Grammar—Parts of Speech

The word “grammar” refers to the way we use words to create meaning. The individual elements in grammar are the eight parts of speech:

- Noun
- Pronoun
- Verb
- Adjective
- Adverb
- Preposition
- Conjunction
- Interjection

This sentence has an example of each of the parts of speech:

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interjection  adjective  verb  verb  preposition  noun
Wow! The orange cat eats and drinks slowly after his nap.

Noun—a noun is a person, place, or thing. A noun is the subject of a sentence; typically, we find the subject at the beginning of a sentence.

Pronoun—a pronoun replaces a noun or a noun phrase that has already been or is about to be mentioned in the sentence. Pronouns help us to create variety in our sentences. Here’s a list of pronouns:

I  You  He  She  Our  They
Me  Yours  His  Her  Ours  Them
Mine  Yourself  Him  Hers  Ourselves  Themselves
My  Myself  Himself  Herself  Their  Theirs

Verb—a verb is the action in the sentence. Typically, we expect the verb to come right after the subject of the sentence.

Passive verbs are all forms of the verb “to be”: am, are, is, was, were, be, being, been.
**Adjective**—adjectives describe, or *modify*, the noun. Usually, we place adjectives right before the noun they describe.

Many people consider articles (*a, an, the*) to be a type of adjective. However, because they don’t actually modify anything, articles are really part of a category of words known as *noun markers* or *determiners*. Determiners tell us whether a noun is specific (*the* hospital) or general (*a* cat, *an* egg).


**Preposition**—prepositions show us the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and something else in the sentence. Prepositional phrases act as adjectives or as adverbs.

The noun or pronoun that comes after a preposition is called the *object* of the preposition. The object of the preposition is *never* the subject of the sentence.

If you’re not sure what a preposition is, think of the Pledge of Allegiance; it’s a simple sentence (*I pledge allegiance*) followed by a series of prepositional phrases.

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**Conjunction**—conjunctions join words and phrases together. The coordinating conjunctions are *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.*

**Interjection**—interjections express surprise or emotion. Most of the time, interjections are separated from the rest of the sentence; they often end with an exclamation point (!).