PARTS OF SPEECH

Parts of speech can be divided into two distinct divisions:
1. Picture words (Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs)

2. Function words (Pronouns, Prepositions, Conjunctions, Interjections)

WHAT IS A NOUN?
A **noun** is a word used to name a person, animal, place, thing, and abstract idea. Nouns are usually the first words which small children learn. The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are all nouns:

Late last **year** our **neighbors** bought a **goat**.
Portia White was an **opera singer**.
The **bus inspector** looked at all the **passengers' passes**.
According to **Plutarch**, the **library** at **Alexandria** was destroyed in 48 B.C.
Philosophy is of little **comfort** to the **starving**.

A noun can function in a sentence as a subject, a direct object, an indirect object, a subject complement, an object complement, an appositive, an adjective or an adverb.

Noun Gender

Many common nouns, like "engineer" or "teacher," can refer to men or women, for example, a man was called an "author" while a woman was called an "authoress"; in hotels a service person male is "waiter" and female is "waitress".

Noun Plurals

Most nouns change their form to indicate number by adding "-s" or "-es", as illustrated in the following pairs of sentences: truth and truths; Box and boxes etc.

Possessive Nouns

In the possessive case, a noun or pronoun changes its form to show that it owns or is closely related to something else. Usually, nouns become possessive by adding a combination of an apostrophe and the letter "s."

The red suitcase is **Cassandra's**.
The only luggage that was lost was the **prime minister's**.
The **children's** mittens were scattered on the floor of the porch.
The concert was interrupted by the **dogs'** barking, the **ducks'** quacking, and the **babies'** squalling.

Types of Nouns

There are many different types of nouns. If you are interested in the details of these different types, you can read about them in the following sections.

Proper Nouns

You always write a **proper noun** with a capital letter, since the noun represents the name of a specific person, place, or thing. The names of days of the week, months, historical documents, institutions, organizations, religions, their holy texts and their adherents are proper nouns. A proper noun is the opposite of a common noun

The **Maroons** were transported from **Jamaica** and forced to build the fortifications in **Halifax**.
Many people dread **Monday** mornings.
Abraham appears in the **Talmud** and in the **Koran**.

Common Nouns

A **common noun** is a noun referring to a person, place, or thing in a general sense --
>   According to the **sign**, the nearest **town** is 60 **miles** away.

>   The road **crew** was startled by the **sight** of three large **moose** crossing the **road**.

Concrete Nouns

A **concrete noun** is a noun which names anything (or anyone) that you can perceive through your physical
Senses: touch, sight, taste, hearing, or smell. A concrete noun is the opposite of an abstract noun.
The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are all concrete nouns:
>   The **judge** handed the **files** to the **clerk**.
>   Whenever they take the **dog** to the **beach**, it spends **hours** chasing **waves**.
>   The **book binder** replaced the flimsy paper **cover** with a sturdy, cloth-covered **board**.

Abstract Nouns

An **abstract noun** is a noun which names anything which you can *not* perceive through your five physical senses, and is the opposite of a concrete noun. The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are all abstract nouns:
>   Buying the fire extinguisher was an **afterthought**.
>   Tillie is amused by people who are nostalgic about **childhood**.
>   **Justice** often seems to slip out of our grasp.
>   Some scientists believe that **schizophrenia** is transmitted genetically.

Countable Nouns

A **countable noun** (or **count noun**) is a noun with both a singular and a plural form, and it names anything (or anyone) that you can *count*. In each of the following sentences, the **highlighted** words are countable nouns:
>   We painted the **table** red and the **chairs** blue.
>   Miriam found six silver **dollars** in the **toe** of a **sock**.
>   The oak **tree** lost three **branches** in the **hurricane**.

Non-Countable Nouns

A **non-countable noun** (or **mass noun**) is a noun which does not have a plural form, and which refers to something that you could (or would) not usually count.
>   Joseph Priestly discovered **oxygen**.
>   We decided to sell the **furniture.**

Collective Nouns

A **collective noun** is a noun naming a group of things, animals, or persons. You could count the individual members of the group, but you usually think of the group as a whole is generally as one unit.
In each of the following sentences, the **highlighted** word is a collective noun:
>   The **flock** of geese spends most of its time in the pasture.
>   The **jury** is dining on take-out chicken tonight.
>   The steering **committee** meets every Wednesday afternoon.
>   The **class** was startled by the bursting light bulb.

WHAT IS A VERB?
The verb is perhaps the most important part of the sentence. A **verb** or compound verb asserts something about the subject of the sentence and express actions, events, or states of being. The verb or compound verb is the critical element of the predicate of a sentence.
In each of the following sentences, the verb or compound verb is **highlighted**:
>   Dracula **bites** his victims on the neck.
>   In early October, Giselle **will plant** twenty tulip bulbs.
>   My first teacher **was** Miss Crawford, but I remember the janitor Mr. Weatherbee more vividly.

Karl Creelman bicycled around the world in 1899, but his diaries and his bicycle **were destroyed**.

WHAT IS AN ADJECTIVE?

An **adjective** modifies a noun or a pronoun by describing, identifying, or quantifying words. An adjective usually precedes the noun or the pronoun which it modifies.

In the following examples, the **highlighted** words are adjectives:

The **truck-shaped** balloon floated over the treetops.

Mrs. Morrison papered her **kitchen** walls with **hideous** wall paper.
The **small** boat foundered on the **wine dark** sea.
The **coal** mines are **dark** and **dank**.
Many stores have already begun to play **irritating Christmas** music.
A **battered music** box sat on the **mahogany** sideboard.
The back room was filled with **large**, **yellow** rain boots.

Possessive Adjectives

A **possessive adjective** (``my,'' ``your,'' ``his,'' ``her,'' ``its,'' ``our,'' ``their'') is similar or identical to a possessive pronoun; however, it is used as an adjective and modifies a noun or a noun phrase, as in the following sentences:

What is **your** phone number?
The bakery sold **his** favorite type of bread.

Demonstrative Adjectives

The **demonstrative adjectives** ``this,'' ``these,'' ``that,'' ``those,'' and ``what'' are identical to the demonstrative pronouns, but are used as adjectives to modify nouns or noun phrases, as in the following sentences:

This apartment needs to be fumigated.
Even though my friend preferred **those** plates, I bought these.
Which plants should be watered twice a week?
What book are you reading?

Indefinite Adjectives

An **indefinite adjective** is similar to an indefinite pronoun, except that it modifies a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase, as in the following sentences:

Many people believe that corporations are under-taxed.

The indefinite adjective ``many'' modifies the noun ``people'' and the noun phrase ``many people'' is the subject of the sentence.

I will send you **any** mail that arrives after you have moved to Sudbury.
They found **a few** goldfish floating belly up in the swan pound.

WHAT IS AN ADVERB?

An **adverb** can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause. An adverb indicates manner, time, place, cause, or degree and answers questions such as "how," "when," "where," "how much".

While some adverbs can be identified by their characteristic "ly" suffix, most of them must be identified by untangling the grammatical relationships within the sentence or clause as a whole. Unlike an adjective, an adverb can be found in various places within the sentence.

In the following examples, each of the **highlighted** words is an adverb:

The seamstress **quickly** made the mourning clothes.

In this sentence, the adverb "quickly" modifies the verb "made" and indicates in what manner (or how fast) the clothing was constructed.

The midwives waited **patiently** through a long labor.
The **boldly**-spoken words would return to haunt the rebel.

We urged him to dial the number more **expeditiously**.
Unfortunately, the bank closed at three **today**.

WHAT IS A PRONOUN?

A **pronoun** can replace a noun or another pronoun. You use pronouns like "he," "which," "none," and "you" to make your sentences less cumbersome and less repetitive.

Grammarians classify pronouns into several types, including the personal pronoun, the demonstrative pronoun, the interrogative pronoun, the indefinite pronoun, the relative pronoun, the reflexive pronoun, and the intensive pronoun.

Personal Pronouns

A **personal pronoun** refers to a specific person or thing and changes its form to indicate person, number, gender, and case.

Subjective Personal Pronouns

Subject Personal Pronouns	Possessive Pronouns	Object Pronoun	Reflexive pronoun
I	My/mine	Me	Myself
We	Our	Us	Ourselves
You	Yours truly	You	Yourself
He	His	Him	Himself
She	Her	Her	Herself
It	Its	It	Itself
They	Their	Them	Themselves

Subject pronoun: **You** are surely the strangest child **I** have ever met.
Possessive pronoun: The smallest gift is **mine**.
Object pronoun:Aroma forced **her** parents to stay with **her**.
Reflexive pronoun: You can help **yourself**.
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Demonstrative Pronouns

A **demonstrative pronoun** points to and identifies a noun or a pronoun. "This" and "these" refer to things that are nearby either in space or in time, while "that" and "those" refer to things that are farther away in space or time.

        This must not continue.
        This is puny; **that** is the tree I want.
        Three customers wanted **these**.

Interrogative Pronouns

An **interrogative pronoun** is used to ask questions. The interrogative pronouns are "who," "whom," "which," "what" and the compounds formed with the suffix "ever" ("whoever," "whomever," "whichever," and "whatever").

        Which wants to see the dentist first?
        Who wrote the novel Rockbound?
        Whom do you think we should invite?
        To **whom** do you wish to speak?
        Who will meet the delegates at the train station?
        To **whom** did you give the paper?

Relative Pronouns

You can use a **relative pronoun** is used to link one phrase or clause to another phrase or clause. The relative pronouns are "who," "whom," "that," and "which." The compounds "whoever", "whomever", and "whichever" are also relative pronouns.

> You may invite **whomever** you like to the party.
> The candidate **who** wins the greatest popular vote is not always elected.
> **Whoever** broke the window will have to replace it.
> The crate **which** was left in the corridor has now been moved into the storage closet.
> I will read **whichever** manuscript arrives first.

Indefinite Pronouns

An **indefinite pronoun** is a pronoun referring to an identifiable but not specified person or thing. An indefinite pronoun conveys the idea of all, any, none, or some.

The most common indefinite pronouns are "all," "another," "any," "anybody," "anyone," "anything," "each," "everybody," "everyone," "everything," "few," "many," "nobody," "none," "one," "several," "some," "somebody," and "someone." The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are indefinite pronouns:

> **Many** were invited to the lunch but only twelve showed up.
> The office had been searched and **everything** was thrown onto the floor.
> We donated **everything** we found in the attic to the woman's shelter garage sale.
> Although they looked everywhere for extra copies of the magazine, they found **none**.

Reflexive Pronouns

You can use a **reflexive pronoun** to refer back to the subject of the clause or sentence. The reflexive pronouns are "myself," "yourself," "herself," "himself," "itself," "ourselves," "yourselves," and "themselves." Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a reflexive pronoun:

> Diabetics give **themselves** insulin shots several times a day.
> The Dean often does the photocopying **herself** so that the secretaries can do more important work.
> After the party, I asked **myself** why I had faxed invitations to everyone in my office building.

WHAT IS A PREPOSITION?

A **preposition** links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition.

A preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence as in the following examples:

> The book is **on** the table.
> The book is **beneath** the table.
> The book is leaning **against** the table.
> The book is **beside** the table.
> She held the book **over** the table.
> She read the book **during** class.

In each of the preceding sentences, a preposition locates the noun "book" in space or in time.

A prepositional phrase is made up of the preposition, its object and any associated adjectives or adverbs. A prepositional phrase can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. The most common prepositions are "about," "above," "across," "after," "against," "along," "among," "around," "at," "before," "behind," "below," "beneath," "beside," "between," "beyond," "but," "by," "despite," "down," "during," "except," "for," "from," "in," "inside," "into," "like," "near," "of," "off," "on," "onto," "out," "outside," "over," "past," "since," "through," "throughout," "till," "to," "toward," "under," "underneath," "until," "up," "upon," "with," "within," and "without."

Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a preposition:

> The children climbed the mountain **without** fear.

In this sentence, the preposition "without" introduces the noun "fear" The prepositional phrase "without fear" functions as an adverb describing how the children climbed.

> There was rejoicing **throughout** the land when the government was defeated.
> The spider crawled slowly **along** the banister.
> The dog is hiding **under** the porch because it knows it will be punished **for** chewing up a new pair **of** shoes.
> The screenwriter searched **for** the manuscript he was certain was somewhere **in** his office.

WHAT IS A CONJUNCTION?

You can use a **conjunction** to link words, phrases, and clauses, as in the following example:

> I ate the pizza **and** the pasta.
> Call the movers **when** you are ready.

Coordinating Conjunctions

You use a **coordinating conjunction** ("and," "but," "or," "nor," "for," "so," or "yet") to join individual words, phrases, and independent clauses. Note that you can also use the conjunctions "but" and "for" as prepositions. In the following sentences, each of the **highlighted** words is a coordinating conjunction:

> Lilacs **and** violets are usually purple.

In this example, the coordinating conjunction "and" links two nouns.

> This movie is particularly interesting to feminist film theorists, **for** the screenplay was written by Mae West.

Subordinating Conjunctions

A **subordinating conjunction** introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).

The most common subordinating conjunctions are "after," "although," "as," "because," "before," "how," "if," "once," "since," "than," "that," "though," "till," "until," "when," "where," "whether," and "while." Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a subordinating conjunction:

> **After** she had learned to drive, Alice felt more independent.

The subordinating conjunction "after" introduces the dependent clause "After she had learned to drive."

> **If** the paperwork arrives on time, your cheque will be mailed on Tuesday.
> Gerald had to begun his thesis over again **when** his computer crashed.

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions always appear in pairs -- you use them to link equivalent sentence elements. The most common correlative conjunctions are "both...and," "either...or," "neither...nor,", "not only...but also," "so...as "and" whether...or." (Technically correlative conjunctions consist simply of a coordinating conjunction linked to an adjective or adverb.)

The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are correlative conjunctions:

> **Both** my grandfather **and** my father worked in the steel plant.

In this sentence, the correlative conjunction "both...and" is used to link the two noun phrases that act as the compound subject of the sentence: "my grandfather" and "my father".

> Bring **either** a Jello salad **or** a potato scallop.
> Corinne is trying to decide **whether** to go to medical school **or** to go to law school.
> The explosion destroyed **not only** the school **but also** the neighboring pub.

WHAT IS AN INTERJECTION?

An **interjection** is a word added to a sentence to convey emotion. It is not grammatically related to any other part of the sentence.

You usually follow an interjection with an exclamation mark. Interjections are uncommon in formal academic prose, except in direct quotations. The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are interjections:

> **Ouch**, that hurt!

Oh no, I forgot that the exam was today.
Hey! Put that down!
I heard one guy say to another guy, "He has a new car, **eh**?"
I don't know about you but, **good lord**, I think taxes are too high!

Source: http://www.arts.uottawa.ca/writcent/hypergrammar/partsp.html