Parts of Speech

Traditional grammar recognizes eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

Many words can function as more than one part of speech. For example, depending on its use in a sentence, the word *paint* can be:
- a noun (*The paint is wet.*)
- or a verb (*Please paint the ceiling next.*)

**Nouns**: A noun (N) is the name of a person, place, thing, or concept.

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The lion in the cage growled at the zookeeper.
```

**Pronouns**: A pronoun (P) is a word used in place of a noun. Usually the pronoun substitutes for a specific noun, known as its antecedent (ANT).

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You know the answer.
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```
When the battery wears down, we recharge it.
```

**Verbs**: The verb of a sentence usually expresses action (jump, think) or being (is, become). It is composed of a main verb (MV) preceded by one of more helping verbs (HV).

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The horses exercise every day.
```

```
The task force report was not completed on schedule.
```

**Adjectives**: An adjective (ADJ) is a word used to modify, or describe, a noun or pronoun. An adjective usually answers one of these questions: Which one? What kind? How many?

```
The decision was unpopular.
```

```
I ordered the special deep-dish, Chicago-style pizza.
```

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Parts of Speech

**Adverbs:** An adverb (ADV) is a word used to modify, or qualify, a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. It usually answers one of these questions: When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?

```
ADV
Pull firmly on the emergency handle.

ADV
They use the truck occasionally.
```

**Prepositions:** A preposition (PREP) is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase modifying another word in the sentence. The prepositional phrase nearly always functions as an adjective or as an adverb.

```
PREP PREP PREP
The road to the summit travels past craters from an extinct volcano.
```

**Conjunctions:** Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses, and they indicate the relation between the elements joined.

- **Coordinating conjunctions (CC) and correlative conjunctions** link words, phrases, or clauses of equal importance: *and, but, or, not, both...and, not only... but*

```
CC CC
Both biofeedback and relaxation can relieve headaches.
```

- **Subordinating conjunctions (SC)** introduce subordinate clauses and indicate the relation of the clause to the rest of the sentence: *after, although, because, before, though, unless, until, where, whether, while*

```
SC
Even though the parents are illiterate, their children may read well.
```

**Interjections:** An interjection is a word or group of words used to express surprise or strong emotion.

- When it stands alone, punctuate an interjection with an exclamation point: *Hooray!*
- As part of a sentence, set off an interjection with a comma or commas: *Hooray, you got the promotion.*

Use interjections sparingly (if at all) in academic writing.

The information for this handout was compiled from the following sources:

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