

STUDENT  
WORKBOOK

# Our Mother Tongue

A GUIDE TO  
ENGLISH  
GRAMMAR

**NANCY WILSON**

SECOND  
EDITION



**OUR MOTHER TONGUE**

# OUR MOTHER TONGUE

AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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To Douglas,  
*my favorite wordsmith*

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# INTRODUCTION

*Someone has rightly said that manners are to be understood as love in the trifles. And because spelling, grammatical coherence, and standards for writing are necessary for clarity of communication, clarity in communication is therefore an act of love.*

DOUGLAS WILSON

## WHAT IS ENGLISH?

---

We know that God Himself created language. The Bible tells us that He spoke all things into existence. God spoke to man in the garden, and we see that He also gave man the gift of language and assigned man the task of finding words suitable for naming all the creatures. Language is truly a wonderful gift. In Genesis 11:1 we learn that “the whole earth had one language and one speech.” But due to man’s rebellion at the Tower of Babel, “the LORD confused the language of all the earth” (v. 9) so that the people could no longer understand one another. Since then, man has had to work very hard to learn the many languages of the world.

English belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Some of the other languages in this branch include German, Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages. English grew out of other languages as well, mostly as the result of wars and invasions. English has changed so much over time that early English is difficult for many to recognize as English at all. Consider this example of Old English from the Bible: *Ne beoth ge thy forhtran, theah the Faraon brohte sweordwigenra side hergas*. This means “Be not frightened thereat, though Pharaoh has brought sword wielders, vast troops . . . .”



The Romance languages constitute another branch of the Indo-European languages, but they grew out of Latin instead of Germanic roots. The languages derived from Latin are called Romance languages because Latin was the language of Rome. These include French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish. Although English is not a Romance language, over the years it acquired many words from Latin. In fact, over fifty percent of English vocabulary has Latin roots. The Romance languages can claim closer to eighty percent Latin roots. English has borrowed from many other languages besides Latin as well. We should strive to teach our students not only to love our mother tongue and how it works, but also to love the story behind it all.

Though English has many thousands of words, each one falls into one (or sometimes more than one) of the eight categories of words, called the parts of speech. English has old or archaic words, new words, foreign words, slang, and words for every discipline or study. Each word has a history, called its etymology. Etymology is the study of words and their origins. Words are very important for the Christian because God chose to reveal Himself to man through the words of the prophets and the apostles in the Bible, and through His Son, the *logos* or Word of God, Jesus Christ. Christians should, above all others, be people of the Word, and people who love words. Writing, reading, and language should be of great interest to God's people, for by means of these tools they can know Him better and glorify Him.

The logical starting point for the study of English is the study of grammar, which is the study of the rules that govern our mother tongue. Language is much like a family with its own culture, traditions, customs, and rules. And, like a family, a language changes with time. The story of how English acquired all its peculiar customs and rules is a fascinating story in itself. Many of our grammar rules came into being in the eighteenth century when the Enlightenment inspired man to reduce everything into neat, tidy, governable systems. In many cases these rules have no particular reason for existing apart from the fact

that someone loudly and authoritatively asserted them. Nevertheless, here we are now in the twenty-first century, and we have a body of widely accepted rules to govern our speaking and writing. It is good for us to know and understand these rules without becoming slaves to them. Like the Sabbath, they should exist for us, not the other way around. This means that a good writer will sometimes break the rules, but he does so for a designed effect and not out of ignorance or laziness. Because we live in a culture that wants no rules, we Christians should desire to preserve and pass on all the important tools of communication, knowing that language is a means, not an end in itself. Language is a God-given tool for our enjoyment and enrichment. It is a gift from Him we must not squander or misuse, but rather glory in. Studying our language enables us to choose our own words wisely, to enjoy and appreciate great literature, to understand the thoughts of others, to give clear and correct expression to our own thoughts, and to train our minds to think in an orderly fashion.

## **WHY ANOTHER GRAMMAR BOOK?**

---

That is a good question. The world seems to be quite full of grammar books, but it is not easy to find a text today that covers all the bases, still emphasizes diagramming, is not laden with politically correct jargon, and embraces a Christian worldview. I am certainly not claiming to have achieved all these things in this little book, but I have aimed for it. I wanted to produce a grammar book that could be used to teach junior-high students as well as high-school or college students and adults, a book that covered many of the aspects of English grammar succinctly; I also wanted a book that could assume the biblical view of language. At the same time I wanted to whet the appetite of the student to want to know more about the history of our language. In the classical Christian school movement, students and teachers often find that they learn more about English in Latin

class than they ever did in English class. Words like *conjugation* or *predicate nominative* are new to them when they come to study Latin. I have used this book to teach what I call Refresher English to college students who are studying Latin and Greek for the first time and to homeschooling parents who need to brush up before (or while) they teach their children.

Diagramming is included and emphasized because it is a healthy review exercise that requires the student to break down the sentence, analyzing and labeling each part logically. Students generally enjoy the challenge of the diagramming. Though some may prefer to parse sentences verbally, I believe diagramming achieves the same thing with more ease, especially in a classroom setting where you want each student to analyze several sentences.

I have relied on many old and new texts to write this book. Some time ago I began collecting English grammar texts from the nineteenth century, and I have used my stash of old grammars for examples, exercises, and information. In fact, you could say there is not one original thought in the whole book. I have merely researched, arranged, collected, and organized the data.

Of course you probably realize the shocking state of English grammar in the government schools today. One friend of mine who taught in an elementary government school confessed to me that she sometimes shut the door of her room and taught grammar to her students. When one of my junior-high students (who had transferred to the Christian school from the government school) needed tutoring in grammar, his parents employed a college student over the summer. The tutor called me to find out what we would be covering in the fall. When I began by mentioning the eight parts of speech, the tutor replied, “I can’t believe you still teach that stuff! What are the parts of speech again? I can’t remember.”

I have realized in preparing this book that a grammar book can never really be done. There is always so much more that could be

researched, rewritten, improved, clarified, and explained better. Nevertheless, my hope is that this will be of some use to those who, by the grace of God, want to employ their mother tongue to the glory of God and for the furtherance of His kingdom.

Finally, I must thank a few important people who helped me assemble this. The Logos School administrators, Tom Garfield and Tom Spencer, were very kind to give me the opportunity to teach junior-high English in the first place, and they exhibited great patience in the production of this book. My friends Tora Whitling, Katie Hurt, and Anita Evans cheerfully tested the material to see if it made any sense to moms. And I owe a debt of gratitude to Canon Press for painstakingly checking it over and over again for clarity as well as technical accuracy in both the first edition and in this second edition. Last, but most importantly, my deepest gratitude to my husband Douglas whose love for the written word and the glory of God has shaped my vision for even this humble project.

# DAILY LESSON PLANS

*A schedule defends from chaos and whim.*

ANNIE DILLARD

The following schedule will cover this text in a semester. If you prefer to go slower, divide it in half and take a year. Most important for the student is not how fast they go, but how well they learn the material.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	pp. 8-12 Exercises A-D	pp. 12-13 Exercise E	pp. 13-17 Exercises A-C	pp. 17-19 Exercises D-E	pp. 19-20 Review Exercise
2	pp. 21-25 Exercises A-D	pp. 25-27 Exercises E-F	pp. 28-31 Exercises A-D	pp. 32-33 Exercise E etc.	pp. 34-38 Exercises A-B
3	pp. 38-41 Exercises C-D	pp. 42-46 All Exercises	pp. 47-51 Exercises A-C	pp. 52-54 Exercise A	pp. 55-56
4	pp. 57-59 Exercises A-C	pp. 59-60 Exercises D-E	pp. 62-66 Exercise A	pp. 67-69 Exercises A-D	pp. 69-71 Exercises E-F
5	pp. 72-73 Exercises A-C	pp. 73-75 Exercises D-E	pp. 75-78 Exercise A	pp. 79-81 Exercise A	pp. 82-85 Exercises A-C
6	pp. 86-88 Exercises A-C	pp. 88-89 Exercise D	pp. 90-92 Exercises A-C	pp. 92-93 Exercise D	pp. 94-96 Exercises A-B
7	pp. 97-99 Exercises A-B	pp. 100-102 Exercises A-B	pp. 102-103 Exercise C	pp. 104-105 Exercise A	pp. 105-107 Exercises B-C
8	pp. 108-109 Exercise A	pp. 109-110 Exercises B-C	pp. 111-112 Exercise A	pp. 112-114 Exercises B-C	pp. 114-115 Exercise D
9	pp. 116-118 Exercises A-B	pp. 118-120 Exercise C etc	pp. 121-123 Exercises A-B	pp. 123-124 Exercise C	pp. 124-126 Review Exercise
10	pp. 127-129 Exercise A	pp. 129-130 Exercise B	pp. 131-133 Exercises C-F	pp. 134-137 Exercises A-B	pp. 137-138 Exercises C-E
11	pp. 139-140 Exercise F	pp. 142-143 Exercise A	pp. 144-146 Exercise	pp. 147-148 Exercise A	pp. 149-151 Exercises A-B
12	pp. 152-153 Exercise A etc.	pp. 154-159 Exercises A-B	pp. 160-163 Exercises A-C	pp. 164-167 Exercise A	pp. 168-172 Exercises A-B
13	pp. 173-174 Exercises A-B	pp. 176-178 Exercise A	pp. 179-184 Exercises A-B	pp. 185-186 Exercises C-D	pp. 187-188 Exercise A
14	pp. 189-190 Exercise A	pp. 190-191 Exercises B-C	pp. 192-196 All Exercises	pp. 197-201 Exercise A	pp. 201-202 Exercise B
15	pp. 203-205 Exercises C-E	pp. 206-207 Exercise A	pp. 207-208 Exercises B-C	pp. 209-210 Exercise A	pp. 210-211 Exercise B
16	pp. 211-212 Exercise C	pp. 212-213 Exercise D	pp. 215-218	pp. 219-220 Exercises A-C	pp. 221-222 All Exercises

## UNIT

# 1

## THE EIGHT CLASSES OF WORDS

---

**A**lthough the English language has many words, there are only eight different classes or kinds of words. Each of these classes has a definite job to do in the language. They are called the **parts of speech**. *Parts* means divisions and, of course, *speech* means language, so the **parts of speech** are simply the *divisions of language*.

1	Nouns . . . . .	8
2	Verbs. . . . .	14
3	Adjectives . . . . .	21
4	Adverbs . . . . .	28
5	Pronouns . . . . .	34
6	Prepositions . . . . .	42
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8	Interjections . . . . .	52
9	Review . . . . .	55

## LESSON

# 1

## NOUNS

*When we name things or discover the names for things, we are mimicking God's creativity. And, oddly enough, it shapes us when we do it.*

REBEKAH MERKLE

### INTRODUCTION

---

#### EXAMPLES

**1. God controls the history of the world perfectly.**

The word *God* is the name of the Supreme Being; the word *history* is the name of a thing (a field of study); the word *world* is the name of a place.

**2. A Christian student sees His hand in all events.**

The word *student* is the name of a kind of person; the words *hand* and *events* are names of things.

**3. Studying with this perspective provides hope and encouragement for the future.**

The word *studying* is the name of an activity; the words *perspective* and *future* are the names of things (concepts or ideas); and the words *hope* and *encouragement* are the names of qualities or ideas.



#### DEFINITION

A *noun*, or a name word, is the name of a person, place, thing, activity, or idea. *Noun* comes from the Latin *nomen*, "name."

#### EXPLANATION

Man has been naming things since God gave Adam the job of naming all the animals. Naming is unique to man. It is a way that man takes dominion over the earth. Today we still name our children and our churches and schools, and man is forever coming up with naming words for new activities (*snowboarding*), new inventions (*microwave*,

internet), new discoveries (*electricity*), and new ideas (*postmodernism*). English has one class of words used to *name* things. These words name persons, places, or things that we can see; they name things that we can perceive with our other senses (such as sounds, smells, or tastes); they name qualities or ideas that we can think about (such as *beauty*, *mind*, *soul*, *life*, or *liberty*); or they name activities (such as *running*, *thinking*, *singing*, or *shopping*). A **noun** is used to name anything that exists or anything that we can think of. The word *noun* comes from the Latin word *nomen* which means *name*. A noun is always the *name* of something.

### EXERCISE A

List two nouns for each of the categories below.

1. Persons you have studied in history.
2. Places you would like to visit.
3. Things you use on a daily basis.
4. Qualities you admire in a friend.
5. Physical feelings (such as *pain*).
6. Mental feelings (such as *pity*).
7. Activities.
8. Subjects to study (such as *history*).

### EXERCISE B

Write down all the nouns in the following paragraph (divided into sections for convenience) from chapter 9 of *Over the Teacups* by Oliver Wendell Holmes. For each word, write down why it is a noun (for example, *tree* is a noun because it is the name of a thing—a plant). Remember that a noun names persons, places, things, activities, or ideas. Be sure to look at what the word is *doing* in the sentence. Is it *naming* something?



### HISTORIA

Have you ever wondered why our language is called *English*? Because it was first spoken in England, of course! But why is England called *England*? The earliest inhabitants of England were called the Britons, a Celtic people living in southern England. The old Latin name for Britain is *Britannia*. (Only a few geographic names from the Britons' ancient tongue survive in modern English.)

The Roman general Julius Caesar invaded Britannia in 55 BC. Though it took nearly one hundred years to complete the conquest, for the next four hundred years Britain was a Roman province, and many Latin words were introduced into the language. The Romans built roads, established camps and forts, and constructed large walls to keep out the invading Scots and Picts from the north. The most famous Roman wall is Hadrian's Wall, and its remains are visible today. Latin words introduced into the British tongue during the Roman occupation include *wall* (from the Latin *vallum*), *mile* (from the Latin *milia passuum*, meaning a thousand



paces), and *street* (from the Latin *strata via*, meaning paved way).

When Rome began to fall to invading barbarians, the Roman soldiers were called home to help in its defense. By AD 410, the Romans had abandoned Britannia, leaving the country defenseless. Consequently, in the middle of the 400s, warring Germanic peoples (the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons) began to invade. They succeeded in pushing the Britons into the northern and western parts of Britain. The Angles settled in central Britain, and the land became known as *Angle-land*. Later this became *England*, and the language spoken, our own mother tongue, became known as *English*.

**Example:** A tree is an underground creature, with its tail in the air. All its intelligence is in its roots. All the senses it has are in its roots. Think what sagacity it shows in its search after food and drink! Somehow or other, the rootlets, which are its tentacles, find out that there is a brook at a moderate distance from the trunk of the tree, and they make for it with all their might.

1. They find every crack in the rocks where there are a few grains of nourishing substance they care for, and insinuate themselves into its deepest recesses.
2. When spring and summer come, they let their tails grow, and delight in whisking them about in the wind, or letting them be whisked about by it; for these tails are poor passive things, with very little will of their own, and bend in whatever direction the wind chooses to make them.
3. The leaves make a deal of noise whispering. I have sometimes thought I could understand them, as they talk with each other, and that they seemed to think they made the wind as they wagged forward and back.
4. Remember what I say. The next time you see a tree waving in the wind, recollect that it is the tail of a great underground, many-armed polypus-like creature, which is as proud of its caudal appendage, especially, in the summer-time, as a peacock of his gorgeous expanse of plumage.

### EXERCISE C

Write five sentences of your own and underline all the nouns you use.

## COMMON AND PROPER NOUNS

---

### EXAMPLES

Look at the examples below.

**1. The boy who won the prize was John Baker.**

The word *boy* is a general term that is common to all young males. *John Baker*, however, is the name of a particular boy.

**2. Though I was born in a small town, I later moved to Chicago.**

The word *town* is a general term, while *Chicago* is the name of a particular town.

**3. He had never seen an ocean until this summer when he saw the Pacific.**

The word *ocean* is a word that names all large bodies of water, while *Pacific* is the name of a specific ocean.

### EXPLANATION

Words used to name a general class of things are called **common nouns**. *Common* means *general*. Words used to name a particular thing, distinguishing it from others in the same class, are called **proper nouns**. *Proper* comes from the Latin *proprius* which means *one's own*. (This Latin word is the root of the English word *property* as well.) A proper noun always begins with a capital letter. Your name is your own, and it is capitalized.

### EXERCISE D

List a proper noun for each of the common nouns listed below. Remember to capitalize all proper nouns.

**Example:** *Street* is a common noun, but *Baker Street* is a proper noun.

1. restaurant
2. country
3. county



### DEFINITION

A *proper noun* is an individual name, while a *common noun* is a general or class name. *Proper* derives from *proprius*, "one's own."

4. national park
5. teacher
6. continent
7. politician
8. team
9. store
10. book



#### DEFINITION

A *noun of direct address* is a noun used to address a specific person.



#### N.B.

N.B. is an abbreviation for *nota bene* which is Latin for *note well*, or *take careful note of what follows*. We will include many things you should look out for in this textbook.

When you address someone directly at the beginning of a sentence, you follow the name with a comma; in the middle of a sentence, you set the name off with commas. (See page 180 for the punctuation rule regarding a noun of address.)

## A NOUN OF DIRECT ADDRESS

---

A **noun of direct address** is called the vocative, which comes from the Latin word *voco*, “I call.” When a noun is used to address a specific person, it becomes a proper noun, and it is capitalized.

### EXAMPLES

1. “Hi, Mom.”  
I waved hello to my mom.
2. “Please, Dad, may I drive?”  
He asked his dad if he could drive the new truck.
3. “No, Son. You don’t have a license.”  
He told his son, “Sorry! Not until you have a license!”

In the first example, *Mom* is a noun of direct address, and it is used as a proper name, so it is capitalized. In the second example, *mom* is a common noun. It refers to a position (a mom), but the word is not used as a name. The same is true in the other examples.

When we refer to God as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, we capitalize each name as a proper noun. We also capitalize common nouns like king, senator, president, or pastor if they are joined with the proper noun. Examples: King David, Senator Smith, President Washington, Pastor Phillips.

### **EXERCISE E**

In the following sentences, identify all nouns of direct address, and supply any capital letters and commas that have been omitted.

1. "I think myself happy king agrippa because today I shall answer for myself." (Acts 26:2)
2. But he said, "I am not mad most noble festus but speak the words of truth and reason." (Acts 26:25)
3. Sarah repeated the story her dad told her about grandpa's Medal of Honor.
4. "But mom I didn't know you were here yet."
5. "Please introduce me to your mom and dad," said the teacher to the young man.
6. "I'd like to introduce you mom and dad to my math teacher," said the young man nervously.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Give the definition of a noun, and look up the Latin history of the word.
2. What kinds of things can a noun name?
3. What is the difference between a proper and a common noun?

# LESSON 2

# VERBS

Every adjective and adverb is worth five cents.  
Every verb is worth fifty cents.

MARY OLIVER

## INTRODUCTION

---

### EXAMPLES

1. **Columbus sailed from Spain on August 3, 1492.**  
The word *sailed* asserts or states something about Columbus.
2. **Did he lose any of his three ships on the voyage?**  
The words *did* and *lose* are used to ask a question.
3. **Read this book about his journey.**  
The word *read* is used to tell someone to do something.



### DEFINITION

A *verb* is a word which can assert action, being, or existence. *Verb* derives from *verbum*, "word."

### EXPLANATION

A word used to assert what a person or thing *does* or *is*, or that *asks* what a person *does* or *is*, or *tells* another person to *do* or *be* something is called a **verb**. The verb is the only word that can assert; it asserts action (even action performed by the mind, like *think*, *consider*, or *love*), condition, being, or existence. Though it is difficult to explain what a verb actually does, it is the most important word in the sentence; it is the life of the sentence, for there can be no complete sentence without a verb. The word *verb* comes from the Latin word *verbum* which means *word*.

## EXERCISE A

Notice in the examples below that the sentences (paraphrased from a quote by Thomas à Kempis) have both naming and asserting parts.

<b>Naming</b>	<b>Asserting</b>
Man	<i>beholds</i> the face.
God	<i>looks upon</i> the heart.
Man	<i>considers</i> the actions.
God	<i>weighs</i> the intentions.

The naming parts of the sentences below are provided. Make up some action verbs which assert (or express) what the following things do.

1. The student \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The wind \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The desk \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The clock \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The bus \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The dentist \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Airplanes \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The tree \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The class \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The baby \_\_\_\_\_.

## AUXILIARIES OR HELPING VERBS

---

### EXAMPLES

Look at the italicized words in the sentences below. In each sentence the verb is comprised of more than one word.

**1. The class is *studying* the history of England.**

The word *is* helps the main verb *studying*.

2. **They will be memorizing many dates and facts.**

*Will be* helps the main verb *memorizing*.

3. **By the end of the semester, they should have covered much of the material.**

*Should have* helps the main verb *covered*.



#### DEFINITION

An *auxiliary* or *helping verb* is one that is used to help another verb to assert. The word *auxiliary* comes from a Latin word that means to help, aid, or assist.

#### EXPLANATION

A word that helps a verb to assert is an **auxiliary** or **helping verb**.

When a group of words is used as a verb, it is called a **verb phrase**.

However, we refer to the whole verb phrase as the verb. The following

verbs are helping verbs. It will be beneficial if you memorize them.

You can sing them to the tune of “London Bridge” if you would like.

**Helping Verbs:** be, is, am, are, were, was, being, been, shall, will, have, has, had, do, does, did, may, can, must, might, could, would, should.

#### EXERCISE B

Fill in each of the blanks with a verb phrase.

1. Trees \_\_\_\_\_ in forests.
2. The grapes \_\_\_\_\_ ripe.
3. David \_\_\_\_\_ a lion and a bear.
4. The small boy \_\_\_\_\_ the window.
5. The artist \_\_\_\_\_ a picture.

#### EXERCISE C

The words in a verb phrase are not always in immediate succession.

Notice the verb phrases in italics in the following sentences.

1. Where *do* pineapples *grow*?
2. *Have* you ever *read* *Pilgrim's Progress*?
3. Perhaps he *did* not really *disobey* me.
4. How *should* I *know* what you *think*?

5. We *could* hardly *hear* his speech.

Write five sentences with helping verbs and underline the entire verb phrase.

## LINKING VERBS

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### EXAMPLES

Look at the italicized words below. In each sentence, the verb is used to link or tie two words together in the sentence.

1. **The man is my father.**

The verb *is* links *man* and *father*.

2. **The bread smells delicious.**

The verb *smells* links *bread* and *delicious*.

3. **I feel sad about your loss.**

The verb *feel* links *I* and *sad*.

4. **The day became rainy.**

The verb *became* links *day* and *rainy*.

### EXPLANATION

A verb that is used to make an assertion by joining two words is called a **linking verb**. These verbs were first called copulative verbs from the Latin word *copula* which means *link* or *bond*. More recently we have simply called them **linking verbs**.

Learn the kinds of linking verbs:

1. "To be" verbs: *be, being, been, am, is, are, was, were*.
2. Sense verbs: *feel, sound, taste, look, smell*.
3. Others: *appears, becomes, grows, remains, seems, turn, prove, go*.

The word *is* has assertive power, but it has no real meaning of its own. In some constructions it resembles an equal sign in its meaning.



### DEFINITION

A verb that is used to make an assertion by joining two words is called a *linking verb*.



**N.B.**

To find out whether a word is a linking verb, substitute *is* or an equal sign.

**N.B.**

One of the common mistakes made regarding linking verbs usually occurs in conversation. That is our use of the verb *feel*. We often want to say that we *feel bad* about something, but we think we should say that we *feel badly*. That is incorrect. If we say we *feel badly* about something, we are in essence saying that our sense of touch is impaired. Feel free to feel bad, but please do not feel badly!

Correct: I feel bad that I can't help you study today.

Incorrect: I feel badly about your poor score.

One way to check if a verb is a linking verb is to substitute the word *is* or an equal sign (=) for the verb. If the meaning of the sentence is unchanged, the verb is indeed a linking verb. A linking verb can have helping verbs just like an action verb.

**Examples:**

1. Her brother *seems* lonely.  
(brother = lonely)
2. The team *remained* state champions for three successive years.  
(team = state champions)
3. Robert *drove* the car.  
(Robert ≠ car) *Drove* is **not** a linking verb.

**EXERCISE D**

Point out the linking and helping verbs in the following sentences.

Note: To run the linking verb test on a question, rearrange the sentence to make a statement. Thus, "Are you my brother?" becomes "You are my brother." (You = brother)

1. The caterpillar will soon become a moth.
2. It seems a pity.
3. This will be a stormy night.
4. Is this an army?
5. You must be a man!

**EXERCISE E**

Underline the verb phrases in the following sentences. Be sure to include any helping verbs and underline any linking verbs twice.

1. Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. (2 Cor. 7:2)
2. Great is my boldness of speech toward you . . . . I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. (2 Cor. 7:4)

3. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (2 Cor. 9:6)
4. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (2 Cor. 8:9)
5. Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. (Judg. 8:11)

### REVIEW EXERCISE A

In the following sentences identify each noun and each verb. Which sentences have linking verbs? Helping verbs?

1. Brevity is the soul of wit.
2. The boys were selling tickets to the game.
3. Cars raced by and raised clouds of dust.
4. We walked through the woods and enjoyed the colors of autumn.
5. Paint was peeling off the sides of the old barn.

### REVIEW EXERCISE B

Below is an excerpt from the third chapter of Macaulay's *History of England* in which he describes the streets of London in the seventeenth century. Identify all the nouns and verbs that you can. Be sure to include helping verbs, and note if a noun is a proper noun.

1. The houses were not numbered; there would, indeed, have been little advantage in numbering them; for of the coachmen, chairmen, porters, and errand boys of London, a very small portion could read.
2. It was necessary to use marks which the most ignorant could understand. The shops were therefore distinguished by painted signs, which gave a gay and grotesque aspect to the streets.



### HISTORIA

In AD 449 the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons invaded Britain, and over the next 150 years they drove out nearly all of the original inhabitants (Britons). After the terrible devastation of these ruthless barbarians, little was left of the Celtic or Roman civilizations. Though nearly all trace of the Jutes is lost, the Anglo-Saxon civilization and race was founded, and the new country became known as the land of the Angles and its language an early form of English, which we call Anglo-Saxon or Old English. The Britons did leave behind a few of their words such as *bog* and *glen* and *basket*.

Christianity first appeared in Britain while it was still a Roman province. In the late 500s St. Augustine arrived from France and converted the King of the Jutes, Ethelbert. Augustine built a monastery in Canterbury and sent missionaries to the northern tribes of the Picts and the Scots. The Romans sent missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons around the year 600. Words from the Latin that were adopted into the Anglo-Saxon language at this time were religious terms such as *monk* and *clerk*.

3. When the evening closed in, the difficulty and danger of walking about London became serious indeed. The garret windows were opened, and pails were emptied, with little regard to those who were passing below.
4. Falls, bruises, and broken bones were a constant occurrence; for, till the last year of the reign of Charles the Second, most of the streets were left in profound darkness.
5. Thieves and robbers plied their trades with impunity; yet they were hardly so terrible to peaceable citizens as another class of ruffians.
6. It was a favorite amusement of dissolute young gentlemen to swagger by night about the town, breaking windows, upsetting sedans, beating quiet men, and offering rude caresses to pretty women.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the definition of a verb?
2. From what Latin word does our word *verb* come?
3. What does a helping verb do? Name all the helping verbs.
4. What is the function of a linking verb? Name the three types of linking verbs and list the verbs in each category.
5. What is the test for a linking verb?
6. What is a verb phrase?

# ADJECTIVES

## LESSON

# 3

*Don't use adjectives which merely tell us how you want us to feel about the thing you are describing. I mean, instead of telling us a thing was "terrible," describe it so that we'll be terrified. Don't say it was "delightful"; make us say "delightful" when we've read the description. You see, all those words, (horrifying, wonderful, hideous, exquisite) are only like saying to your readers, "Please will you do my job for me."*

C.S. LEWIS

## INTRODUCTION

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### EXAMPLES

Look at the italicized words in the sentences below.

1. **The *old, tall, red maple* tree was blown over in the storm.**  
*Old* and *tall* and *red maple* tell us what kind or which tree.
2. **Both boys fished from the bridge.**  
*Both* tells us how many boys.
3. **Mother's favorite teapot fell from the table with a crash.**  
*Mother's* tells us whose teapot, and *favorite* tells us which teapot.

### EXPLANATION

One class of words is joined to a noun or a pronoun (see Lesson 5) to help describe, limit, or qualify its meaning. These words answer the following questions: which? what kind? how many? whose? or how much? The word *adjective* comes from the Latin *adjectus* which means *that can add to*. An **adjective** is added to a noun or pronoun to define its meaning more exactly. These are the three categories of adjectives:



### DEFINITION

An *adjective* modifies a noun or pronoun by describing, qualifying, or limiting. The word derives from the Latin *adjectus*, "that can add to."



## PUNCTUATION NOTE

When you have more than one adjective in succession before a noun, separate them with commas. See the first sample sentence at the beginning of this lesson. A comma separates the adjectives *old*, *tall*, and *red* from the noun *tree*. However, no comma is needed between *red* and *maple* because the word *maple* is commonly associated with the word *tree*. We use commas to keep things clear. If the adjectives are separated by *and*, no punctuation is needed. *The day was bright and sunny and warm.*

1. **Descriptive adjectives** describe or qualify (add to) the meaning of a noun: a *blue* sky, a *fat* pony, a *greasy* sandwich. To find a descriptive adjective, you just put the words *what kind of* in front of the noun. What kind of sky? *Blue* sky. *Blue* is a descriptive adjective. What kind of pony? *Fat* pony. *Fat* is a descriptive adjective.
2. **Limiting adjectives** simply point out and tell *which?* or *how many?* They point out, as in *this* book, *that* orchestra. They tell how many (six boys) or tell the position or order (the first speaker). They include the articles: *a*, *an*, and *the*.
3. **Possessive nouns and pronouns** are also used as adjectives, answering the question *whose?* In sentence 3 above, *Mother's* is a possessive noun modifying the noun *teapot*. Because it is used as an adjective, we call it an adjective and not a noun in this sentence. In the sentence, *Please give me your hand*, the word *your* is a possessive pronoun that is being used as an adjective (*whose* hand? *your* hand). (Don't worry, pronouns will be covered in detail in Lesson 5.)

### EXERCISE A

List a few appropriate descriptive adjectives (that tell *what kind of*) for each of the following nouns.

**Example:** boy: *tall, quiet, active, athletic, loud, lanky, noisy, smart, capable, honest.*

1. dog
2. book
3. sign
4. teacher
5. meeting
6. friend
7. porch
8. hill

9. chair
10. letter

## THE ARTICLE

---

### EXAMPLES

Observe the very common italicized words in these sentences.

1. **The child is sick.**

The word *child* is limited by the article *the*. It is a particular child that the reader is already familiar with.

2. **A soldier stood at attention.**

The word *soldier* is limited by the article *a*. In this case the article makes it clear that it is an individual soldier, singled out as a representative of a class, but with whom we are not particularly familiar.

3. **Man is mortal.**

*Man* has no article because it is unlimited and applies to all mankind.

### EXPLANATION

Three little words in the adjective family are particularly hard working. These are the **articles** *a*, *an*, and *the*. At least one of these words appears in almost every sentence written. The word *article* comes from the Latin *articulus* which means *a joint* or *knuckle*.

1. *The* is a **definite article** because it points to a specific person or thing. When you say, "This is *the* book," *the* refers to one particular book. The definite article *the* can be used with nouns that are either singular (one) or plural (more than one). Thus, *the book* or *the books*.
2. *A* and *an* are **indefinite articles** because they do not point to a particular person or thing.



### DEFINITION

An *article* is an adjective that is used to limit a noun by making it definite or indefinite. The word derives from *articulus*, "joint" or "knuckle."

**N.B.**

Our language is forever undergoing change. The articles are examples of such changes. *A* or *an* is a changed form of the Saxon word *ane* or *an*, which means *one*. *The* is a changed form of *that*.

3. *An* is used before a word that begins with a vowel sound, but is shortened to *a* before a word beginning with a consonant sound. Thus, *an* automobile, *a* car. The indefinite articles can only be used with nouns of the singular number (*a* car, not *a* cars).

When you say, "This is *a* way to the river," we understand other ways exist. However, if you say, "This is *the* way to the river," we may assume it is the one and only way. Although this does not seem to be of great importance at first glance, it actually can be significant. Consider the book titled *A Handbook to Literature* (by C. Hugh Holman). If it were titled *The Handbook to Literature*, we might assume that the author thought his work definitive. As it is, we sense a certain humility on the part of the author as he acknowledges his is not *the only* handbook on literature. All this is based on the choice of article.

**EXERCISE B**

Write down the appropriate article for each blank. If no article is needed, ignore the blank.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ noun is \_\_\_\_\_ name of \_\_\_\_\_ anything.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ adjective modifies \_\_\_\_\_ noun or \_\_\_\_\_ pronoun.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ word *verbum* comes from Latin and means *word*.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ commas are needed to separate \_\_\_\_\_ series of adjectives.

**EXERCISE C**

For the nouns below, provide at least one appropriate adjective for each of the questions: Which or what kind? How many? Whose?

**Example:** Pitcher(s): *this, red, porcelain* (what kind or which), *several* (how many), *her* (whose).

1. tree
2. class

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