

Word Formation/ Parts of Speech

1. What are parts of speech introduction?

Parts of speech are **categories of words that indicate how the words function grammatically in a sentence**. English has eight main parts of speech: **nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections**.

2. Common “Guidelines” for usage

Knowing the correct part of speech for a word form is important, but it’s less than half the battle. The real challenge comes with being able to know how to use it appropriately in a sentence. Below are some (but definitely not all) of the most common usage patterns. Again, emphasize that these are just guidelines because there are many exceptions in English. Once you have taught students these patterns, they will be able to use most word forms immediately in their writing.

Nouns

- Nouns are people, places, or things.
- Nouns always come before verbs and after verbs.
- Every sentence will have at least one noun.

Nouns are usually in these positions:

- **a/an/the** _____
 - The prediction came true.
- **adjective** _____
 - Wrong predictions are dangerous.

- **Possessive** (my, your, his, her, John's) _____
 - Their prediction was wrong.
- **have** _____
 - I have a prediction.
- _____ **Verb**
 - Predictions make people's lives easier.

Verbs

- Verbs show the action or state of being in a sentence.
- Verbs usually aren't the first word in a sentence.
 - Exception—Commands: (*Go to class.*)
- EVERY sentence MUST have a verb!

Verbs are usually in these positions:

- **Subject** _____
 - Jessica predicted that she would win the game yesterday.
- **Adverb** _____
 - He always predicts the weather.
- **can/should/might/must** _____
 - She can't predict what he will do.
- **didn't/don't** _____
 - Don't predict something unless you know it is true.
- **to** _____
 - I'm going to predict your future.

Adjectives

- Adjectives describe nouns (people, places, and things).
- They answer the question: “What kind of person/place/thing?”

Adjectives are usually in these positions:

- am/is/are/was/were _____
 - The game was predictable.
- _____ noun
 - Predictable people are easy to understand.
- very _____
 - Tony is a very predictable person.
- adverb _____
 - Tony is always predictable.
- a/an/the _____ noun
 - The predictable answer was “yes.”

Adverbs

- Adverbs describe verbs or adjectives.
- They answer the question “How did he do it?”
- Usually, you add -ly to the adjective to make an adverb (but not always!)

Adverbs are usually in these positions:

- _____ ,
 - Predictably, Tommy was late again.

- _____ Verb
 - He predictably walked in late.
- Verb _____
 - He walked quickly.
- very _____
 - He walked very quickly.
- _____ Adjective
 - Tom is predictably late.

3. Word Formation

It is the process by which new words are formed by adding an affix, another word or converting from one word class to another by removing and adding alphabets. Learning word formation can be challenging, and students can often get confused between how to form **adjectives, adverbs, noun, and verbs**.

It is not obligatory to get all the forms for every word as not every word in English neatly breaks down into these four word forms. Sometimes a word will not have all of the forms, or the forms may be rarely used in English.

Students need to discover the most common endings for parts of speech and even relationships between parts of speech. For example, **adjectives** ending in *-able/-ible* often take **the noun** ending *-ity*. (e.g. *responsible- responsibility; possible-possibility; capable- capability*)

Here are some other patterns to help your students discover within the chart:

- **Common endings –**
 - Nouns for things = *ment; -ity; -ness; -tion*
 - Nouns for people = *-er; -or; -ist*

- Verbs = rarely have special endings because they get manipulated for tense; usually the shortest word form
- Adjectives = *-ous; -able/-ible; -al; -ed/-ing; -ful/-less; -ic; -ive*
- Adverbs = *-ly*
- To form an adverb, add *-ly* to the adjective form (not the noun/verb form)
- If two word forms are the same, it will usually be the noun and verb (e.g.: parent, answer, guess).
- Nouns ending in *-tion* will usually take the *-al* suffix for adjectives.

Be sure that these are patterns, not “rules,” and that there will be some exceptions to most of these patterns. However, by establishing these patterns concretely, students will be able to vastly improve their vocabulary quickly, and they will more readily notice and remember exceptions to the pattern.