each other and concluded that the period that often appears after the phrase *the pursuit of Happiness* was not originally a part of the document. Instead, she argues that an ink blot or smudge after the word *Happiness* was misinterpreted as a period in later readings, which affects the interpretation of the document. Inserting a period separates the text, leaving readers to assume the three self-evident truths are (1) “all men are created equal,” (2) “they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,” and (3) “among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” However, if the period is removed, the list of truths continues. Furthermore, Allen notes that the structure of what follows the supposed period fits into the sentence structure prior to it, which supports her conclusion that the period should be removed.

Many examples of punctuation interpretation rely on commas rather than periods. Tom Goldstein and Jethro K. Lieberman (1989) provide two examples of misused commas in legal writing. Michigan accidentally legalized slavery as a legitimate punishment in Section 8, Article 2 of its constitution: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime, shall ever be tolerated in this state” (quoted in Goldstein and Lieberman 1989: 171). Lawmakers later realized the mistake and fixed it. The first draft of the 1984 Republican platform condemned “any attempts to increase taxes which would harm the recovery,” condemning only those taxes that do harm the recovery, the revised version reads “any attempts to increase taxes, which would harm the recovery,” claiming *all* increased taxes would harm the recovery (171-172).

More recently, in 2015, Andrea Cammelleri won her case against the Village of West Jefferson in Ohio (*W. Jefferson v. Cammelleri*). Cammelleri contested a citation she had received for parking her truck on the street for longer than 24 hours, which violates the following West Jefferson city ordinance:

It shall be unlawful for any person to park upon any street in the Village, any motor vehicle camper, trailer, farm implement and/or non-motorized vehicle for a continued period of twenty-four hours.

Cammelleri argued she did not violate the ordinance because it prohibits parking a *motor vehicle camper* from parking on the street for a continued period—it doesn’t prohibit a truck. The city argued that common sense dictates the reading of *motor vehicle* and *camper* as two distinct constituents. However, the judge ruled in favor of Cammelleri, stating:

Finally, reading ‘motor vehicle camper’ as one item does not produce an absurd result. The definition of ‘motor vehicle camper’ is consistent with the Ohio Revised Code’s definition of ‘recreational vehicle.’ ... By utilizing rules of grammar and employing the common meaning of terms, ‘motor vehicle camper’ has a clear definition that does not produce an absurd result. If the village desires a different reading, it should amend the ordinance and insert a comma between the phrase ‘motor vehicle’ and the word ‘camper.’ (5)

Cammelleri won her case because of a missing comma.

Marcin (1977) writes about a case that hinged on deadly commas. In 1917, Sir Roger David Casement sought to rebel against the King of England by fighting for Irish freedom, and in his rebellion, he colluded with Germany. When colluding, he was in Germany—not England

—as he worked with the would-be traitors of the King. Casement and his crew were arrested before they could implement their plans, and Casement was charged with treason. The case relied on the Treason Act of 1351, which defines treason in England:

if a Man do levy War against our Lord the King in his Realm, or be adherent to the King's Enemies in his Realm, giving to them Aid and Comfort in his Realm, or elsewhere, and thereof be probably attained of open Deed by the People of their Condition ... that ought to be judged Treason

The issue of interpretation is defining the role of the phrase *or elsewhere*, which is separated by commas from the rest of the sentence structure. Casement's lawyer argued that "the treason statute prohibited ... adherence to the enemy on English soil by giving that enemy aid and comfort either on English soil or elsewhere (wherever the enemy was)" (Marcin 1977: 299). The prosecutor argued that the commas make the phrase *or elsewhere* outside the scope of the participial clause *giving them Aid and Comfort in his Realm*; instead, he argued that *or elsewhere* directly applied to the verb phrase *be adherent to the King's Enemies*. Casement ultimately lost the case and was sentenced to hang.

While punctuation and other written conventions in everyday writing will rarely—if ever—result in such dire consequences as these cases, they do provide writers the ability to inject emotion and intonation into messages. Deborah Tannen (2013) uses the following text message interaction between Jackie and a friend to demonstrate how particular writing conventions can carry emotional overtones, such as sincerity. The situational context for this interaction is that Jackie and a group of friends were leaving a restaurant together, and Jackie had stayed behind to wait for Melissa while all the other friends piled into a cab and left. Jackie then texted one of the friends in the group in the cab. In the interaction below, *J* stands for Jackie, and *F* stands for the friend, who remains unnamed.

- (18.60)J: Thanks for waiting for Melissa with me thats cool
 F: JACKIE I AM SO SO SORRY! I thought you were behind us in the cab and then I saw you weren't!!!! I feel soooooooooo bad! Catch another cab and ill pay for it for youuuuu
 J: no its fine we are walking
 F: seriously Jackie please, get a cab, I feel so bad!!!
 J: we are walking there its fine.

Tannen points out that the friend uses spelling conventions, specifically letter reduplication and capitalization, to add urgency and sincerity to her messages. In return, Jackie's texts let her friend know that she is not okay with being left behind through her lack of punctuation and capitalization, and she indicates finality in her final text of the interaction by ending it with a period. While her text may say the situation is *fine*, her language says it clearly isn't.

That same text message exchange written according to prescriptive punctuation and spelling conventions looks quite different:

- (18.61) J: Thanks for waiting for Melissa with me. That's cool.
 F: Jackie, I am so, so sorry. I thought you were behind us in the cab, and then I saw you weren't. I feel so bad. Catch another cab, and I'll pay for it for you.
 J: No, it's fine; we are walking.
 F: Seriously, Jackie, please get a cab. I feel so bad.
 J: We are walking there; it's fine.

Many texters will immediately sense a difference between the two interactions even though no words have changed—only the conventions used to write, punctuate, and format them have. This revised interaction feels distant and impersonal to the point where it doesn't sound like the two texters know each other very well. According to social expectations for texting, many people would judge this interaction as awkward or even socially unacceptable.

In some cases, the lack of capitalization or punctuation provides an emotional undertone for the message. For example, the only piece of punctuation the following tweet uses is the apostrophe in the contractions *i'd* and *don't*:

- (18.62) girl i really thought i'd be out here in my early 20s living my best life but here i am watching stupid youtube videos and shitty anime eating unhealthy fast food with the money i don't even have hoping some kinda magic will happen to me
 (Twitter, s e n s e i, @seupo, March 4, 2018)

Even without punctuation, the tweet is grammatical and unambiguous, so it is an easy message to follow from beginning to end. The lack of punctuation and capitalization lends a tone of sincerity—as if the author is providing unfiltered thoughts without overthinking the message or editing for content and grammar.

Revising the tweet to match standard written conventions of prescriptive grammar changes the flow of the content:

- (18.63) Girl, I really thought I'd be out here in my early 20s, living my best life, but here I am, watching stupid YouTube videos and shitty anime, eating unhealthy fast food with the money I don't even have, hoping some kind of magic will happen to me.

The message now reads as though it's been carefully thought through, which makes the opening *girl* vocative seem incongruous with the rest of the tweet. Because it reads a bit more formally, it loses its original stream-of-consciousness appeal. The underlying message itself doesn't necessarily change between the revisions; rather, the fully punctuated version loses some of the frankness and sincerity of the original.

How writers choose to punctuate and structure our sentences depends on the medium they choose for writing messages, whether it's email, text, Facebook messenger, or Twitter. The practices that differ across these platforms do not indicate a downfall in society and ability to write according to prescriptive rules; rather, those who choose to write in formal genres learn to “code-switch” among the different practices. In the same way that I choose different words and

grammatical structures depending on whether I'm giving a lecture in a college course, presenting at a professional conference, or talking with my family, I can employ written conventions, such as punctuation, differently depending on the audience, message, and medium. Those differences are not "bad" but reflect how expectations for language use change depending on the communication situation.

Formal written genres in English require prescriptive standards as a writer-based strategy for clear, efficient, and effective communication for a diverse audience of readers across both space and time. In these genres, written conventions, such as punctuation and capitalization, help clarify meaning and show connections within the content. The rules used for these formal genres are rooted in older practices of English and do not always match the conventions used in everyday writing, such as text messages or tweets. Informal writing tends to use written conventions as a method for conveying emotion, tone, and sincerity. Therefore, while punctuation tends to aid readers in parsing and connecting grammatical structures to create semantic meaning in formal written genres, punctuation is more likely to function as a pragmatic tool in informal written genres.

Practice Set 18.3 Punctuation and changing interpretations

On the following page is a Twitter story told in a thread by @oscarewilde in July 2018. Your job is to revise the tweets for punctuation and written conventions, compiling them into a written format you would expect to see for a short story written in a more formal genre. Make note of any revisions that change the tone, feeling, or message of the story.


@oscarewilde
Follow

i received this comically large pencil as a gift several years ago and my first thought, understandably, was 'what the christ am i meant to do with this?'



3:34 PM - 12 Jul 2018

42,155 Retweets 115,560 Likes

879 42K 116K

Tweet your reply


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

the 2nd thought i had was: I'm Quite Certain I Could Ruin Someone's Day With This. And so a while ago i took it in with me to a lecture, hoping against hope that whichever poor Fool was unfortunate enough to sit next to me might have forgotten or misplaced their writing implement

7 1.3K 22K


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

utilising The Pencil is also dependent on the person not using a laptop. So the chances of success are extraordinarily slim, and I've only managed to find suitable candidates three times in all of the dozens of occasions i've had The Pencil on my person

3 966 19K


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

i size up my target, watching them feign patting their pockets in vain for the ballpoint they so obviously left at home, and i wait, i wait for the blessed question.... Do You Have A Pen I Could Borrow?

6 1.1K 20K


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

'Oh', i say, 'I'm so sorry; I only have a pencil.' 'That's fine!' i hear them say, distantly now, as the blood is rushing to my ears and i can barely hear them. I maintain a straight face. This is key to the delivery and the final blow

11 1.7K 34K


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

I reach into my bag for The Pencil. The look of utter dumbfounded misery as i hand it to the victim is unparalleled in its sweetness. In an instant their eyes flicker through the 5 stages of grief, landing on acceptance, as they realise it's This or Nothing

18 2.2K 36K


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

still maintaining that eye contact i smile, only the tiniest fraction, the unspoken words forming between us. 'What are you gonna do now, huh? You feeling lucky, kiddo? Buddy? Buckaroo? You gonna kick up a fuss in this silent lecture theatre? Huh? Or will you take The Pencil?'

20 1.8K 33K


@oscarewilde · 12 Jul 2018

they Always take the pencil

161 5.1K 78K

Image 18.5 @oscarewilde's comically large pencil

Terms introduced in Chapter 18

Punctuation

accent mark
 apostrophe
 colon
 comma
 dash
 double quotation marks
 ellipses
 exclamation point
 hyphen
 parentheses
 period
 question mark
 semicolon
 single quotation marks
 slash
 square brackets

Concepts

comma splice
 faulty parallelism
 formal genres
 Oxford comma
 scare quotes

Chapter 18 Exercises

Exercise 18.1

The following sentences were taken from ten different movie reviews, all for the same movie: *Werewolf*, directed by Ashley McKenzie. Though the sentences are reviews of the same movie, they range in degrees of complexity. As you annotate the sentences, consider how word choice, constituent structures, and punctuation play a role in creating a reading experience for the intended readers.

1. There's a peculiar series of images that have a slightly goofy allure—extreme closeups of the ridges and whorls that Nessa learns to make with soft ice cream as she swirls it into cones—and this delight is a central aspect of the drama. (Richard Brody's review in *The New Yorker*, March 2, 2018)
2. The elliptical narrative structure articulates a sad truth of the addict's life concerning both the challenge and the tedium of making it through to the next fix. (Glenn Kenny's review in *The New York Times*, February 28, 2018)
3. McKenzie deserves credit for revealing such a troubling facet of her homeland, and even if the shallow focus—both literal and figurative—of her movie can be frustrating at times, she bravely never turns away. (Jordan Mintzer's review on *The Hollywood Reporter*, February 10, 2017)
4. Shot almost entirely in oblique close-ups to capture the disorientation and frustration of McKenzie's characters, twentysomething junkies Blaise and Vanessa, *Werewolf* doggedly and courageously refuses to romanticize its characters lives. (Review on *Rotten Tomatoes*)
5. While not part of the horror genre, it captures many of the emotions that make those films great—approaching monsters, feelings of isolation and abandonment, the tension that exists

between the “believers” and everyone else. (Christopher Schobert’s review on *The Playlist*, September 12, 2016)

6. Individual shots are framed with a randomness that doubtless is more apparent than real, enhancing the illusion that McKenzie is merely observing, and not controlling, the fates of her characters. (Joe Leydon’s review on *Variety*, September 20, 2016)
7. She edited the film herself, creating a rhythm that’s slightly jumpy without crossing the line into jagged cold-turkey cliché, and gets effortlessly natural performances from her two leads, neither of whom has acted onscreen before (save for Gillis’ role in one of McKenzie’s earlier shorts). (Mike D’Angelo’s review on *AV Club*, February 27, 2017)
8. But while *Werewolf* may show signs, even a happy ending will prove far from joyous. (Jared Mobarak’s review on *The Film Stage*, September 9, 2016)
9. McKenzie keeps the camera close on Vanessa, scrutinizing her acne, the hair that’s almost unifying her eyebrows, and a variety of other indignities that litter the lives of those who can’t afford to take anything for granted. (Chuck Bowen’s review on *Slant Magazine*, February 25, 2018)
10. After all the film’s earlier off-center angles, McKenzie puts these objects in the middle of the frame, as if to suggest an almost Zen sense of routine and balance creeping into Nessa’s life, taking her further and further from Blaise’s sharp, twitchy reality. (Bilge Ebiri’s review in *The Village Voice*, February 27, 2018)

Exercise 18.2

Find the following punctuation uses in natural text, and annotate the relevant constituents.

1. comma separating constituents in a series
2. comma (with or without a coordinator) separating independent clauses
3. comma separating phrase or dependent clause structure from the rest of the sentence
4. semicolon between two complete sentences with linking adverb
5. semicolon between two complete sentences without linking adverb
6. dash(es) or parentheses separating additional information from the sentence structure
7. quotation marks for dialogue or direct quotation
8. scare quotes
9. hyphen
10. ellipses

Exercise 18.3

Find an informal text online (e.g., blog posting, long Facebook status, Amazon review) of at least 250 words to analyze in terms of its punctuation use.

Highlight each piece of punctuation and insert a brief notation to indicate why the punctuation is used in that particular context (as in Practice Set 18.2 for the *Winnie the Pooh* sentence).

In at least one paragraph, answer the following questions:

- Does it follow all prescriptive rules of grammar?
- How does punctuation affect the flow of the text?
- Would it be beneficial to add in and/or change punctuation within the text? Why, or why not?
- Is the text effective? Why, or why not?

Epilogue: Grammar IRL

*I wanted a perfect ending... Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Like my life, this book has ambiguity. Like my life, this book is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity... —Gilda Radner, *It's Always Something* (1989: 254)*

Throughout this book, I relied on natural language data rather than constructed sentences. **Constructed sentences** are created as a pedagogical tool by a teacher or textbook editor to target specific concepts for a particular lesson and introduce students to a particular skill. While constructed sentences can help pinpoint specific issues the students need to focus on, those constructed sentences grammatically differ from the sentences students encounter in their everyday reading. **Natural language data**, or authentic sentences, exist because of organic reasons, which means they are written by an author for a communicative purpose to reach an intended audience. Crawford and Csomay (2016: 8) define two key features of authentic sentences: they are “produced for reasons other than linguistic investigation,” and they “represent actual language use.”

For instance, the following set of constructed sentences comes from a series of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt worksheets;¹⁴⁹ the instructions with this set asks students to identify the subject and predicate in each sentence:

- (e.1) a. This new car is a blue-and-white four-door sedan.
- b. It has a sunroof and an automatic transmission.
- c. The leather seats feel comfortable.
- d. Dual air bags make the car very safe.
- e. Our family's new car is a small one with a big trunk.
- f. It gets thirty miles per gallon of gas.

All six sentences in this set are simple sentences with only one subject and one predicate. Furthermore, the subjects are all noun phrases that occur at the beginning of the sentence, and the predicate is headed by a short verb phrase that consists of a single lexical verb, which immediately follows the subject.

I turned to COCA to find six authentic sentences on a similar topic—a description of a four-door sedan—and found the following:

- (e.2) a. Small cars are no longer an afterthought at GM.
- b. First came the surprisingly slick Cruze, and now the diminutive Sonic arrives this fall.
- c. The four-door sedan or hatchback replaces the Aveo, a rebadged Daewoo that was such a dreadful piece, it's no wonder Chevy gave its new tiny tot a fresh name.

¹⁴⁹ I found these worksheets at this website: <<http://teachersites.schoolworld.com/webpages/RSiczek/files/lhb%20subj%20pred%20practice%20and%20key.pdf>>.

- d. Two four-cylinder engines—a 1.8-liter or a turbo 1.4—reside behind a distinctive row of four exposed headlights that suggests the designers worked to give this economy car some style.
- e. Its inside is simple but attractive, and there's room for a pair of 6-footers in the rear seat.
- f. Plus, the Sonic is a terrific drive.

While all six sentences in the constructed set are simple sentences, the sentences in the COCA set have a variety of sentence types with varying numbers of subjects and predicates in each one. Several sentences feature embedded clauses, both finite and non-finite. The subjects in the COCA set are not always at the beginning of the sentence; in fact, two subjects appear after the verb. The only commonalities between these two sets is that the subjects are noun phrases, and all the short verb phrases are comprised of a single lexical verb. Constructed data sets do not match the complexity and variation of natural language.

The three methods I used for finding natural language data while writing this book are the following: (1) grabbing a nearby book and searching for examples; (2) using a search engine, such as *GoogleBooks*, by plugging in a key word or phrase, such as “will have been” or “to have been being;” and (3) using COCA, which is a tagged corpus. Being a tagged corpus means every word in COCA carries a searchable lexical category label, so I can search for specific words or phrases (e.g., *dog*, *the dog*), specific strings of lexical categories (e.g., a noun followed by past-participle form of a verb followed by a preposition), or a mix of those two (e.g., *dog* followed by a preposition). While searching for authentic sentences takes time and patience, Chafe (1991: 88) notes that “corpora are ... closer to reality.” These authentic sentences reflect the creativity and diversity of language use in a way that constructed sentences cannot. Even linguists who spend their lives devoted to studying language use have said that they learn new things about language when they use corpora (Fillmore 1991; Norrick 2008; Sinclair 1994).

We use language on a daily basis, yet all of us are bad at identifying how we use language—our linguistic intuitions are flawed, partially due to selective attention. Zwicky (2006) writes that our selective attention makes us “notic[e] things that are salient to us, disregarding the rest.” We need to focus only on the salient details that matter to us because, as Mlodinow (2012: 64) notes, it helps us “avoid [cognitive] clutter by retaining the gist but freely discarding the details. As a result ... we can accurately remember surface structure—the words in which [something] was said—for just eight to ten seconds.” Because we disregard so many details and forget the actual structures used, our resulting linguistic “impressions are unreliable” (Zwicky 2005).

Furthermore, Zwicky (2006) notes that we suffer from several illusions when it comes to language use. The recency illusion makes us believe that linguistic patterns we've only recently become aware of are new in language. The out-group illusion leads us to believe that any linguistic feature or pattern we don't personally use is “bad” English. Finally, the frequency illusion (also called the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon) leads us to believe this feature we have started noticing occurs all the time or at least more frequently than it really does.

For example, Edna is a 50-something professional who regularly uses text messages to communicate with clients. One day, she notices that a client uses *lol* to end the text message instead of a period. Because Edna believes she has never seen that in a text message before, she

assumes it is a new development in language use (*recency illusion*) that reflects how society is going downhill, with all these young kids degrading our language (*out-group illusion*). After she sees that *lol* in text message, she suddenly starts seeing that pattern everywhere she turns, which makes her believe that it happens in almost every form of written communication (*frequency illusion*). Until something is “salient,” we don’t notice it; once we start noticing it, we tend to focus too much on those examples, causing us to believe they are more frequent than they are. Furthermore, if it is a feature we don’t like, we tend to associate it with other groups (i.e., the younger generation) and label it as a feature of “bad” English.

Along with our flawed intuitions of language use, we suffer from a limited imagination. Chafe (1991) refers to constructed sentences as artificial and manipulated language because, when constructing sentences, we are affected by at least two types of priming. We are more likely to rely on a limited vocabulary range of word diversity due to semantic priming. For instance, I ask a class of students to give me an example of a noun, and one student shouts, “Dog!” Invariably, the next student either provides another animal, such as *cat* or *horse*, or another one-syllable concrete noun, such as *man*, *box*, or *house*. We are also more likely to produce grammatical structures we have recently seen or used due to syntactic priming. Gries (2005) and Goldberg and Bencini (2005) note the connections among semantic and syntactic priming, which means specific words can prime us to think of a grammatical pattern. For instance, if we need a verb, and we think of *give*, we will be more likely to create sentences with ditransitive structures because *give* primed us for that grammatical pattern.

For example, if I create a set of constructed sentences and write “Jolene threw a banana” as the first sentence, the next sentences I write are more likely to fit into the same patterns: sentences that rely on simple noun phrases and feature an animate subject followed by a transitive dynamic verb in the active voice. In fact, when writing that example sentence, the next sentence I thought of was “She ate an apple.”

Relying only on constructed sentences provides a disconnect between the concepts being taught and the ways language is actually used in everyday writing. As another example comparison, the following ten sentences were taken from a worksheet intended for high school students; again, the directions were to identify the subjects and predicates in each sentence.

- (e.3)
- a. Williamsburg is a restored colonial town in Virginia.
 - b. At this tourist attraction, costumed guides show visitors around their town.
 - c. In the springtime, gardens are filled with daffodils and tulips.
 - d. Hungry tourists enjoy dinners in candle-lit taverns and restaurants.
 - e. Uniformed soldiers perform maneuvers on the commons to the delight of both children and adults.
 - f. At some sites, craftspersons practice long-forgotten arts such as blacksmithing and candlemaking.
 - g. Williamsburg served as the capitol of the Virginia Colony from 1699 to 1779.
 - h. In 1765, Patrick Henry delivered his famous speech in the Williamsburg Capitol.

- i. English colonists chose the site for its good soil drainage and pleasant climate.
- j. At first, residents called the colony Middle Plantation.

This set shows more diversity than the first constructed set, yet every sentence is a simple sentence structure with a noun phrase functioning as the subject.

The types of sentences those same high school students encounter in their everyday reading are more likely to look like these authentic sentences:

- (e.4) a. In fairy-tales, witches always wear silly black hats and black cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks. (*The Witches*)
- b. In a city called Stonetown, near a port called Stonetown Harbor, a boy named Reynie Muldoon was preparing to take an important test. (*The Mysterious Benedict Society*)
- c. The sun sets in the west (just about everyone knows that), but Sunset Towers faced east. (*The Westing Game*)
- d. There will be no awakening. (*The 5th Wave*)
- e. My mother drove me to the airport with the windows rolled down. (*Twilight*)
- f. “Movies don’t count,” Cooper says. (*Swim the Fly*)
- g. The Hopewell has been a family-run institution on the Upper East Side for over seventy-five years. (*Suite Scarlett*)
- h. When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow. (*To Kill a Mockingbird*)
- i. Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. (*Rebecca*)
- j. A throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods, and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes. (*The Scarlet Letter*)

The sentences we create for communicative purposes are more likely to feature a variety of constituents within more complex sentence structures.

Another issue with constructed sentences is that we construct them based on our own dialect, but natural language data helps us to find patterns that exist in a variety of dialects. The following examples from J.K. Rowling’s (2003) *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* highlight phrases that are associated with British English:

- (e.5) a. Oh yeah, it went down a storm once they understood what it was (428)
 b. he was making rather a meal of ensuring that his poster of the Kenmore Quidditch team was quite straight. (217)
 c. “I know, mate,” said Ron sympathetically, tipping bacon onto Harry’s plate, “she’s bang out of order.” (319)

These sentences include British expressions that many American readers are not familiar with, like *went down a storm* and *making a meal of [something]*. The third example uses *bang* as an adverb—something not seen in most varieties of American English.

Even within American English, there are dialectal differences that result in different grammatical patterns. For instance, the following examples include linguistic features that appear in some American English dialects but not others.

(e.6) ***to a person* = ‘everyone’**

- a. Politicians and oil barons, lawyers and historians, shipping titans and ne’er-do-wells: to a person, they loved Ivy, had fully embraced her and, by association, Eleanor and Joe. (Semple 2016: 137-138)
 b. To a person they needed moisturizer. (Semple 2016: 235)

***be fixing to* = ‘be going to’**

- c. people like me, what they call Baby Boomers, are fixing to retire. (COCA)
 d. He’s also fixing to buy Kevin Costner’s palazzo (COCA)

***anymore* = ‘these days’**

- e. Anymore, we’re all winners.
 f. Anymore he didn’t eat breakfast.

Searching for natural language data provides the possibility for finding patterns like these that you may not use in your everyday language but that exist in English as valid grammatical patterns used by other speakers and writers.

Authentic sentences also provide examples of linguistic creativity that stretch our imaginations by taking predictable grammatical patterns and filling them with unexpected or even nonexistent words. For example, in one scene of *I Love Lucy*, Lucy walks into the living room, where her husband, Ricky, is playing the card game Solitaire on the table. She asks Ricky what they should do for the evening, suggesting that they visit Mertzes, their friends and neighbors, to play some cards. Ricky responds that he doesn’t feel like going anywhere or playing cards. That scene leads to the following interaction:

- (e.7) LUCY: What do you call what you’re doing here?
 RICKY: Tiddlywinks.
 LUCY: Lay your black tiddly on your red wink. (Daniels 1952)

The word play in this interaction relies on Lucy taking apart the compound *tiddlywinks*, which refers to a specific game, and applying it to Ricky's ongoing Solitaire game. It's grammatically interesting because *tiddly* on its own is an adjective, yet she's using it here as a noun, and the noun *wink* cannot normally be modified by an adjective like *red*, yet here it is.

This process of conversion, where a word is used in an unexpected lexical category, allows writers to package meaning in new ways. One of my favorite examples of words being used in new ways comes from the local news show on NBC; it was a rather hot summer, and they did a segment on “rednecking the weather:”



Image E.1 *Rednecking* as a verb

The news correspondent in charge of the segment walked viewers through methods people could “[beat] the Texas heat” in ways that might be associated with rednecks, such as a cooler filled with ice and connected to a fan in the back of an SUV (“redneck” or not, that’s genius).

Grammar provides consistent patterns that writers can fill in new, inventive ways, creating connections between the meaning of the word and a different lexical category, as in the following examples:

- (e.8) a. And then I was like, “Whatever, bitches.” And the bitches whatevered. (online meme)
- b. I keep thinking oh man, I’m so immature. How am I allowed to be an adult. Then I spend time with teenagers. And it’s like, wow, okay, yeah. I am an adult. I am so adult. Look at me adulting all over the place. (snh-snh-snh, Tumblr)¹⁵⁰
- c. Today is the Mondayest Tuesday ever. (Valarie Wilcox, spoken)
- d. I less than 3 you, Lacey!!! (Sayard Harris, Facebook)

When writers play with words by changing their lexical categories in ways that have never been recorded before, readers or listeners can still gain meaning from the new uses by making connections with the word’s typical meaning and associating it with a new grammatical form.

¹⁵⁰ Based on what I can track down, the original source for this particular content is the user snh-snh-snh on Tumblr from a post in October 2014: <<http://snh-snh-snh.tumblr.com/post/82629530771/i-keep-thinking-oh-man-im-so-immature-how-am-i>>.

Therefore, the verb *whatever* in (a) can be defined as taking a nonchalant attitude or bugging off. In (b), *I am so adult* treats *adult* like an adjective with the degree adverb *so*, and *adulting* is the verb form, meaning ‘to behave in a manner expected of an adult’ or ‘to achieve goals people associate with being an adult.’ The proper noun *Monday* becomes an adjective in (c), representing our general cultural dislike of Mondays, which Americans tend to associate with being tired and maybe a bit grumpy and disoriented. In example (d), rather than saying “I heart you,” which turns the noun *heart* into a verb, Sayard chooses to describe the heart shape, using *less than 3* to represent the heart shape <3.

As another example, in the “Not Hell nor High Water” episode of *Say Yes to the Dress* (Inge 2007), a bride walks out in a dress that she loves, calling it *gorge* and *gorgiana* (both forms of *gorgeous*), and says this statement:

(e.9) It looks beyond.

This use of *beyond* treats it as an adjective, meaning something along the lines of ‘beyond words’ or ‘awesome.’ Or, as some might say, “I can’t even.” While some prepositions are morphing into standalone adverbs, the subordinator *because* has recently morphed into a preposition (e.g., *because science*).

Rachel Clink (2016) analyzes the word *deadass* (or *dead ass*) on social media, demonstrating that the adjective-plus-noun compound is being used as an adverb. For example, tweets with this use of *deadass* include the following:

- (e.10) a. daehwi apologising the soul out of himself but woojin just deadass stared at the ghost & walked past (@alpaca woojin, my guardian angel, Aug. 10, 2017)
- b. Deadass tired of this single shit now but when you give mfs a chance they don’t know how to act for shit 😭 (@YOUNGBOYMLB, Diablo, Aug. 10, 2017)
- c. harry deadass duct taped his jeans and wore them around like this (@cuddlingzjm, shan, Aug. 10, 2017)
- d. I’m deadass gonna sleep all day 😭 (@artbaee, Lauryn, Aug. 11, 2017)
- e. I deadass thank my mom so much for always being here for me through good and bads ! (@alejandre_gorge, Gorge, Aug. 11, 2017)
- f. We deadass have 3200 students this year. If someone sneezes, we’re all catching the bubonic plague 😭😭 I’m not ready yall (@ElijahAkpan, Elijah, Aug. 10, 2017)
- g. I would deadass give my man every password to every social media and be so unbothered (@Seytenn, Aug. 9, 2017)
- h. I deadass did a wholeass shoot w a dog (@plvcve, robert, Aug. 9, 2017)
- i. Louis deadass used sign language to say “H you’re mine” in the interview. (@2hearts_larry, Min, Aug. 7, 2017)
- j. Shoutout to women. Y’all are deadass beautiful (@kyle_christian7, grovvyK, Aug. 7, 2017)

Deadass can be used as a degree adverb (e.g., *deadass tired*, *deadass beautiful*) or an adverb providing information about the speaker's stance (e.g., *just deadass stared at the ghost*, *deadass have 3200 students*). Speakers tend to use swear words like these in increasingly creative ways, providing many possibilities for grammatical analyses.

Writers also use derivational patterns to create entirely new words. My son, who was eleven at the time, used the following statement to describe what happened to a vampire who turned to dust when he was exposed to sunlight:

(e.11) He was vampirized.

He used a blend of *vampire* and the verb form *vaporize* to create a new word, a process frequently used in natural language use that is unlikely to show up in constructed language data.

Without using natural language data, we would remain unaware of these intricacies in how we apply grammatical patterns in our everyday language. And so, if you truly want to learn features of grammar in real life, you need to look for authentic language data.

Appendix I: Annotation scheme

A one-page summary of the annotation scheme is presented on the final page of this appendix. Using keyboard shortcuts as you annotate will allow you to more efficiently insert annotations, and the table below summarizes some helpful shortcuts for the annotation scheme for both Word (on PC and Mac) and Pages (on Mac only).

	Word		Pages
	PC	Mac	Mac
superscript	CTRL =	command +	control command +
subscript	CTRL +	command =	control command -
bold	CTRL b	command b	command b
underline	CTRL u	command u	command u
left double guillemet	ALT 0171	option \	option \
right double guillemet	ALT 0187	shift option \	shift option \
cut	CTRL x	command x	command x
copy	CTRL c	command c	command c
paste	CTRL v	command v	command v
page break	CTRL enter	fn command return	fn command return
undo	CTRL z	command z	command z
redo	CTRL y	shift command z	shift command z

Table A1.1 Keyboard shortcuts

Along with these standard shortcuts, you can customize toolbars and keyboard shortcuts to make your word processing software work more efficiently for you.

As mentioned in the preface, one major benefit of the annotation scheme is that it is fully searchable within typed documents, which helps if you are working on large projects and want to find all instances of, for example, pronouns or direct objects. You can search by individual words, form superscripts, function subscripts, or even phrase/clause boundary markers. In most word processors, the find feature is accessed by hitting control-F on a Windows computer or command-F on a Mac. All screenshots within this appendix are taken from a Word document on a Mac, and all searches are performed on an annotated version of Sarah Addison Allen's (2010) essay "Just So You Know."

In Microsoft Word, the best way to perform these searches is by using the navigation pane. That option can be located under the View tab; once you've selected the box next to "Navigation Pane," you need to select the search icon, which is the magnifying glass, from the four options at the top of the side navigation pane.

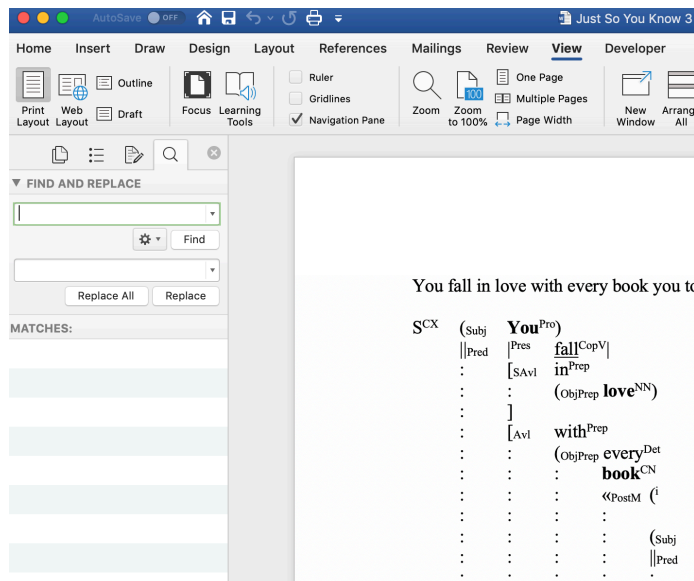


Image A1.1 Navigation pane in Word

In the Find search box, you can type whatever you're searching for. For instance, typing *book* into the search bar will return results for every instance of the form *book* in the document, providing a list form in the navigation pane and highlighting the instances in the body of the document.

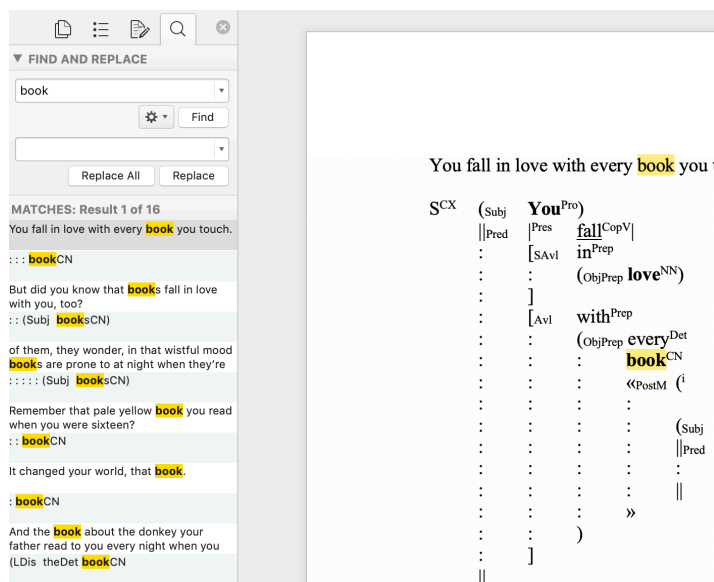


Image A1.2 Searching for a word within a document

The navigation pane provides the number of matches within the document, and my document has 16 instances of *book*.

You can search by any label to identify the instances of a particular type of word or function. For instance, searching for *CopV* will identify all the copular verbs within the document.

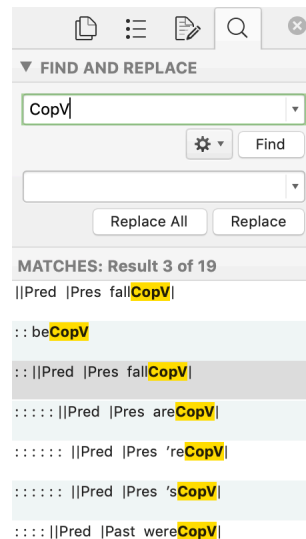


Image A1.3 Searching for all copular verbs

The results show a list of copular verbs with limited context. To see any of those verbs in its larger context within the document, you can click on the result to be taken to its location in the document. These general searches are not perfect, as some labels could match orthographical words in your document, such as *Prep* appearing in words like *prepped*, *preparation*, and *preparatory*, so you still need to look through your results to ensure they are relevant. There are methods for limiting results, and I will introduce you to a few of those in this appendix, but you can find many more online.

You can search by punctuation, too,¹⁵¹ which means you can also use the bounding markers in the annotation scheme for your searches. For example, you can search *(DObj* to identify nominal elements functioning as direct objects within the document.

¹⁵¹ For nearly all special characters, you can simply type the character you want in the find box, including spaces. If you want to search for a caret, however, you need to type two carets in a row in the search box. For instance, typing *^DiscM* will show all results of inserted phrases functioning as discourse markers. You can also search by character codes. For instance, searching for *^0199* will provide a list of every opening double guillemet («) in the document.

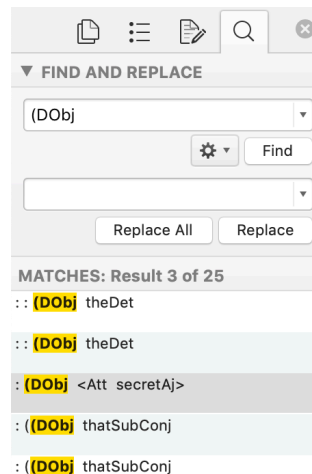


Image A1.4 Searching for nominal direct objects

As you can see in the image, noun phrases and nominal clauses appear in the results. If you want to limit the search to nominal clauses, you can simply add the second parenthesis to the search bar: *((DObj*. If, however, you want to search only for noun phrases, you can use *^t* to indicate a tab needs to appear before the parenthesis.

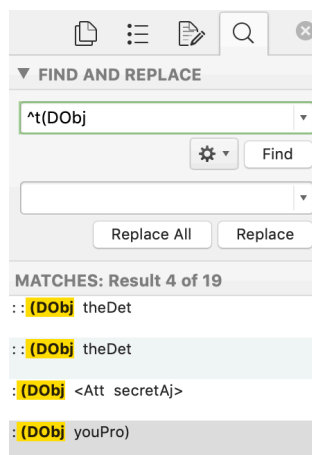


Image A1.5 Searching for NP as direct object

The results are now limited to noun phrases that function as a direct object.

If you want to find something more advanced, you need to learn how to use wildcards. For instance, if you want to find all nouns at once (regardless of type), you need to perform an advanced search because searching for *N* will provide too many unwanted results. Under the search bar, there is a gear, and clicking on that gear provides a list of options, including “Advanced Find & Replace.”

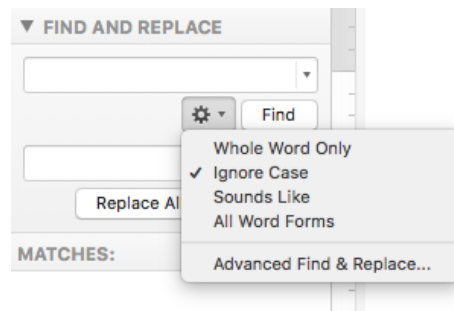


Image A1.6 Advanced find and replace in Word

After clicking on that option, a pop-up menu box appears, and in the bottom left-hand corner of that box, is a downward-pointing caret, which you need to click on to expand the full range of options. From the list in the expanded half of the box, you need to select “Use wildcards.”

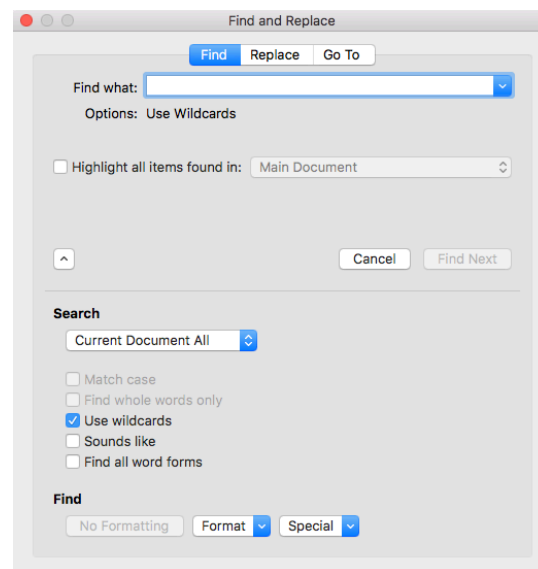


Image A1.7 Use wildcards feature in Word

I will show you two possible wildcard search types that you can do on Word, but these are not the only ones available to you.

Square brackets in wildcard mode indicate options, telling Word you want one of the options presented within the brackets. For instance, if I want my search results to show all nouns, I need to consider how nouns are labeled: CN, NN, CollN, and PropN. All these labels share one feature, the final *N*, which means I want to use the *N* as a non-optional part of my search, so it should not appear in square brackets. To find all four of these labels at one time, I want all instances of *N* preceded by either *C*, *N*, *l*, or *p*. In these searches, capitalization matters, so my search terms need to be typed precisely as *[CNlp]N*.

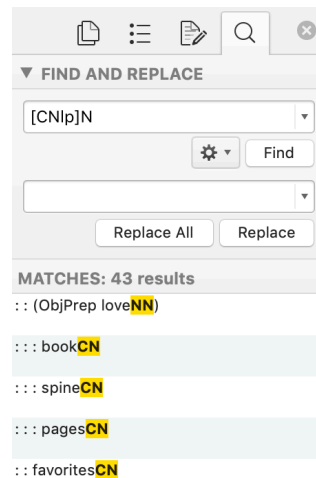


Image A1.8 Finding all nouns, regardless of type

This more advanced search shows me I have 43 instances of nouns in my document. As a quick guide, here are some more searches you can do with square brackets:

- [pt]V — for all verb types
- S[SCf] — for all sentence types, to quickly count the number of sentence structures

These searches are inclusive—that is, they'll provide you a list of any result that matches any of those options.

Sometimes, though, you may want to exclude options, which requires an exclamation point within square brackets alongside at least one option in the search bar, as in *[!p]*. For instance, if you want to find instances of adverbial constituents (whether they are adverb phrases, adverb clauses, or noun phrases), you can type *Avl* into the search bar. The results will include any constituent functioning as any type of adverbial: adjunct adverbial (*Avl*), subject adverbial (*SAvl*), and object adverbial (*OAvl*). To search for all instances of adjunct adverbials, I can search for *[!SO]Avl* and see a list of all instances of *Avl* as its own label.

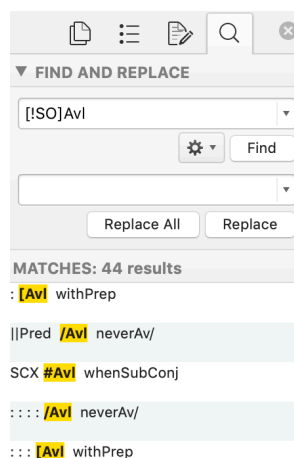


Image A1.9 Finding all adverbial adjuncts

With those wildcards in place, the 44 matches on the results list include only those functioning as adjunct elements.

Microsoft Word has one of the best search features of word processors because it shows lists with context and numbers of results while allowing for advanced, finessed searches. Of course, the reliability of these searches depends on the reliability of your annotations, including correct labels, boundary marks, and spelling.

The final page of this appendix provides a one-page summary of the full annotation scheme used throughout the book.

Annotation Scheme

S^{Type}I^F pre-nucleus slot(s)

subject

- ||_{Pred} (1) each grammatical word on its own line (compounds on one line)
 : (2) tab in constituents so sisters are aligned
 : (3) one-word phrasal constituents close at the end of a single line
 : (4) bounding markers of longer constituents align, connected by “trickle-down” colons
 : (5) line up coordinated constituents with coordinator between
 ||

Lexical level

NOUN	noun ^N	count ^{CN}	non-count ^{NN}	collective ^{CollN}	proper ^{PropN}
VERB	<u>intransitive</u> ^{ItV}	<u>copular</u> ^{CopV}	<u>monotransitive</u> ^{MtV}	<u>ditransitive</u> ^{DtV}	<u>complex-transitive</u> ^{CtV}
AUX	primary ^{PriAux}	modal ^{ModAux}	semi-modal ^{SemiAux}		

adjective ^{Aj}	adverb ^{Av}	determiner ^{Det}	preposition ^{Prep}
pronoun ^{Pro}	coordinator ^{CoConj}	subordinator ^{SubConj}	negator ^{Neg}
infinitive ^{Inf}	insert ^{Insert}	existential ‘there’ ^{Exist}	

OTHER FORMS interrogative^{IntPro, IntDet, IntAv} relative^{RelPro, RelDet, RelAv} pro-form^{ProV, ProAv}

Phrasal level

(function noun phrase)	[Avl, SAVl, OAvl, PMod, Comp preposition phrase]
<SPred, OPred, Att, PMod adjective phrase>	/Avl, SAVl, OAvl, Deg, DiscM adverb phrase/
TMAV short verb phrase	Pred long verb phrase

TMAV superscripts

TENSE/MOOD	present ^{Pres}	past ^{Past}	modality ^{Mod}	non-finite ^{NF}
ASPECT	perfect ^{Perf}	progressive ^{Prog}	perfect progressive ^{PerfProg}	
VOICE	active	passive ^{Pass}		

Clausal level

//Avl adverb clause//	<<PMod, NRM relative clause>>	((Subj, DObj, SPred, Comp nominal clause))
#function non-finite clause#	@Quot quotative clause@	{Paren, DiscM, TagQ special clause}
^Paren, DiscM special phrase^		

Functions with their subscripts (if any)

subject ^{Subj}	predicate ^{Pred}	
direct object ^{DObj}	indirect object ^{IObj}	object of preposition ^{ObjPrep}
subject predicative ^{SPred}	object predicative ^{OPred}	
attributive ^{Att}	degree ^{Deg}	discourse marker ^{DiscM}
post-modifier ^{PostM}	complement ^{Comp}	non-restrictive modifier ^{NRM}
adverbial ^{Avl}	subject adverbials ^{SAVl}	object adverbial ^{OAvl}
quotative ^{Quot}	parenthetical ^{Paren}	tag question ^{TagQ}
vocative ^{Voc}	cleft ^{Cleft}	extraposition ^{ExtP}

Sentence superscripts

TYPE	simple SM	compound ^{CD}	complex ^{CX}	compound-complex ^{CC}	fragment ^{frag}
ILL. FORCE	declarative	interrogative ^{Int}	imperative ^{Imp}	exclamatory ^{Exc}	

Other features GAP

index markerⁱ

Appendix II: Syntax infographic

The final page of this appendix provides a syntax infographic, which serves as a one-page summary for common semantic definitions, morphological features, syntactic environments, grammatical forms, and grammatical functions that have been presented throughout the text. Each piece of information is overlaid with another on the infographic, which creates layers and provides a reminder that understanding the form and function of an individual constituent requires understanding how it fits within its given context. Information about each constituent type is presented and described throughout the text, so the information presented in the summary below focuses on *how* to read the infographic.

All lexical category labels include a brief etymological definition of the term to help connect the term to the role within the clause for that lexical category. The five major phrase types have their own color-coded boxes with an all-caps label attached to the outside of the box to indicate its type, such as the label *NP* on the green noun phrase box. Within the phrase box, the head word is written in bold and all-caps, such as *PREPOSITION* in the purple preposition phrase box. All phrase boxes include the following information about its head word(s): basic semantic definition, brief overview of morphological inflections and derivations (if applicable), and lexical examples. Situated within the noun phrase and verb phrase boxes are dashed-line ovals, which present specifying words that support head words within those phrases, so auxiliaries support head verbs, and determiners support head nouns.

The overlapping of boxes represents the potential for syntactic embedding; for instance, the adjective phrase box overlaps with two others to indicate that an *AjP* can occur within a noun phrase or verb phrase. Where constituents overlap, a typical function or list of functions is provided inside a small color-coded circle; for example, when an *AvP* occurs within an *AjP*, the *AvP* will likely take the degree function. All constituents operate within the clause box because the clause is at the highest level of the syntactic hierarchy.

Within the *VP* box, the major valency types are provided, each connected to its function(s) for required arguments within the predicate. When a verb type requires more than one argument, it has more than one line beside its name, so ditransitive and complex-transitive have two lines. When more than one option is presented for the function of the required argument, a single line splits off into two; for instance, a copular verb requires one argument that can take either the subject predicative or subject adverbial function. The function circles are connected to the grammatical forms typically associated with the function via color-coded lines, such as the object adverbial function connecting with the forms *PP* and *AvP*.

Arrows represent a more complex possibility for embedding; when possible, a likely function (or set of functions) for the embedded constituent is provided in the arrowhead. For instance, a clause can be embedded within a *PP*, and the embedded clause is likely functioning as the object of preposition. The arrow that represents the potential embedding of a clause inside a *VP* does not list any associated functions because there are too many possible functions for an embedded clause to fit on the arrowhead.

Solid-colored ovals represent connecting words, and the lines extending from the ovals demonstrate potential constituents being connected. The coordinator has double-lined

connections, which reflect the job of a coordinator to hold two or more equal constituents together; furthermore, the double lines connect to forms, reflecting the fact that coordinators often join two or more constituents of the same grammatical form. The subordinator has single-line connections to the NP, VP, and clause to reflect its basic use as a word that introduces an NP and VP while embedding the structure within a higher-level clause.

Small stand-alone boxes represent the four lexical categories that can function in a variety of ways and typically have a smaller inventory of possible words that fit into the part of speech label. Three of those categories (negator, infinitive marker, and existential) have only one word that fits into its box. The relative isolation of these boxes represents their use as clausal elements that can interact with other constituents in unique ways.

The information on the infographic is not exhaustive. For example, not all functions are included on the infographic, including the major functions subject and predicate—two functions typically found at the clausal level. To maximize readability and to focus on the more basic connections that students need help remembering, some information has been omitted.

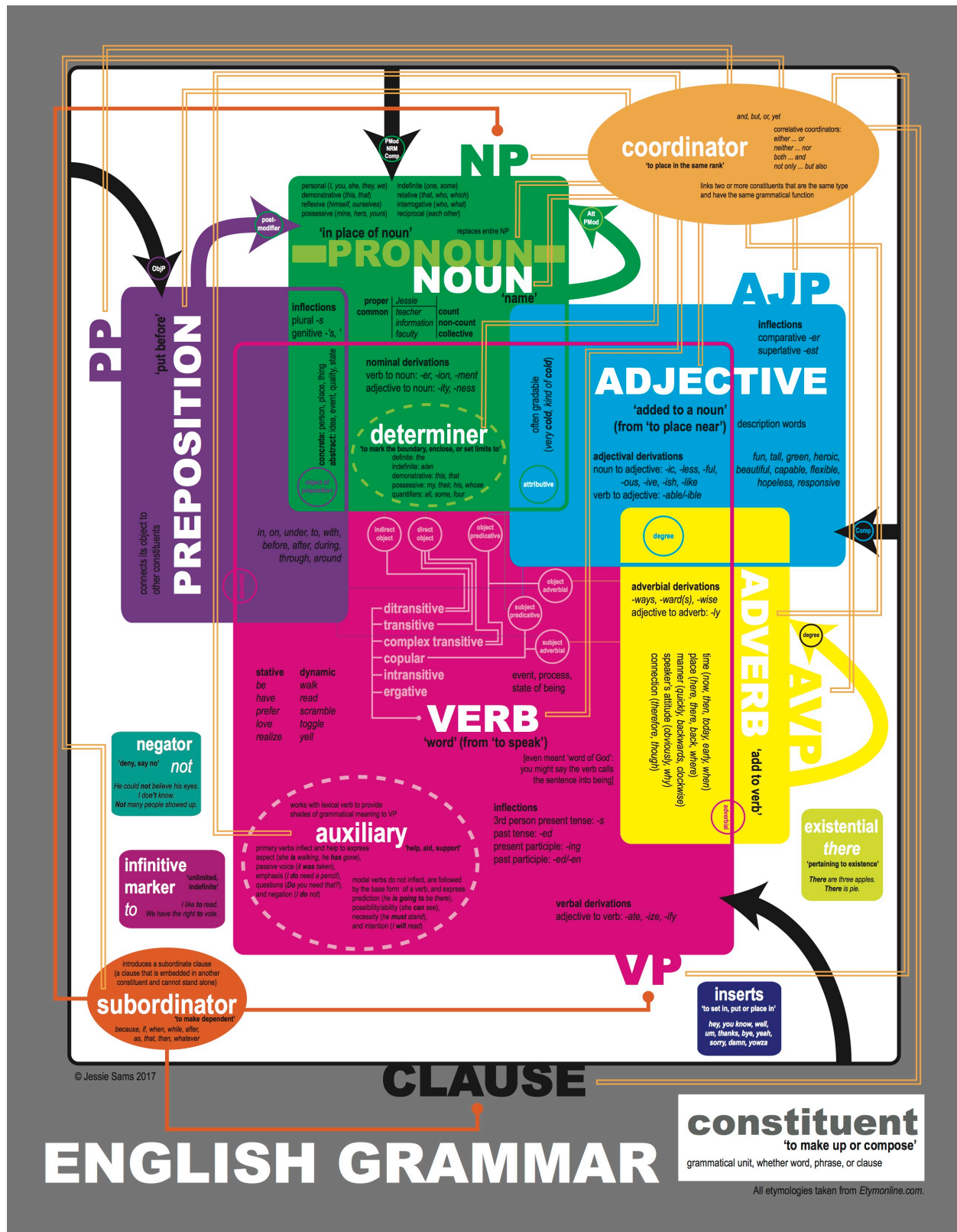


Image A2.1 Syntax infographic

Appendix III: Using GoogleBooks, COCA, and W&P

When selecting an online corpus to use, you have many options.¹⁵² This appendix takes you through three options, provide different kinds of information and are helpful for different types of searches. These three corpora, COCA especially, provide the majority of the examples throughout this textbook, and they can help you find examples of grammatical features. The website links and screenshots provided here are up-to-date as of August 2017, the original printing date of this book. It's also helpful to find the Help or About sections provided on the websites to find more current and detailed guidelines for using the corpus. If you find examples to use on any of these corpora, you need to remember to cite the corpus in your work.

A3.1 GoogleBooks

If you've ever used Google, you will find that using GoogleBooks (books.google.com) is a familiar experience. The benefit of using GoogleBooks rather than relying on Google's main search engine is that all the results will come only from books. Sometimes, you may want to use Google's main page to get results from a variety of sources; however, if you specifically want to find examples from published books, then the GoogleBooks engine is the right choice for you.

The GoogleBooks page looks the same as Google's home page with the exception of it being a static image rather than Google's famous interactive images:

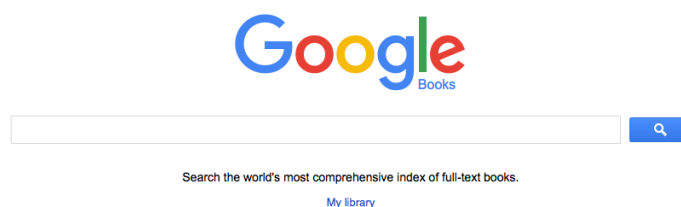


Image A3.1 GoogleBooks home page

When relying on any search engine, it's best to have specific terms in mind and use search operators to your advantage.

For instance, if you're trying to pull out examples of short verb phrases that include modality, the perfect aspect, and passive voice all in one SVP, the best way to get results is to come up with a potential phrase for Google to search. In this case, that means coming up with a perfect passive SVP that includes a modal, such as *might have been searched*. If I were to type that phrase into the search bar, Google would give me results that use any one or any combination of those words. Since I want to limit the results to only those including that specific string, I need to use quotation marks around the entire phrase when I type it into the search bar:

¹⁵² The search bars on social media sites often work in the same way as described for GoogleBooks. For instance, you could choose to use Twitter as an online corpus and type a word or phrase you're interested in finding in its search bar. It will display results from users who have used that word/phrase and whose accounts are public.

“might have been searched”. When I search for that specific phrase, here are the first results I get:

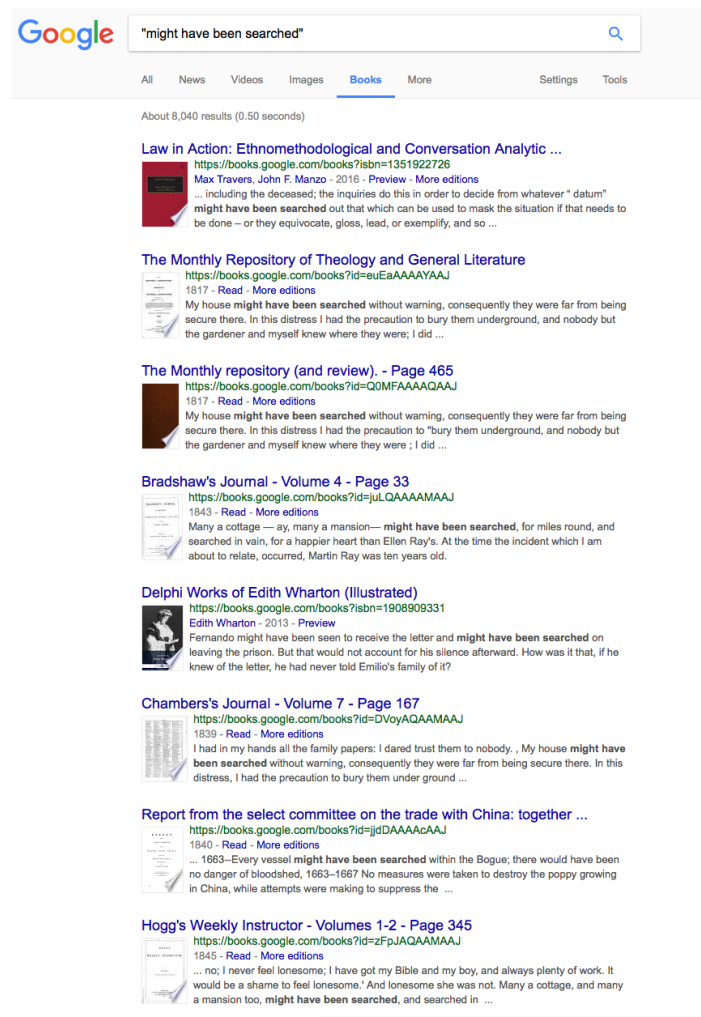


Image A3.2 Results for “might have been searched” on GoogleBooks

If you look at the top of the image, you’ll see that I have about 8,040 results; while it may be tempting to use that number as quantifiable evidence of how often that SVP is found (versus another one), you shouldn’t rely on those numbers too much. If you look closely at the results, you may notice that the exact same story is printed in multiple sources, giving me the match *My house might have been searched without warning*, which means one of my results has been repeated three times on this page alone. Another result, *Many a cottage, and many a mansion too, might have been searched*, appears twice in this image. That means I need to be careful about making quantifiable claims based on the information I find on GoogleBooks.

Once you've found a source you think you may want to use, you can click on the hyperlinked result title to be taken to the page within the book with the relevant result. The image below shows a book I selected after searching for the word *behooves*:¹⁵³

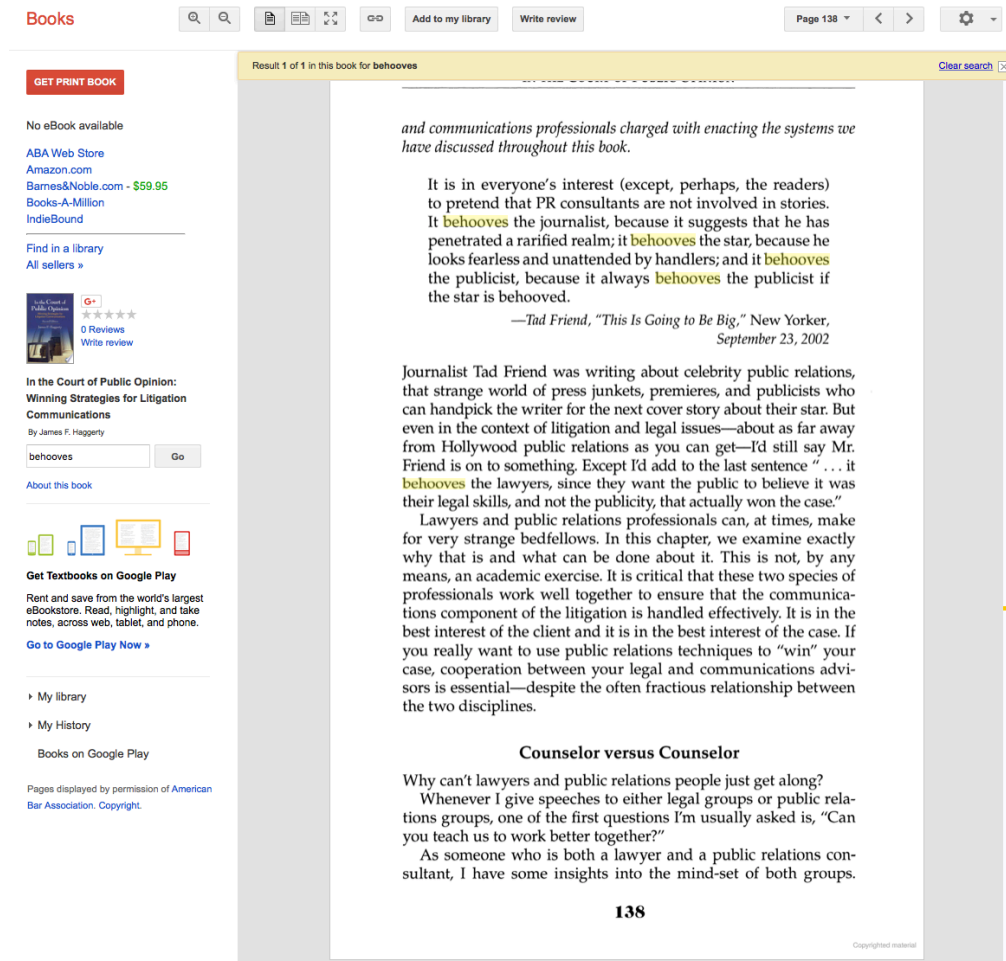
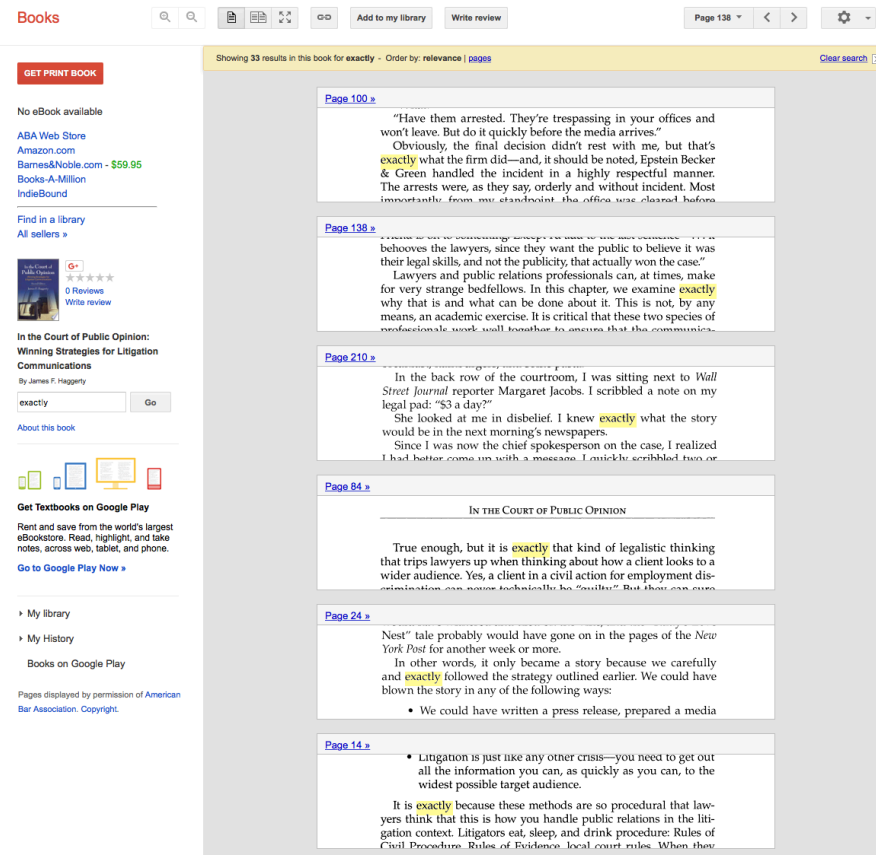


Image A3.3 Book result for *behooves*

Within the page, the word I searched for is highlighted so I can quickly see where it is used in context. In the left sidebar, Google provides basic information about the book, and if you click on the book's cover image, it will take you to more detailed information so that you can cite the book, should you choose to use any sentences from it.

The search bar beneath the book's image will search only within that book while a search bar at the very top of the screen—not shown in this image—searches all of GoogleBooks. That searchability within a book allows you to pull several examples out of the same book. The image below shows the results for searching for the word *exactly* within this book:

¹⁵³ When searching for a single word, you do not need quotation marks—you simply type the word into the search bar.

Image A3.4 Search for *exactly* within the book

The results show up as small screenshots of individual pages with the word (or phrase) in question highlighted. If you want more context, you can click on the hyperlinked page number to see the full page. One drawback is that not all pages are available for preview, and if no hyperlink is provided, you will not be able to see any context outside of what is provided in that small screenshot.

A3.2 COCA

While GoogleBooks works beautifully for finding specific words or phrases that have been published in books or online, it isn't the best tool to use if you want to search by finer linguistic distinctions. The Corpus of Contemporary American English,¹⁵⁴ or COCA for short (<http://www.corpora-english/coca>), is an amazing tool for linguists because its corpus is huge (over 520 million words), includes a variety of registers (including transcripts of spoken language), and allows you to search by specific word, phrase, or lexical category. The initial

¹⁵⁴ To use the COCA, you'll need to register for an account, or you'll be limited with how many searches you can make. The account is free, though you will likely see screens asking you to donate to their worthy cause of keeping the corpus open to the public; most corpora of this magnitude are by subscription only and cost hundreds of dollars per annual subscription. You will not be restricted from accessing content if you don't donate, but if you happen to have extra money burning holes in your pocket and want to spend it on intellectual pursuits, the COCA is a good recipient to consider.

screen you'll come to on COCA's website includes a search bar for starting your search, and the search parameters are set to their default: a List search.

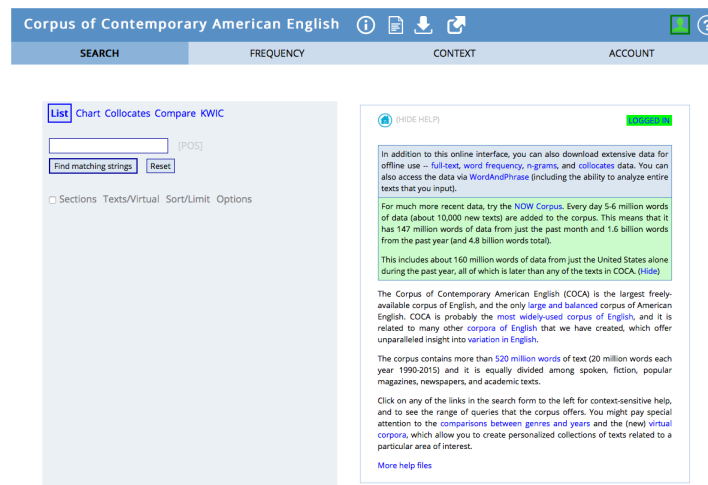


Image A3.5 COCA's home page

When typing into this search box, you cannot use any search operators. If you type multiple words into the search bar, you simply type them out: *hocus pocus*. If you type in quotation marks, it will assume you want to search for quotation marks, too. COCA searches for exact matches if the word is typed in all lowercase letters, so, for instance, if you type *cat* into the box, it will return all instances of *cat* but not of *cats*, *catty*, *caterwaul*, or *catty-cornered*. If you want to search for a contraction, you need to insert a space between the component parts: *did n't*.

You can specify a particular lexical category for your search; if you know the codes, you can just type them right into the search bar. If you don't, clicking on the light grey *[POS]* next to the search bar provides you with a drop-down list of lexical categories to choose from. A space indicates a new word, so *rough_nn** indicates I want to find instances of the word *rough* followed by any noun. On the other hand, *dog_nn** without a space between the components indicates I only want instances where the word *dog* is used as a noun.

As a word of caution, you should never use the back button on your browser/keyboard when working on the COCA. It will take you to an error page, and you may end up losing the search you were working on. While you can get most searches back, you cannot retrieve any random samplings you had pulled up, which can be quite frustrating. The menu at the top (*search, frequency, context, account*) allows you to switch between views and is what you should use in lieu of the back button.

In the basic List search mode, I typed the word *staple* into the search bar. COCA provides me with a screen showing that the word *staple*—in that exact form—is found 2586 times in the corpus. By clicking on the hyperlinked word *staple*, I am taken to a list view of the results with some context, as seen in the following image:

CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT				☐ [?] <input checked="" type="button" value="SAVE LIST"/> CHOOSE LIST CREATE NEW LIST [?]		SHOW DUPLICATES
1	2015	SPOK	Fox	A	B C	over 500,000 donations and the money is coming in. CAMERON# For others Trump-trashing is a staple . SEN-RAND-PAUL- (R-K# really there's a sophomoric qua
2	2015	SPOK	NPR	A	B C	of lettuce and about 60 percent more than growing wheat. Cotton's been a staple of Arizona's agriculture economy for many years. It's in decline. There
3	2015	SPOK	NPR	A	B C	you'd have to kick Jack Nicholson out. Every time they open up the Staple Center, they're like shoo, get out of here. KIM-KARDASHIAN# (Unintelligible
4	2015	SPOK	NPR	A	B C	mean, I grew up in the '90s, so Tyson was obviously a staple of my upbringing - Mike Tyson. So I don't think you could really
5	2015	SPOK	ABC	A	B C	, duct tape and a knife. He pays cash. Then there's that staple of 21st century criminology, the computer evidence. It turns out that Pedro Googled
6	2015	FIC	Bk:LastGoodParadise	A	B C	basin served rabbitjust hole-in-the-wall ethnic places in the Valleyyet in Europe it was a well-respected staple . He would explain on the menu that rabbit was lov
7	2015	FIC	Bk:SirenaQuestNovel	A	B C	no elephant orgy. The case arose out of a traffic accident, that hoary staple of the personal injury bar. Nevertheless, it possessed him like none he'd
8	2015	FIC	ParisRev	A	B C	'm going to stuff six dollars and ninety cents in pennies up your ass and staple it shut. " Six-ninety was 138 -- which was 23 times 6 (the
9	2015	FIC	FantasySciFi	A	B C	across it and a torn place up top, like someone yanked it off a staple on a bulletin board or a telephone pole: SPACECRAFT CONVENTION Hear speakers who ha
10	2015	FIC	FantasySciFi	A	B C	the top of anyone's priority list. I pried o u t h e staple and brought the paper to the living room, looking for M om. She
11	2015	FIC	AfricanAmerRev	A	B C	, gold, and silver across their fingers and necklines. The men wore the staple dress of dignitaries, tuxedos and bowties. The women sipped on highballs while th
12	2015	FIC	NewEnglandRev	A	B C	of him. Hut-sut rawlson on the rillah-rah and the brawla brawla soo-It. A staple on the set list of every band I've had. Rahman knows he pushed
13	2015	MAG	Astronomy	A	B C	do-or-die tests. " # Still, " parallel universes " are such a sci-fi staple , they're more familiar to the public than most other aspects of theoretical physics
14	2015	MAG	Essence	A	B C	understated. Women wear little to no makeup. And lemons, the region's staple , can be found in luxe fragrances. Indeed, " the traditional beauty habits
15	2015	MAG	Essence	A	B C	Cooling Spray (\$6.99, CVS) # 99. Swabs 2.0 # A household staple is now in cotton beauty rounds. # Q-tips Beauty Rounds (\$4.99, Walmart
16	2015	MAG	Horticulture	A	B C	the knee-high North American wild turkey. The tree's fruit has been a kitchen staple for much of history. High in pectin, persimmons were used to make puddin
17	2015	MAG	Horticulture	A	B C	1536 by the Spanish Conquistadors. Potatoes reached Ireland by 1589 and became the main staple food for peasant farmers there until the Great Famine that I
18	2015	MAG	MilitaryHist	A	B C	called it " The Craggs of Tumbledown Mountain, " and it would become a staple at events featuring pipe music. His was not the only tune written about the
19	2015	MAG	Money	A	B C	fine art. Stop in Ginkgo for graphic-printed T-shirts before slurping down a northern Vietnam staple , beef-based pho, at Tuyen Pho Cam (\$3). # When you ar
20	2015	MAG	MotherEarth	A	B C	unusually long life spans. In many parts of the world, yogurt is a staple as important as bread or water, and it comes in many incarnations, from

Image A3.6 List results for *staple*

In each example, the word *staple* is highlighted, and each row provides information about where the word is found, including the year, genre, and source. For instance, the first result (*For others Trump-trashing is a staple*) is from spoken language in 2015 on Fox.

If you want to see more context than what is provided in that view, you can click on any of the left-hand column entries for that row, whether you click on the number of the result, genre, or source. For instance, I clicked on result number 22, which is just out of view on the image above:

Corpus of Contemporary American English









SEARCH

FREQUENCY

CONTEXT

CONTEXT +

Source information:

Date

2015

Publication information

May/Jun2015, Vol. 40 Issue 3, p44-49. 6p.

Title

Hung out to Dry

Author

HILL, JOHN;

Source

MAG: Mother Jones

Expanded context:

comprehensive evaluation. After palpating his pancreas and liver, the doctor told Ryan that parts of his body were " screaming and dying " as a result of all the alcohol. The hip he broke when he fell off his bike, drunk, while pedaling to the liquor store never healed, leaving him with a rolling limp and in constant pain. At one point Ryan had permission from a psychiatrist to alleviate his withdrawal with some vodka, which he knocked back with an orange soda chaser in the men's room. Then came the pivotal moment, a **staple** of addiction reality shows: the interview when the psychiatrist asked if he was willing to go into rehab. # Ryan said he was terrified, but vowed, " I want to amaze people, to let them know: I was gone, but here I am. " # The next day, Ryan arrived at Bay Recovery, a luxurious San Diego center where treatment ran about \$1,800 a day. In a baggy white T-shirt, sagging jeans, and a blue bandanna, he carried his navy-blue duffel bag from

Image A3.7 Expanded context for *staple*

The word *staple* is still highlighted where it occurs, but now I have a lot more context to understand its use. The expanded context also provides more specific information about its source, so I can search for the article "Hung out to Dry" in *Mother Jones* in the library or on Google to get even more context. To get back to the list of results, you need to click on *Context* in the menu bar (notice this view is of *Context +*), and to get back to the search bar, you click on *Search* in the menu. The *Frequency* option takes you back to the page showing how many results there are for your current search.

The images above are based on typing *staple* in lowercase letters in the original search bar. If you type in all capital letters while doing a List search, the frequency results provide any inflected form of the word *staple*, as seen in the following image:

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]

COMPARE

	☐	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	☐	STAPLE	2582	
2	☐	STAPLES	1544	
3	☐	STAPLED	303	
4	☐	STAPLING	86	
TOTAL			4515	

0.656 seconds

Image A3.8 Results for a List search of *STAPLE*

Doing this kind of search allows you to compare the use of inflected forms, showing that *staple* is more frequent than *staples*, *stapled*, or *stapling*. If you click on any of the hyperlinked forms, you will be taken to the context lists; for instance, clicking on *STAPLE* takes you to the same screen as shown in Image A3.6.

In the List search mode, you can also search using a “wild card” asterisk: *staple** tells COCA to return any results that have *staple* followed by any character, including a space:

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]

COMPARE

	☐	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	☐	STAPLE	2586	
2	☐	STAPLES	2390	
3	☐	STAPLETON	782	
4	☐	STAPLED	357	
5	☐	STAPLER	133	
6	☐	STAPLERS	44	
7	☐	STAPLEHOUSE	28	
8	☐	STAPLEY	13	
9	☐	STAPLES.COM	11	
10	☐	STAPLES-MOTLEY	10	
11	☐	STAPLEHURST	8	
12	☐	STAPLEDONIAN	6	
13	☐	STAPLE-GUN	4	
14	☐	STAPLEFORD	4	
15	☐	STAPLESINK.COM	3	
16	☐	STAPLESCOMMUNITY	3	
17	☐	STAPLE-CROP	2	
18	☐	STAPLEDON	2	
19	☐	STAPLEMAN	2	
20	☐	STAPLES.	2	
21	☐	STAPLER-ASSISTED	2	
22	☐	STAPLES/OFFICE	2	
23	☐	STAPLESES	2	
24	☐	STAPLETON-AREA	2	
25	☐	STAPLETON.	2	
26	☐	STAPLETON/REUTERS/LANDOV	2	
27	☐	STAPLETONES	1	
28	☐	STAPLETONDENVER.COM	1	
29	☐	STAPLETON/REUTERS	1	
30	☐	STAPLETON-JEANNE	1	

Image A3.9 List search for *staple**

Now I can compare even more forms based on the word *staple* and click on any of them to see individual results with context.

Another type of search is the Chart search; going back to the original search bar, you need to click on *Chart* above the search box. In this mode, you can use the same search terms, but now any matching result will be grouped together for analysis rather than provided as

separate lists for comparison. Using the chart option allows you to compare frequency across genre and sub-genre. For instance, typing *staple* into the Chart search provides this set of frequency results:

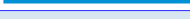
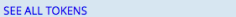
SECTION (CLICK FOR SUB-SECTIONS) (SEE ALL SECTIONS AT ONCE)	FREQ	SIZE (M)	PER MIL	CLICK FOR CONTEXT (SEE ALL)
SPOKEN	195	109.4	1.78	
FICTION	147	104.9	1.40	
MAGAZINE	1,068	110.1	9.70	
NEWSPAPER	709	106.0	6.69	
ACADEMIC	467	103.4	4.52	
1990-1994	440	104.0	4.23	
1995-1999	446	103.4	4.31	
2000-2004	507	102.9	4.93	
2005-2009	524	102.0	5.14	
2010-2015	669	121.6	5.50	
TOTAL	2,586			SEE ALL TOKENS

Image A3.10 Chart search for *staple*

In this view, *FREQ* means frequency (i.e., the number of times *staple* is used in that genre or range of years), *SIZE* refers to the number of words within that genre or range of years (measured in millions), and *PER MIL* indicates the number of times *staple* is used in that genre or range of years per million words (i.e., for every one million words, *staple* will, on average, appear about 10 times within the fiction genre). For instance, in the spoken genre, *staple* occurs 195 times out of the 109.4 million words within the spoken genre, giving *staple* a rate of usage of 1.78 instances per million words.

If you click on “See all sections at once,” you can see more specific information about the sub-genres and individual years. The image below illustrates the section results for *staple*:

	SECTION NAME	# PER MILLION	# TOKENS	# WORDS	
1	2011	6.45	133	20,633,381	
2	2014	6.17	122	19,780,119	
3	2003	6.05	126	20,825,770	
4	2007	5.70	116	20,339,671	
5	2009	5.57	112	20,090,609	

Image A3.11 Section results for *staple* in Chart mode, focusing on top year results

I’ve only captured the top five results in the screenshot, and they indicate that *staple* is used most in 2011, with 133 tokens (i.e., *staple* is seen 133 times in the COCA sources that match a date of 2011) and a rate of 6.45 instances per million words. COCA data includes 20,633,381 words for the year 2011.

Below the section detailing the individual years, the results include sub-sections for genre:

1	MAG:Home/Health	19.05	304	15,958,693	
2	MAG:Women/Men	12.82	125	9,752,554	
3	NEWS:Life	12.78	203	15,880,999	
4	MAG:Entertain	12.78	52	4,070,117	
5	MAG:Soc/Arts	8.89	68	7,650,584	

Image A3.12 Section results for *staple* in Chart mode, focusing on top sub-genre results

This breakdown of information tells us that *staple* occurs most frequently in magazines that focus on the topics of home and health, with 304 tokens and 19.05 instances per million words. These results help you capture more context-specific information about how the word is used rather than focusing only on how many times it is used overall.

A third search mode is the Collocates search, which allows you to search for the words that show up within four positions before and/or after another word. You can limit the collocates you're searching for by position and part of speech. For example, in the image below, I've chosen to search for collocates of *stapler* (my main word), and I want to find adjectives (*_j**) that occur directly before it—notice on the row of numbers that only the number one to the left of the dark blue square is highlighted. That indicates the position I'm interested in.

Image A3.13 Searching for Collocates on COCA

The results show the adjectives occurring in the position I've selected:

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]

COMPARE

	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	☐ GRAY	2	
2	☐ INDUSTRIAL	2	
3	☐ PNEUMATIC	2	
4	☐ RED	2	
5	☐ RARELY-USED	1	
6	☐ TWO-FOR-ONE	1	
7	☐ STRAIGHT-UP	1	
8	☐ SMALL	1	
9	☐ RUSTED	1	
10	☐ REDESIGNED	1	
11	☐ ORDINARY	1	
12	☐ MANUAL	1	
13	☐ IMPROVED	1	
14	☐ HEAVY-DUTY	1	
15	☐ FLIMSY	1	
16	☐ ELECTRIC	1	
17	☐ COMMON	1	
	TOTAL	21	

0.844 seconds

Image A3.14 Results for adjectival collocates of *stapler*

These 17 adjectives occur directly before *stapler* in COCA's data. For instance, *red stapler* occurs twice in the corpus, and *two-for-one stapler* occurs once. This type of search can be especially helpful if you want to know patterns of words that frequently occur together.

The Compare search, the fourth search type, is a similar type of search, except it allows you to add a word to compare its collocates to another. For instance, the image below shows a search for *STAPLE_v** (i.e., any inflected form of *staple*, as long as it's a verb) and *BIND* (i.e.,

any inflected form of *bind*). The collocates box is left as a wild card to show that I'm interested in any word and any part of speech that occurs directly after the two words I'm comparing.

Image A3.15 Performing a Compare search on COCA

The results for a Compare search are provided in two tables of results, and, in this case, Word 1 (W1) is *staple*, and Word 2 (W2) is *bind*. The dark green rows indicate collocates that are highly correlated with the word; as the correlation decreases, the green turns light, and if the correlation is low enough, it shows up as white, then pink, and then red.

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON NUMBERS (WORD 1 OR 2)

[HELP...]

SORTED BY RATIO: CHANGE TO FREQUENCY

WORD 1 (W1): STAPLE (0.04)

WORD 2 (W2): BIND (24.64)

	WORD	W1	W2	W1/W2	SCORE		WORD	W2	W1	W2/W1	SCORE
1	LENGTH	18	0	36.0	887.2	1	BY	1275	0	2,550.0	103.5
2	FOODS	9	0	18.0	443.6	2	WITH	319	0	638.0	25.9
3	SHUT	6	0	12.0	295.7	3	US	219	0	438.0	17.8
4	GUN	4	0	8.0	197.1	4	FOR	1356	4	339.0	13.8
5	PAPER	3	0	6.0	147.9	5	ME	81	0	162.0	6.6
6	FABRIC	3	0	6.0	147.9	6	HIM	127	1	127.0	5.2
7	4	3	1	3.0	73.9	7	HIS	122	1	122.0	5.0
8	ONTO	7	3	2.3	57.5	8	BEHIND	51	0	102.0	4.1
9	THERE	3	3	1.0	24.6	9	UP	645	8	80.6	3.3
10	THAT	17	22	0.8	19.0	10	ONLY	40	0	80.0	3.2
11	OFF	5	7	0.7	17.6	11	THEMSELVES	39	0	78.0	3.2
12	AN	5	9	0.6	13.7	12	TIGHTLY	38	0	76.0	3.1
13	AROUND	7	15	0.5	11.5	13	PEOPLE	31	0	62.0	2.5
14	YOUR	6	13	0.5	11.4	14	HER	172	3	57.3	2.3
15	ACROSS	4	9	0.4	11.0	15	FROM	57	1	57.0	2.3
16	DOWN	5	14	0.4	8.8	16	NOT	28	0	56.0	2.3

Image A3.16 Comparison results for *staple* and *bind*, searching for collocates occurring directly after the word

For each collocate, the results show how many times the collocate was found with each word in the position indicated by the search (i.e., for this search, directly after the word). For instance, *paper* occurs directly after *staple* three times but does not occur after *bind*. On the other hand, *for* occurs directly after *bind* 1356 times but only four times after *staple*. The W1/W2 and W2/W1 columns display a ratio of use: *from* is 57 times more likely to occur directly after *bind* than it is to occur directly after *staple*.

Above the results tables, each word has been assigned a ratio: for every single instance of *bind*, there are 0.04 tokens of *staple*; however, for every instance of *staple*, there are 24.64 tokens of *bind*. In other words, *bind* occurs more frequently than *staple*. The final column of the table provides a score for each collocate, and that score is the ratio of the W1/W2 or the W2/W1 column to the word's ratio of use and helps further quantify the strength of the correlation.

Therefore, the score for *foods* (the second collocate listed for *staple*) is the ratio of 18.0 to 0.04, which is 443.6.¹⁵⁵ Once the score drops below 10, the correlation strength becomes lessened. For instance, while *down* is more likely to occur directly after *staple*, the score isn't strong enough for me to say the combination of those two words regularly occurs. If I'm trying to identify specific patterns of usage for word choice, the best examples are those with the highest scores.

The Comparison search is especially helpful for understanding how two synonyms are used differently. Based on the results above, you can see that (1) *bind* is more likely to be passive because *bound by* is the top result and (2) people are more likely to be *bound* than *stapled*. As you look through the results, notice how many personal pronouns appear directly after the verb *bind*. On the other hand, *paper* and *fabric* are more likely to be *stapled* than *bound*.

The final type of search you can perform on COCA is a KWIC search, which stands for Key Word In Context. This type of search is similar to a List search in that it will display a list of results with some context but is also similar to a Collocates search because you can sort the results based on position (i.e., you can have results sorted by the first three collocates occurring after your searched word). It limits the number of results you'll get with a default of 200 and maximum of 1000, and the results are a random sampling from the corpus. Because the results are random, you'll get a different set every time you search even if you don't change the search terms. The results are color-coded by lexical category, as you can see in the image below, which displays results for *staple*, written in lowercase without a lexical category restriction:

CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT				[?] SAVE LIST		CHOOSE LIST	CREATE NEW LIST	[?]	SHOW DUPLICATES
1	1992	ACAD	Ethnology	A	B	C	They annually produce a storable surplus of yams ; a main staple also used in reciprocal exchange between initiatory partners		
2	1993	NEWS	NYTimes	A	B	C	and greater perils in the pits . Meat , once a staple among mining families , is a rare extravagance as Ukraine's		
3	1998	MAG	AmerArtist	A	B	C	the surface . However , both Licht and I choose to staple and hammer the stretcher together so the frame remains very		
4	2010	MAG	GoodHousekeeping	A	B	C	. " That 's GH for us : It 's our staple and our support : " " If I see a product in		
5	1998	NEWS	WashPost	A	B	C	wine vinegar , to remember that fresh herbs should become a staple and to exploit the flavors of sweet onions and pungent garlic .		
6	2015	MAG	Smithsonian	A	B	C	was eulachon , an oily smelt whose flesh was a food staple and whose oil was used as a medicine and for illumination .		
7	1999	SPOK	Fox_Sunday	A	B	C	. Most Americans consider football as much a Thanksgiving staple as turkey ; but a game like the holiday has n't always		
8	1996	MAG	Sportsill	A	B	C	but since the 1991 Persian Gulf war it has been a staple at almost all athletic competitions . In Kenya the national		
9	2010	MAG	CountryLiving	A	B	C	its buttery take on the classic chocolate-pecan Derby Pie -- a staple at any self-respecting Kentuckian 's race-day celebration . "		
10	2013	NEWS	NYTimes	A	B	C	of the country 's best-selling hot sauces ; it is a staple at Super Bowl parties and other sporting events where pizza ,		
11	2009	NEWS	WashPost	A	B	C	photos . # Nice to know : Live music , a staple at the Shah Dogfish Head locations , will begin after the first		
12	1995	MAG	Fortune	A	B	C	, a big piece of its profits flows not from its staple businesses but from gains on merchant-banking investments		
13	1993	ACAD	GeographRev	A	B	C	and hierarchy came to be identified with the production of the staple commodity ; which in Thailand was rice . Prohibited from		
14	1998	FIC	HarpersMag	A	B	C	it . # The chemistry and geology of clays (a staple component of the protracted conversation around a firing) ,		
15	1992	MAG	USNWR	A	B	C	about 20 percent for Americans and Germans : Rice , the staple crop ; costs at least seven times more in Japan than overseas		
16	2003	MAG	MotherJones	A	B	C	table underlying the atolls , poisoning the Tuvaluans ' staple crops ; Already some farmers have been forced to grow their		
17	2010	MAG	Smithsonian	A	B	C	been " rice , wheat and corn " : the main staple crops not ; What diversity of crops is more functional , not		
18	2008	ACAD	Bioscience	A	B	C	conditions that made possible the intensive farming of staple crops notably of grain , olives , and grapes among the		
19	2015	MAG	People	A	B	C	of my focus . " # Although Barrymore has a few staple dishes under her belt " Salmon with veggies is regular at my		
20	2014	SPOK	CNN	A	B	C	, looking for a taste of home : First up a staple done a little differently than the norm . Tamales wrapped in		

Image A3.17 KWIC results for *staple*

These results line up the word in question in a column down the middle, allowing you to quickly see what occurs directly before and after your word. The default setting alphabetizes the results according the first word that occurs directly after the searched word, so if you look down the list, you'll see they start at *also* and move through *done* for the first 20 results. When the same word

¹⁵⁵ To find a ratio, you divide one number by another, so finding the ratio in this case means dividing 18.0 by 0.04. If you do the math yourself, you'll see the numbers are slightly off (the result is 450 instead of 443.6). That difference is because the displayed word ratio is rounded to two decimal places (e.g., 0.04 is rounded and not the full ratio); however, when finding the results, COCA uses the full ratio with however many decimal places there are.

appears more than once, the alphabetization moves to the second word (e.g., *and our* shows up before *and to*). If both those match, it moves to the third word, and so on. Just like any other results, you can get more context for any individual entry by clicking on one of the left-hand columns.

COCA treats punctuation as its own entry, so notice that all pieces of punctuation are highlighted just like the words—they are in a dark grey to show they do not carry a part of speech assignment. Since COCA is not programmed to recognize all proper names, the same thing happens with names, which is why *Charlie* is also highlighted in dark grey. The color-coding indicates part of speech and only extends to four words on either side of the central search word. These color-coded parts of speech should be taken as guides rather than the final word on the matter; for instance, *staple* is coded as a verb in line 19, where it would be better coded as an attributive noun (*staple dishes*). COCA determines part of speech by complex algorithms based on patterns of use, and, like humans, computers can make errors.

A useful feature of COCA is that you can create a search based entirely on parts of speech rather than on any particular words. For instance, if you're interested in finding a string of words that matches the pattern *ModAux V Prep Det N*, you can put this string into the search box: `_vm* _v* _i* _d* _nn*`.

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. At the top, there are tabs: 'List' (selected), 'Chart', 'Collocates', 'Compare', and 'KWIC'. Below the tabs is a search box containing the pattern `_vm* _v* _i* _d* _nn*`. To the right of the search box is a label '[POS]'. Below the search box are two buttons: 'Find matching strings' and 'Reset'.

Image A3.18 Searching the COCA based on a string of parts of speech entries

The results are sorted by frequency, showing the most likely combination of words that fit this exact string:

1	☐	WILL CONTINUE AFTER THIS MESSAGE	32	
2	☐	CAN DO AT THIS POINT	30	
3	☐	COULD COME AT ANY TIME	29	
4	☐	'S GO TO SOME CALLS	28	
5	☐	CAN HAPPEN AT ANY TIME	22	
6	☐	CAN SAY AT THIS POINT	16	
7	☐	WOULD SAY AT THIS POINT	16	
8	☐	CAN OCCUR AT ANY AGE	14	
9	☐	CAN OCCUR AT ANY TIME	14	
10	☐	COULD HAPPEN AT ANY TIME	14	
11	☐	MAY APPEAR IN THESE PAGES	13	
12	☐	WILL KEEP FOR SEVERAL MONTHS	13	
13	☐	'S LOOK AT SOME NUMBERS	12	
14	☐	WOULD BE AT THIS POINT	12	
15	☐	CAN STRIKE AT ANY TIME	11	
16	☐	WILL GO TO ANY LENGTHS	11	
17	☐	'LL HEAR FROM BOTH SIDES	10	
18	☐	CAN SAY WITH SOME CERTAINTY	10	
19	☐	COULD DIE AT ANY MOMENT	10	
20	☐	COULD DIFFER FROM THOSE ESTIMATES	10	
21	☐	COULD DO AT THIS POINT	10	
22	☐	MIGHT BE OF SOME USE	10	
23	☐	'LL GET TO THAT RIGHT	9	
24	☐	CAN BE OF ANY HELP	9	
25	☐	CAN PLAY AT THIS LEVEL	9	

Image A3.19 Results for `_vm* _v* _i* _d* _nn*`

A3.3 Word and Phrase

WORD AND PHRASE INFO

MARK DAVIES | BYU | COCA CORPUS

Frequency list

RANK	PuS	WORD	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD		
1	1900	N	DASHBORD	1248	75	606	300	234	33
2	1901	J	INSENSITIVE	1181	223	132	234	240	332
3	1902	N	CONJUGATES	1275	275	50	219	225	358
4	1903	J	PURTY	1254	102	302	379	175	21
5	1904	N	INGENUITY	1224	110	125	421	236	332
6	1905	N	TALLY	1301	232	181	328	391	169
7	1906	V	CLAW	1318	64	865	204	133	34
8	1907	N	BLUSH	1347	87	589	561	84	35
9	1908	N	CASCADE	1194	12	392	513	414	419
10	1909	N	RESCUER	1334	469	180	300	300	38

SAMPLE FREQUENCY RANGE FROM TOP 60,000 WORDS IN COCA. [\[SEE MORE\]](#)

Input/analyze texts

from every **finger** on their hands a **kafka blade** **blamed**. **Scorn** **bullet** and **shark's** **cut**.
fixed their **thrash**. on their **kips** they **and** **diamond** **studded** **bullet** for their **guts**. "who
 were they?" **it** **asked** **my** **mother** **as** **the** **boy** **bleed** **to** **alarm** **in** **the** **dark**. **think**. "you **was** **stupid**.
 "what? **that's** **history's** **piece** **come** **back** **again**. On what a **man** **come** **down** **on** **me** **and** **not** **ask** **me** **no**.
He **come**. **Do** **he** **keep** **ask**. **Get** **inside** **and** **close** **the** **door**. "Some **children** **are** **playing** **in**
the **road** **waiting** **barrel**, **using** **gun** **and** **using**. "who **came** **do** **Punchinello** **title**.
title. **and** **and** **came** **do** **Punchinello** **me** **get**. "Cut **me** **go** **and** **say** **"I** **ask** **to** **him**. "terrible
He **said**. **But** **today**. **History's** **piece** **might** **be** **passing** **by**. "who **is** **the** **history**?" **it** **asked**. "it

SAMPLE FROM 370,000 TEXTS IN COCA. [\[SEE MORE\]](#)
[\[PREDICTION\]](#) [\[ANALYSIS\]](#) [\[REVIEW\]](#) (1996)

Image A3.20 Word and Phrase home page

There are a variety of ways you could choose to search within the frequency list, but I'll show you the most basic: searching for a particular word. When searching for a word, you need to use its lemma, or its base form (e.g., *staple* is the lemma for *stapled*, *stapling*). In this case, I've chosen to search for *hound*:

WORD	hound	SEARCH RESET	CLICK ON A WORD FOR CONTEXT AND SYNONYMS (CAN ALSO LIMIT TO GENRE)									
LIST FROM #	(1-60,000)		RANK #	PoS	WORD	TOTAL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC	
PART OF SPEECH	☒ NOUN ☒ VERB ☒ ADJ ☒ ADV ☒ MISC		1	9371	N	HOUND	1930	133	932	538	241	86
			2	17401	V	HOUND	576	145	143	131	111	46

Image A3.21 Search for *hound* on W&P's frequency list

The results are broken into two sets: instances of *hound* as a noun and instances as a verb. The rank indicates the word's ranked frequency according to the COCA, so as a noun, *hound* is the 9371st most frequent word across the genres. This rank is not a straight frequency because it is not indicative of only how many times the word occurs. Instead, the rank takes both frequency and dispersion into account. Dispersion refers to how often it shows up across genres. If a word is frequent in only one genre, its low dispersion rate will reduce its ranked position. However, if a word is less frequent but evenly used across the genre, its rank will increase. Word and Phrase contains entries and ranks for the 60,000 most common words in English, which means that while most words you may want to search will show up on this site, there are some that will not.

The total column indicates straight frequency and provides the number of tokens of that word appearing as that part of speech, so *hound* as a verb appears 576 times. Of those 576 times, 145 of them are in the spoken genre, and only 46 are in the academic genre. The genre results are color-coded so that if the box is darker blue, it shows a much higher frequency than the others: *hound* as a noun is much more frequent in fiction than it is the other genres. The shading decreases with frequency and correlation.

To get more information about the word and its use, you need to click on one of the hyperlinked results; I've chosen to click on *hound* as a verb, and the results pictured below reflect that choice. After selecting a result, the bottom portion of the screen splits into three areas, each providing its own type of information.

WORD AND PHRASE . INFO
FREQUENCY LISTS - ANALYZE TEXTS | ALL GENRES - ACADEMIC

WORD: SEARCH RESET

LIST FROM #

PART OF SPEECH: ☒ NOUN ☒ VERB ☐ ADJ ☐ ADV ☐ MISC

INTERACTIVE HELP (1-2 MINUTES)

CLICK ON A WORD FOR CONTEXT AND SYNONYMS (CAN ALSO LIMIT TO GENRE)

RANK #	Pos	WORD	TOTAL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC
9371	N	HOUND	1930	133	932	538	241	86
17401	V	HOUND	576	145	143	131	111	46

SYNONYMS (click to see) [?]
SEE ALSO:
MORE SPECIFIC (1)
MORE GENERAL (6)
MULTI-WORD (4)

SYNONYMS

3334	chase
3443	hunt
7249	harass
13185	dog
13310	persecute
17401	hound
18084	pester
22660	badger

HOUND v (RANK 17401, FREQ 576)

CLICK BAR TO LIMIT

	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC
STORED	52	40	54	41	15
MORE	145	143	131	111	46

CONCORDANCE LINES

GENRE	TEXT
1 NEWS	argument or statistical error she made. She was relentlessly hounded about working with Gore, and last year's revelations about
2 MAG	were often harassed and practitioners sometimes were hounded all the way out of the country. Now, for the
3 NEWS	plight of ordinary people like Yon Soon Choe -- who was hounded and beaten for six years by her ex-husband -- that keeps law
4 FIC	Italian. The religious routine is not the one that has hounded and bounded and pounded me. It's the emotional routine of
5 ACAD	groups, such as Birlik and ERK, are constantly being hounded and harassed by Since 1992, numerous opposition figures,
6 SPOK	maw. She will be injured and destroyed and beiltied and hounded and harassed by harassment KDPPEL voice-over The Senate
7 SPOK	Committee: She will be injured and destroyed and beiltied and hounded and harassed by harassment. Prof. ANITA HILL, University of
8 SPOK	40, 50 or 60 years, you must have been hounded and haunted by trying to sing a Sinatra song or song you
9 SPOK	. KOTB: (Voiceover) He loved that after years of being hounded and hunted by a Beatle. He could walk the streets of
10 NEWS	Is inundating herself with C-Span and Imus; no more news hounding and midnight writers . "I've cut myself off because eventually

DEFINITIONS (WORDNET)
1. pursue or chase relentlessly
(BAD ENTRY?)

COLLOCATES (click to see with HOUND)
noun press, death, media, dog, reporter, paparazzi, autograph, couple, police, quarterback, grave, authority, fear, creditor, plaintiff **misc** by, him, her, out, stop, harass, hound, destroy, constantly, belting, hunt, daily, rich, everybody, relentlessly

CLICK WORD TO: ☒ SEARCH AS COLLOCATE ☐ QUERY THAT WORD [?]

Image A3.22 Results screen for *hound* on Word and Phrase

I'll focus on the three major types of information displayed in this screen, starting with the left sidebar, which provides a basic definition of your word with a list of synonyms:

SYNONYMS (click to see) [?]

SEE ALSO:
MORE SPECIFIC (1)
MORE GENERAL (6)
MULTI-WORD (4)

pursue

3334	chase
3443	hunt
7249	harass
13185	dog
13310	persecute
17401	hound
18084	pester
22660	badger

Image A3.23 Synonyms in the left sidebar for *hound* as a verb

Every piece of information in that list is hyperlinked, which means you can click on any of those synonyms and get more information on that word. The blue bar provides a basic definition of your word (*pursue*), and the synonyms are listed in order of ranked frequency, so *chase* is the most common and is ranked as the 3334th most frequent word in the corpus.

If you click on *more specific*, it provides you with one synonym with the meaning ‘hound or harry relentlessly’: *ferret*, which carries the rank of 22,606. If you click on *more general*, the meaning shifts to ‘go after with the intent to catch,’ and you are provided with this list of synonyms and ranks:

2714 track
3334 chase
3976 trail
6473 tag
13185 dog
19026 tail

To get back out of these more general and more specific lists, you can click on *synonyms*, which takes you back to your original synonym list. Finally, clicking on *multi-word* provides four options, all of which are uses of *hound* as a compound noun rather than as a verb: *hound dog*, *basset hound*, *Afghan hound*, *Walker hound*.

Moving away from the left sidebar, the main area of results provides information across the top portion, including definitions, collocates, and frequency:

HOUND v (RANK 17401, FREQ 576)						DEFINITIONS (WORDNET)	(BAD ENTRY?)
	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC	1. pursue or chase relentlessly	
CLICK BAR TO LIMIT						COLLOCATES (click to see with HOUND)	
STORED	52	40	54	41	15	noun press, death, media, dog, reporter, paparazzi, autograph, couple, police, quarterback, grave, authority, fear, creditor, plaintiff misc by, him, her, out, stop, harass, hound, destroy, constantly, belittle, hunt, daily, rich, everybody, relentlessly	
MORE	145	143	131	111	46		

Image A3.24 Overview of results for *hound* as a verb

The collocates are helpful because they provide you with words that are likely to occur with *hound* as a verb—it’s rather telling that *press*, *media*, *reporter*, and *paparazzi* are nouns frequently associated with hounding. You can see a negative connotation with the verb, with its collocates of *harass*, *destroy*, *belittle*, *grave*, and *death*.

Within the frequency results by genre, the total instances within that genre are in bold at the bottom of the table (e.g., *hound* occurs in magazines 131 times). Above that is a pre-stored number, which reflects the number of instances stored in the 200 or so results provided for you in the concordance:

CONCORDANCE LINES		CLICK WORD TO: ☒ SEARCH AS COLLOCATE ☐ QUERY THAT WORD [?]		
GENRE		SORT	SORT	SORT
1 NEWS	argument or statistical error she made . She was relentlessly hounded about working with Gore , and last year 's revelations about			
2 MAG	were often harassed and practitioners sometimes were hounded all the way out of the country . Now , for the			
3 NEWS	plight of ordinary people like Yon Soon Choe -- who was hounded and beaten for six years by her ex-husband -- that keeps law			
4 FIC	Italian . The religious routine is not the one that has hounded and bounded and pounded me . It 's the emotional routine of			
5 ACAD	groups , such as Birluk and ERK , are constantly being hounded and harassed by Since 1992 , numerous opposition figures ,			
6 SPOK	maw . She will be injured and destroyed and belittled and hounded and harassed real harassment KOPPEL voice-over The Senate			
7 SPOK	Committee : She will be injured and destroyed and belittled and hounded and harassed real harassment . Prof. ANITA HILL , University of			
8 SPOK	40 , 50 or 60 years , you must have been hounded and haunted by trying to sing a Sinatra song or song you			
9 SPOK	. KOTB : (Voiceover) He loved that after years of being hounded and hunted as a Beatle . He could walk the streets of			
10 NEWS	is inundating herself with C-Span and Imus ; no more news hounding and midnight wonkery . " I 've cut myself off because eventually			
11 FIC	forgotten the farm-wife 's daughter , her sweet , tender youth hounded away by drought and desperation . To bring healing to those			
12 SPOK	remorse . He claimed in the 1979 interview he was being hounded because everyone wants to have sex with young girls . It 's			
13 ACAD	his supporters have claimed at various times that he 's being hounded because of race and religion , a tactic that may make for			
14 SPOK	to- Mr. DONALDSON : Well , you 're against the media hounding Bill Clinton on this issue ? Vice Pres. QUAYLE : No ,			
15 MAG	do n't complain , nothing will ever change . I 'm hounding Blackfoot telephone company and Clark Fork			
16 SPOK	his only problem . Remember how Rosa Navarro said she was hounded by a doctor who lied to her , who tricked her into			
17 MAG	Individualism threatened by modern ways ; his swimming buck is hounded by a hunter and his dog , almost unnoticed in the background			
18 FIC	same characteristics . This , in spite of being hunted and hounded by a massive and murderous criminal society that wants nothing			
19 SPOK	So why did n't he ? Mr-SCHULMAN : He 's been hounded by a person who has a vendetta . (Footage-of-Franklin)			
20 MAG	talent for comedy to the tale of Hubie , a mousekin hounded by a shoe-level fear , strangely enough , of islands . When			

Image A3.25 Concordance results for *hound* as a verb

The concordance results are formatted like the KWIC results from COCA in that a sampling of results are shown to you, organized around a central column for your search term, color-coded by parts of speech, and alphabetized by the first word appearing after yours. If you want to see more results from a specific genre, you can click on the bar above the genre's results, which shows you the pre-stored results that match that genre, or you can click on the number in the *More* row, which shows you more results from that genre; however, those results are not pre-stored, so they will take longer to process and load.

On Word and Phrase's home screen, you had two options, the first of which is the frequency list we explored with *hound*. The second option is input/analyze text. I've selected an excerpt from J.K. Rowling's (2008) graduation speech to Harvard to analyze. When inputting a text, make sure that any dashes have a space before and after it to separate it from the words themselves; otherwise, a combination like *cute—not* is interpreted as one word. The image below provides the results I get from putting in a 529-word excerpt from that speech:

ENTER TEXT BELOW -SAMPLES- MY TEXTS

You see? If all you remember in years to come is the 'gay wizard' joke, I've come out ahead of Baroness Mary Warnock. Achievable goals: the first step to self improvement. Actually, I have wracked my mind and heart for what I ought to say to you today. I have asked myself what I wish I had known at my own graduation, and what important lessons I have

SEARCH CLEAR HELP WORD PHRASE

Text created: 9/29/2015 4:49:26 PM
519 words

SEE LISTS	FREQ RANGE	1-500	501-3000	> 3000	SAVE TEXT	HELP
	529 WORDS	72 %	14 %	14 %		

You see? If all you remember in years to come is the 'gay wizard' joke, I've come out ahead of Baroness Mary Warnock. Achievable goals: the first step to self improvement. Actually, I have wracked my mind and heart for what I ought to say to you today. I have asked myself what I wish I had known at my own graduation, and what important lessons I have learned in the 21 years that have expired between that day and this . I have come up with two answers. On this wonderful day when we are gathered together to celebrate your academic success, I have decided to talk to you about the benefits of failure. And as you stand on the threshold of what is sometimes called 'real life', I want to extol the crucial importance of imagination . These may seem quixotic or paradoxical choices, but please bear with me . Looking back at the 21-year-old that I was at graduation, is a slightly uncomfortable experience for the 42-year-old that she has become. Half my lifetime ago, I was striking an uneasy balance between the ambition I had for myself, and what those closest to me expected of me . I was convinced that the only thing I wanted to do, ever, was to write novels. However, my parents, both of whom came from impoverished backgrounds and neither of whom had been to college, took the view that my overactive imagination was an amusing personal quirk that would never pay a mortgage, or secure a pension. I knew that the irony strikes with the force of a cartoon anvil, now . So they hoped that I would take a vocational degree; I wanted to study English Literature. A compromise was reached that in retrospect satisfied nobody, and I went up to study Modern Languages. Hardly had my parents' car rounded the corner at the end of the road than I ditched German and scuttled off down the Classics corridor .

Image A3.26 Results of text analysis for an excerpt of Rowling's Harvard speech

The results are color-coded based on each word's frequency rank. Range 1 words (ranked 1-500) are the most commonly used words across English and appear in blue, such as *you*, *in*, *years*, and

study. Range 2 words (ranked 501-3000) appear in green, such as *goals*, *ought*, *personal*, and *joke*. Range 3 words (ranked 3001-60,000) appear in yellow, such as *wizard*, *quixotic*, *cartoon*, *anvil*, and *paradoxical*. You can change the color of these key words to red by clicking on the red square next to the Range 3 results in at the top of the screen. The Range 3 words are considered key words because they are the ones that carry the most specific content and “character” of the text (i.e., you can find out most about the author, intended audience, and genre by examining these words). Any words appearing in grey are not in the 1-60,000 frequency range.¹⁵⁶

If you eliminate the Range 1 words, you lose all ability to make meaning of sentences, yet you can retain some of the original purpose. For instance, I’ve taken all the Range 1 words out of the first three paragraphs of the excerpt and am left with this string of words: *wizard joke ahead achievable goals self improvement wracked heart ought myself wish graduation lessons expired wonderful gathered celebrate academic success decided benefits failure threshold sometimes extol crucial importance imagination*. While no one could make grammatical sense out of that string of words, you might still get the sense of what this text’s original purpose was—notice the use of multiple words associated with graduation, including *graduation* itself: *goals*, *improvement*, *lessons*, *gathered*, *celebrate*, *academic*, *success*, *threshold*, *importance*. You need the Range 1 words to connect those key content words into a meaningful message, yet it is the Range 2 and 3 words that most distinguish texts from each other.

In the table at the top, you can see the percentage of words in the text belonging to that range: 72% of this text is comprised of Range 1 words. If you click on *See Lists* in the lefthand box of that table, the left sidebar in the bottom portion of the screen provides a list of every word used within your text, organized by rank and frequency within the text.

¹⁵⁶ Word and Phrase is sensitive to compounds—even those with spaces between them. And so, while both *literature* and *English* as separate units are in the top 60,000 most frequent words, their use together as a compound (*English literature*) is not.

TOKENS: word1, word2... (CLICK TO SEE IN COCA)
RANGE 3 (COCA LIST > 3000) WORDS
5: poverty 3: graduation 2: cannot, imagination 1: achievable, ambition, amusing, anvil, bathroom, cartoon, celebrate, compromise, convinced, corridor, criticise, crucial, depression, ditched, ennobling, entails, expired, expiry, extol, fools, hardships, humiliations, impoverished, improvement, irony, lifetime, mortgage, mythology, overactive, paradoxical, parenthesis, pension, petty, pride, quirk, quixotic, retrospect, romanticised, satisfied, scuttled, self, steering, threshold, uncomfortable, uneasy, useful, vocational, wizard, wracked
RANGE 2 (COCA LIST 501-3000) WORDS
3: myself 2: failure, poor, sometimes, whom 1: academic, agree, ahead, backgrounds, balance, bear, benefits, blame, blaming, choices, climbing, corner, date, decided, degree, direction, executive, fear, feared, gathered, goals, hardly, heart, importance, indeed, itself, joke, keys, lessons, lies, neither, nobody, novels, ought, personal, planet, please, quite, responsibility, road, rounded, secure, securing, slightly, stress, strikes, striking, subjects, success, thousand, wheel, wish, wonderful, wrong, yourself
RANGE 1 (COCA LIST 0-500) WORDS
30: I 23: the 20: to 15: that 13: and 12: of 9: have, my 8: for, is, was, you 7: a, what 6: on, parents 5: an, at, had, in, with, would 4: been, it, they, your 3: but, come, day, experience, me, not, out, this 2: all, are, between, by, came, do, first, never, only, or, own, remember, study, take, than, up, view, wanted, when, years 1: about, actually, age, ago, answers, as, asked, back, become, both, called, car, clear, closest, college, down, efforts, end, enough, ever, expected, force, found, from, half, hard, has, hoped, hoping, however, if, important, know, known, learned, less, life, like, looking, make, may, means, might, mind, moment, more, most, name, now, off, old, one, pay, point, put, reached, say, see, seem, she, since, so, something, stand, step, studying, talk, telling, their, them, themselves, there, these, thing, think, those, time, today, together, took, two, want, we, well, went, which, write

Image A3.27 Lists of words appearing in the excerpt taken from Rowling's Harvard speech

From these lists, I can see, for example, that the word *poverty* belongs to Range 3 and occurs five times in the text. The most frequent word in the text is *I*, which occurs 30 times and belongs to Range 1.

You can also click on any word within the text to learn more information about it. For instance, clicking on *wizard* provides all the information provided in a word search:

SYNONYMS (click to see) [?] SEE ALSO: MORE SPECIFIC (8) MORE GENERAL (2)

expert
4097 genius
9713 **wizard**
12267 ace
14769 prodigy
16999 virtuoso
17248 whiz
28899 wiz
sorcerer
9713 **wizard**
11936 shaman
17786 sorcerer
43506 conjurer
44184 warlock

WIZARD *n* (RANK 9713, FREQ 3525)

CLICK BAR TO LIMIT

	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC
STORED	11	75	45	67	4
MORE	203	1294	883	998	147

CONCORDANCE LINES

GENRE	TEXT	WORD	CONTEXT
1 FIC	these two would be hunting down Split Heirs 121 p121	escapes	wizards after all these years, but that was no reason to go
2 MAG	PHOTO: Frederick Brown 's 1989 portrait of Chicago harmonica	wizard	Amos [?] Wells is one of a series he did
3 MAG	offers a sort of hybrid between the Poet PC and the	Wizard	and [B.O.S.S.] Its Portfolio is a DOS-compatible \$300 device that
4 FIC	is. Perhaps the Druids had tea with some [?] [?]	wizards	and borrowed the golem, ah, recipe. If so,
5 MAG	of the Wizard family (and with some models, between	Wizards	and [ant-computer] and Apple PCs) by using special cables. #
6 NEWS	of our teams, specifically by adding Michael Jordan to the	Wizards	and [aromir] [?] to the Caps. All of sudden both franchises
7 SPOK	some of Hollywood 's brightest animators, special effects	wizards	and photographers [?] Cuba. For two weeks, the experts who
8 NEWS	be more drawn to fantasy, with comic book heroes,	wizards	and pirates replacing gun-toting cops as heroes. Last year 's
9 FIC	snarling sound of disgust and outrage. Corbal looked at the	wizard	and the [?] man in confusion. " What 's wrong with
10 NEWS	turn as the smug Umbridge nearly upstages the witches,	wizards	and villains [?] The special effects and visuals are masterful.
11 SPOK	It is year five of the Hogwarts school, and young	wizards	are starting to get comfortable with their powers. In " Harry
12 FIC	and there, he went directly to Kedrigern. he drew the	wizard	aside and [?] low, urgent tones said, " The assassins
13 FIC	? he loathed cards; it was I.W. who was a	wizard	at determining [?] people 's hands sight unseen ? and he would
14 FIC	: drooping head, a big, punished schoolboy. Can	Wizard	banish [disappointment] [?] easily ? DECEMBER 20, Earnshaw 's
15 MAG	's bird breaks the sound barrier PICTURE-PERFECT MARS The CG	wizard	behind those [?] pics ROACH RECON Turning insects into
16 SPOK	was looking at the magic compass while he walked, the	wizard	bumped into [?] lot of trees and fell in some holes in
17 FIC	bring myself to wait any longer. I was a [?]	wizard	but [?] had no power. I did not know how to
18 FIC	Ochietti said nothing. " So, " said the [?]	wizard	cheerfully [?] now that we have those scientific facts firmly
19 NEWS	Otis Thorpe. " We need an attitude overhaul, "	Wizards	Coach [?] Bickerstaff said. # Webber did not return Unseid
20 MAG	to prepare. It was n't always like this. When	Wizards	coach [?] Doug Collins played for the Sixers in the 1970s, he

CLICK WORD TO: ☒ SEARCH AS COLLOCATE ☐ QUERY THAT WORD [?]

Image A3.28 Searching for more information on *wizard*

This cross-referencing of every word in the text allows you to perform detailed analyses of any text.

Underneath the entry box where you copy and paste the text you're analyzing, you can change the search from *Word* to *Phrase*. When you do that, a row of boxes appears below your highlighted text results. You can select words that appear in your text by clicking on them—clicking on them fills in the row of boxes, one by one—to see how commonly they're used together. For instance, I have selected *overactive imagination*, which you can see at the top of the image below:

1. SELECT WORD overactive imagination
2. CHANGE TO EXACT WILDCARD ALL FORMS SYNONYMS PART OF SPEECH ANY WORD REMOVE

SEARCH CLEAR HELP

SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
2	26	3	3	2

CONCORDANCE LINES

GENRE	TEXT	WORD	CONTEXT
1 FIC	, struggling to get out. Lily says I have an	overactive	imagination and [?] need to invent drama in my life.
2 FIC	by the brusque, matter-of-fact words, Constance	imagination	and [?] flush with embarrassment even as
3 FIC	Mission Service. Ford reads them because he 's got an	imagination	and [?] stories too much - lots of students in
4 MAG	believe my house was haunted. I think I had an	imagination	and [?] so convinced that those around me became
5 FIC	opposite sex, so far at least. Blessed with an	imagination	and [?] keen intelligence, Gracie too was out
6 FIC	denuded face peering down at us ? [?] My	imagination	had [?] a bedraggling of hoary ladies out of a
7 FIC	, all I can say is who would n't have an	imagination	if they [?] the kind of stories I used to
8 FIC	" Always a possibility, " he said. " An	imagination	might [?] a facility to a man in my business.
9 FIC	thoughts on this happy occasion. She could probably blame her	imagination	on [?] much work and not enough sleep. Hannah and
10 FIC	than once he'd told himself she was a figment of his	imagination	or [?] hallucination caused by too many blows to his
11 FIC	the network and somehow wreak havoc. Whether that was just his	imagination-and	the conspiracy theorist [?] him-Alan was n't
12 NEWS	modern-day fairy tale is about a recently [?] woman with an	imagination	[?] Lucille Lortel Theater, 121 Christopher
13 MAG	writing, including a fourth novel, Olivia Joules and the	imagination	[?] 2003 [?] which fell rather flat, plus work
14 FIC	, the abyss, with a face showing signs of an	imagination	and [?] more real to Blam than anything
15 MAG	seen him with another woman. People said I had an	imagination	but [?] knew what I saw. Sure enough,
16 MAG	corner of the hut. # I was equipped with an	imagination	and [?] extremes and inclined toward the
17 FIC	ca n't be I # Hoping it might only be her	imagination	Venus [?] around in her seat, afraid that her
18 FIC	she could believe that it was all a product of her	imagination	which [?] had been unreasonably stimulated by the
19 FIC	wounds from different incidents. " # " You have an	imagination	[?] said Bokatu. He pointed to a small hairy
20 SPOK	MAGLIN (Voiceover) in " Olivia Joules and the	imagination	[?] and [?] manages to violate one of the most basic
21 ACAD	might strike some as extravagant rhetoric or the product of an	imagination	[?] but it 's possible that O'Reilly was
22 FIC	had unkempt, sandy hair, restless hands, and an	imagination	[?] [?] a heritage that might someday
23 FIC	that what she 'd glimpsed was only a figment of an	imagination	[?] [?] she dared to look again, the awful
24 FIC	. They had to be some mistake. Figments of his	imagination	[?] [?] to write novels had finally
25 FIC	first, the millennialist thought it was a figment of his	imagination	[?] [?] fingers wrapped around the black rubber grips

Image A3.29 Searching for the phrase *overactive imagination*

These results tell me that the phrase *overactive imagination* is most frequent in fiction, where it occurs 26 times. The concordance results allow me to see context for the phrase's use.

Another type of text analysis is the academic-specific text comparison, which shows you the percent of words within a text that are associated with academic writing in general or with a specific academic discipline. To find this option, click on *ACADEMIC*, which is directly below the

Word and Phrase . *Info* banner at the top of the screen. I've selected four paragraphs from Chapter 1 of this book to analyze:



Image A3.30 Academic text comparison on Word and Phrase

The results are still color-coded, but now they are color-coded for words' frequencies based on their association with academic writing. Words in grey represent words that are common to all genres and are not academic in nature (e.g., *from*, *like*, *were*, *question*) while words in blue are not included in the most frequent words of any genre (e.g., *quotative*, *stylometry*). The yellow words represent the top 500 words most used in academic writing but not in other genres (e.g., *perspective*, *direct*, and *theory* frequently appear in academic writing but not in spoken, newspaper, magazine, or fiction), and the green words represent the words ranking 501-3000 within the academic genre (e.g., *integrated*, *differentiate*). The red words are associated with academic writing in general but are not in those most commonly used across different types of academic writing (e.g., *angle*, *parenthetical*). It is those red words that we are most interested in for the next type of comparison.

Underneath 'discipline' in the table, the drop-down menu allows you to select a specific discipline to compare with your text:

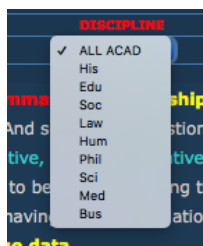


Image A3.31 Academic disciplines available for comparison

The best match for linguistics is HUM, which stands for *humanities*. When I click on that, the text is compared to vocabulary specific to humanities, which changes the words highlighted in red. The yellow and green words stay the same because they are frequent across all academic

disciplines, but the words highlighted in red will change to show the words most associated with the humanities.

SEE LISTS	FREQ RANGE	1-500	501-1000	DISCIPLINE 6%	SAVE TEXT	HELP
	518 WORDS	23 %	2 %	Hum		

From a **theoretical perspective**, I am **interested** in better **understanding** the **grammatical relationship between** the **quotation** and **direct quotation** to investigate how **verbs** like Don Corleoned can be **used** in quotations. And so my first question in a **theoretical approach** is the **following**: Is the **direct quotation** a sort of **direct object** of the **verb** in the quotation, or is the quotation more of a **parenthetical phrase** like you know or I mean? **Finding** the answer to that question would then allow me to begin investigating the **types** of **verbs** allowed by native speakers in **quotations** and their **syntactic roles**. **Theoretical approaches require** having a **firm** foundation in the area being **studied** (**such** as grammar) and in a **particular theory** to **apply** that **theory** to **natural language data**.

From a **typological perspective**, I want to know how other **languages** **overtly** mark (if they do at all) **direct quotations** and what **features**, if any, are **similar** across **languages**. A question **within** this **approach** is the **following**: Do all **languages** **use** quotations or have a **similar system**? From there, my **analysis** could **focus** in on the **languages** that have **quotation** constructions **similar** to English, and my next **major** question could be whether those **languages** also allow **creative verb** choices like Don Corleoned and what **patterns** there are for allowing **such verbs**. **Typological approaches require access to data** in different **languages** and an **ability** to work with **data** from a **variety** of **languages**.

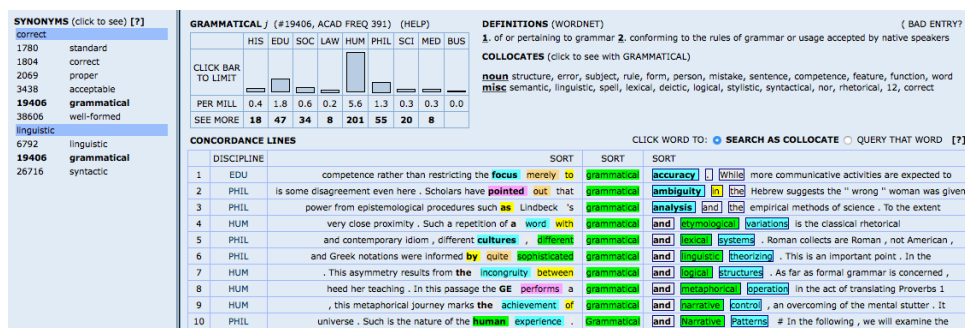
Finally, from an **applied perspective**, the **types** of questions I might ask really **depend** on the **field(s)** I want to have my **research focus** on. If I were focusing on education, my questions might **focus** on **language** learners and **understanding** how **readers** are able to **interpret creative quotation verbs** like Don Corleoned. If I were focusing on psychology and cognition, I might want to know how the brain **works** as it reads **such** a sentence and to **find** out, through **eye-tracking studies**, if **readers** actually have to **back-track** to understand **verbs** like Don Corleoned in that **context**. Yet another area of **interest** is stylometry, or the **study** of **stylistics** and **understanding language** choices made by **particular authors**. From that angle, I'd be more **interested** in **understanding** what **patterns** we **generally** find in quotations and then seeing if **authors** show **individual differences** in their **use** of quotations. I could **extend** that line of thought and investigate whether **specific genres** have **patterns** in quotation **use** that **differentiate** them from other **genres**. **Applied approaches require a firm** foundation in **both linguistics** and the other **field(s)** being **integrated** with the **study**.

While certainly not **exhaustive**, these sample questions that could spur different **types** of **studies** demonstrate that the **approach** taken to even a single **observation** can drastically **alter** how the final **product** takes **shape**. Because our course is **focused** on better learning **patterns** of grammar (**rather than assuming** an already **existing** foundation in the **subject**), our **approach** will not be **theoretical**. Our course **specifically focuses solely** on English grammar, and so our **approach** is also not **typological**. Instead, we will be taking an **applied approach** to **studying grammar**: we will **study features** of English grammar as a foundation and **apply** that **information** to other fields, **such as genre studies, literary analysis, and education**.

Image A3.32 Text comparison to humanities

Of the 518 words within the excerpt, 6% are highly associated with humanities. Notice the other ranges have not changed—they are compared to academic vocabulary in general. The red words are the ones associated with a particular discipline. In this case, words such as *grammatical*, *quotation*, *parenthetical*, and *typological* are more closely related to the humanities than others. If I change the discipline, the red words change, too (e.g., selecting the medical option leaves me with one red word, *angle*, and a 0% discipline match). This analysis provides a glimpse of the readability of a text because more highlighted words indicate a higher academic vocabulary. More red words indicates more knowledge is necessary within a particular academic field to understand the text. It can also help student writers figure out if their writing is on par for their field. A match of 0% to their chosen discipline can indicate they're not using the jargon expected of their field; on the other hand, having a percentage match too high for a specific discipline indicates outside readers (even those who read a lot of academic texts) will not find your text approachable.

If you click on a word (even the grey ones), the information provided is laid out in the same way as a regular Word and Phrase search, but all the information is specific to academic writing. For instance, I selected *grammatical*, and Word and Phrase provided these results:

Image A3.33 Results for *grammatical* in academic texts

The synonyms, frequency ranks, and concordance results are specific to academic genres. The word *grammatical* occurs most frequently in the humanities with 5.6 instances per million words, is considered synonymous with words like *standard* and *syntactic*, and often appears with collocates like *structure*, *competence*, and *linguistic*.

If you look back at Image A3.32, you'll notice that some of the grey words are underlined; these indicate words that are associated with academic genres—just not the one I'm comparing my text to. If I click on one of those words, I can find out what academic genre it's most associated with. For example, clicking on *cognition* shows me that it is most used in education texts, followed by philosophy and then humanities. In the same way, clicking on *grammar* tells me that word is more associated with education texts while (oddly enough) *grammatical* is much more frequent in humanities texts.

Along with these textual comparisons, you can also perform a basic word search within academic texts by clicking on *FREQUENCY LISTS* in the menu at the top of the page. The results there will look like the ones in the image above, showing frequency across academic disciplines.

Word and Phrase is an amazing tool for understanding the connections between word use and genre, as well as providing a fuller semantic picture of words, including connotations and synonyms. Its tools allow you to connect syntactic analyses with semantic ones.

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