

GLOSSARY

BASIC NOTIONS

Parts of speech: It is the term we use to refer to a class, or category, of words which share certain characteristics. In English, the most common parts of speech are: noun (e.g. *cat*), verb (e.g. *learn*), adverb (e.g. *carefully*), adjective (e.g. *simple*), preposition (e.g. *up*), determiner (e.g. *the*) and conjunction (e.g. *and*, *because*). Some consider the *pronoun* (e.g. *he*) to be a separate part of speech; we include it in the category *noun*. (An interjection (e.g. *darn!*) is another part of speech, but it is less important when it comes to identifying constituents and clauses; see 'Form of a constituent'; see 'Clause')

Constituents: Constituents, also called *phrases*, are the (potentially larger) units that the combination of words create. In the sentence *The big cat was running in the garden*, for instance, the words *the*, *big* and *cat* form the larger constituent *the big cat*. They can be identified by using constituency tests (for more information on constituency tests, see Bas Aarts (2001), *English Syntax and Argumentation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 193-240; Liliane Haegeman (2006), *Thinking syntactically*. Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing. pp. 65-145). Substitution, for example, is a kind of constituency test: noun phrases (NPs) can often be replaced by a single pronoun (*the old man who lives across the street from me* > 'he'). Constituents have both a form and a function.

Form of a constituent: The form of a constituent is determined by its head, which is the essential element of that constituent. For example, in *the big cat*, the head of the constituent is *cat*, which is a noun. The whole constituent *the big cat* is therefore referred to as a Noun Phrase.

Function of a constituent: A constituent performs a specific function, either at the clausal level (this will often depend on the arguments required by a verb) or at the phrasal level (i.e. in relation to the head of a phrase). In the sentence *A couple of my friends went to Australia last month*, the noun phrase *A couple of my friends* fulfils the clausal function of Subject. In the sentence, *My keys are on the table; on the table* is Subject complement (function at the clausal level); *the table* is a object of a preposition (function at the phrasal level). (See below for a complete list of functions.)

Complements: Complements are the obligatory constituents that, in addition to the Subject, a verb requires. In the sentence *Tom smashed the window yesterday*, the noun phrase *the window* is an obligatory constituent (you cannot say **Tom smashed*: it is a complement of the verb, and its function is that of Direct Object). (Note that a given verb may or may not require the same number of complements depending on its meaning. (In *He doesn't eat meat*, 'eat' is transitive whereas in *Don't talk while you're eating*, 'eat' is intransitive. Both sentences are grammatical, however.) The adverb phrase *yesterday* is, however, not a complement but an Adjunct. (*Tom smashed the window* is a grammatical sentence; 'yesterday' is syntactically optional)

Arguments: The verb in English occurs with a Subject (unless it is used in the imperative *Come here!*) and often (but not always, as in, *He survived*) combines with a number of (obligatory) complements. These (Subject + Complements) are the arguments of the verb. It logically follows from this that adjuncts are not arguments.

FORMS

Noun Phrase: A noun phrase is a constituent whose head is a noun (e.g. *happiness*, *the big cat*, *the destruction of the city*) or a pronoun. All nouns in English - except pronouns and proper names - can be preceded by the definite article *the*.

Verb Phrase: A verb phrase is a constituent whose head is a verb (e.g. *Tom [arrived] last week, They [broke the window], His teacher [told them a story] on the train yesterday*). It is composed of the verb and all its complements except the Subject. Verbs are morphologically marked for number (*They have a dog* vs. *He has a dog*), tense (*Tom is in the garden* vs. *Tom was in the garden*) and aspect (*John sang a song for us* vs. *John was singing a song for us*). (They can also be marked for person: *I am/you are*; also, they are not always marked for person or number - for instance, all (non-progressive) past tense forms in English are marked for tense and aspect, but never for person or number: *I/you/he/we/they/etc. went*).

Adjective Phrase: An adjective phrase is a constituent whose head is an adjective (e.g. *funny, [strange] colors, the [big] cat, a [very tall] building*). Adjectives provide additional information about a noun (they often provide descriptive information) and occur either right before the head noun (*the big cat*) or after a linking verb (*He seemed happy, John became anxious*). Less commonly, they can be used in apposition: [*Pleased with his exam results*], *he went out for a drink*.

Prepositional Phrase: A prepositional phrase is a constituent whose head is a preposition (e.g. *They're playing [in the garden], A couple [of my friends] didn't show up*).

At the phrasal level, a prepositional phrase generally follows a noun (e.g. *the destruction [of the city], the cupboard [under the stairs]*) or an adjective (e.g. *afraid [of snakes]*). In these cases, the PrepP often functions as an Adjunct. It can also function as a nominal or adjectival complement.

At the clausal level, a PrepP is either introduced by a prepositional verb (e.g. *I was looking [for a pen], They never listen [to their teacher]*) or functions as Prepositional Complement (*They live [in Brussels], Mary put it [behind the desk] this morning*) or as Adjunct (*They're playing [in the garden], They called me [at 9am]*). PrepPs can also function as Indirect Objects (e.g. *I sent a letter [to the editor]; I bought a present [for my sister]*).

Adverb Phrase: An adverb phrase is a constituent whose head is an adverb (e.g. *He is [very] kind, He was dancing [very slowly]*).

An Adverb Phrase can be used to qualify the situation referred to by the verb (*He danced [gracefully]* - this is often called an adverb of manner), to modify an adjective (*She was [very] careful not to fall*) or even to modify another adverb (*They were walking [very] slowly*). Adverb phrases can also be used clause-initially and be separated from the main clause by a comma: *Obviously, he has had enough of this* (= It is obvious that he has had enough of this); *Frankly, I've had enough of him* (= I'm being frank when I say that ...) (see chapter 6, section 2.2.3)

Clause: A clause is composed of a Subject and a predicate (= verb + complements (+ Adjuncts)). The clause in which the main verb occurs is called the main clause (e.g. [*John saw the bird that I bought last week*]). Main clauses can be combined by means of a coordinating conjunction (*[I met Mary this morning]MC and [John went to his office]MC*). Clauses that are introduced by a subordinating conjunction are called subclauses (e.g. *John saw the bird [that I healed last week]*). Another term for subclause is **subordinate clause**.

FUNCTIONS

Subject: Although a sentence does not necessarily have complements such as Direct Object or Indirect Object, every sentence has a Subject. The *Subject* of a sentence can be identified by turning a declarative clause into an interrogative clause: this results in inversion, meaning that the finite verb (the auxiliary that is marked for tense and person) will occur before the Subject. The Subject of a sentence is usually an NP, but a PrepP, an AdjP, an AdvP or a clause can function as Subject as well. (See Aarts 2008 70-72.)

Direct Object: The *Direct Object* can be identified by asking who or what is 'affected' by the main verb in the clause. It is usually realized as an NP, but a PrepP (e.g. *When shall we organize **the meeting?** I prefer **after Christmas***) or a clause can also function as Direct Object. (See Aarts 2008: 73-76.)

Indirect Object: An *Indirect Object* can be identified by looking first for the Subject and the Direct Object, and then asking *for/to whom?* or *for/to what?* Generally speaking, it is not possible to have an Indirect Object without a Direct Object. Indirect Objects can be realized as NPs, PrepPs (headed by 'to' or 'for') or a finite *wh*-clauses (*They told **whoever was listening** the story*). (See Aarts 2008: 77.)

Subject Complement: A *Subject Complement* follows a linking verb such as *be, become, seem, appear, look, taste*. A Subject Complement 'complements', that is, adds more information about the Subject. A Subject Complement can be realized as an NP or an Adjective Phrase (or a clause). Do not confuse Direct Object and Subject Complement. A Direct Object introduces an argument (or 'participant') in addition to the Subject: *My mother married **a doctor*** (mother ≠ doctor). A Subject Complement does not introduce a new participant into the situation, since it qualifies or identifies the Subject: *My mother is **a doctor*** (mother = doctor).

Object Complement: An *Object Complement* 'complements', that is, adds more information about the Direct Object (e.g. *They called him **a liar***). It can be a NP or an Adjective Phrase (or a clause). *Make, name, consider* and *elect* are examples of verbs that are often (but not always) used with an Object Complement: *That makes me **angry**; They named her **Sarah**; I consider him **the best candidate**; They elected him **president**, I call that **stretching things too far**.*

Prepositional Complement: A *Prepositional Complement* is a syntactically obligatory constituent in the form of a Prepositional phrase, the head of which does not depend on a Prepositional verb. As it is a complement, it cannot be left out without resulting in an ungrammatical sentence or at least a sentence that has a different meaning from a sentence with a Prepositional Complement: *He lives in Lille* vs. *He lives!* (= He's alive!) Note, too, that we consider that *here* and *there* function as Prepositional Complements in a sentence like *Put it here/there*, although they are not PrepPs. This makes sense when we consider that *here* and *there* can be easily paraphrased with a PrepP: *Put it there (on the table, under the chair, next to the desk)*.

Adjunct: An *Adjunct* is a syntactically optional constituent that occurs in a variety of formal realizations (NP, AdvP, a PrepP, a clause) (see Aarts 2008: 77-79). The claim that it is 'syntactically optional' means that if it is left out the sentence is still grammatical. Needless to say, if a constituent is left out, from the point of view of meaning, the message communicated will no longer be the same. So it is important to distinguish the syntactic effect from the semantic effect that the omission of a constituent has. An Adjunct often gives information concerning the circumstances of the predication, that is (for example), where, when or why. (*I met him met him **on campus at 3 pm.***)

Prepositional Object: A *Prepositional Object* is a Prepositional Phrase the head of which belongs to a prepositional verb: *I'm **looking for my glasses**; She's **listening to music**; **What are you looking at?***

Object of a Preposition: Whereas an NP or a VP can be composed of nothing other than the head itself (*Milk comes from [cows]_{NP}; The train [arrived]_{VP}*), a preposition can never occur alone and is always followed by a Noun Phrase. It makes sense, then, that an *Object of a Preposition* is a syntactically obligatory constituent in the form of a Noun Phrase that directly follows a preposition that introduces a Prepositional Phrase. The omission of this constituent results in a syntactically and semantically incomplete PrepP. An Object of a preposition is a function that related to the internal structure of a phrase; it refers to the function of part of a phrase. Be careful not to confuse prepositions with particles; they often have the same form, but they do not function in the same way: *He lives **up** the road* ('up' is a preposition here) vs. *He looked **up** the word* (or 'looked the word up') *in the dictionary* (where 'up' is a particle). (See Depraetere & Langford 2012: 47-52.)

Constituents

Function	Clausal Function								Phrasal Function
	Subject	Direct Object	Indirect Object	Subject Complement	Object Complement	Prepositional Complement	Prepositional Object	Adjunct	Object of Preposition
Form	- NP - PrepP - AdjP - AdvP - Clause	- NP - PrepP - Clause	- NP - PrepP - Finite Wh-clause	- NP - AdjP - Clause	- NP - AdjP - Clause	PrepP	PrepP	- NP - PrepP - AdjP - AdvP - Clause	NP
Frequency	1/Clause	MAX 1 / Clause						∞	1 / PrepP

Complements

VERB +

Subject = Intransitive Verb (e.g. *She sneezed, We arrived yesterday*)

Subject + DO = Transitive Verb (e.g. *He painted the walls, They played football in the garden*)

Subject + DO + IO = Ditransitive Verb (e.g. *Mary gave him a pen, I baked a cake for the children*)

Constituents

Form	Noun Phrase	Adjective Phrase	Adverb Phrase	Prepositional Phrase	Clause
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject - Direct Object - Indirect Object - Subject Complement -Object Complement - Adjunct -Object of preposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject - Subject Complement - Adjunct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject - Adjunct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject - Direct Object - Indirect Object - Prepositional Complement - Adjunct -Prepositional Object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject - Direct Object - Indirect Object - Adjunct - Object Complement - Subject Complement