



**Academic Writing Centre**  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

**Parts of Speech**

Allison McMurtrey – Utah Valley University

The following table gives definitions and examples for each of the eight parts of speech.

Part of Speech	Definition	Examples
<b>Nouns</b>	a person, place, thing, or idea	<b>juice, Albert Einstein, book, jail, freedom, lips</b>
<b>Verbs</b>	show action or state of being	<b>lift, throw, need, be, is, are, was, have live, slip</b>
<b>Adjectives</b>	describe nouns or pronouns  Answer the questions: what kind? how many? which one? whose?	<b>blue car, risky business, ninth inning, hard rock, Rosemary's baby, a deal</b>
<b>Adverbs</b>	describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs  Answer the questions: when? where? to what extent?	<b>very fast car, too quickly dropped, generously gave, to boldly go</b>
<b>Prepositions</b>	show time and space relationships	<b>after</b> Gail fell, <b>into</b> the woods, <b>next to</b> the honey pot, <b>over</b> the rainbow  Other common ones include <b>of, to, as, except, for, from, like, with</b>
<b>Conjunctions</b>	Coordinating conjunctions join similar elements in a sentence.  Subordinating conjunctions show unequal relationships.	Coordinating conjunctions include: <b>but, so, yet, for, nor, and, or</b>  Sarah <b>and</b> Jim, apples <b>or</b> oranges  Subordinating conjunctions include: (this is not a complete list): <b>Since, until, when, unless, while, before, because, though</b> I have liked football <b>since</b> I was young.
<b>Pronouns</b>	replace nouns to avoid too much repetition	<b>I, he, they, we, none, some, all, who, she, us, his, it</b>
<b>Interjections</b>	express strong or mild emotions	<b>Ouch! Hooray! Hey! Oh, Well</b>

# Academic Writing Centre

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Identifying common endings on words is one way of spotting certain parts of speech. The common endings in the following table are not always definite, but they will give you a place to start when you are deciding what part of speech a word is. This list is not comprehensive.

Part of Speech	Common Endings	Examples
<b>Nouns</b>	-ity, -ness, -hood, -ment, -tion, -ism, -dom	obesity, kindness, brotherhood, kingdom, achievement, capitalism, complication
<b>Verbs</b>	-fy, -ize, -ate	mystify, economize, stagnate
<b>Adjectives</b>	-y, -ful, -ic, -al, -ive, -ish, -ant	greasy, beautiful, sarcastic, cynical, secretive, pinkish, exuberant
<b>Adverbs</b>	-ly	quickly, outrageously

You can also always find a noun shortly after the articles, **a**, **an**, and **the** or after adjectives.

For example: **A** good **teacher** always gives **an** accurate **evaluation** of **the** student's **work**.

However, the lines defining parts of speech are not absolute. Even though a word is one part of speech in one sentence, it may be a different part of speech in another sentence, **depending on how it is used**. For example, in the following sets of sentences the italicized words do not change form, but they do change parts of speech because they are used differently.

- The marine was *running* when he fell and sprained his ankle. (**Verb**)
- *Running* is my least favourite pastime. (**Noun**)
- The band marched *down* the street. (**Preposition**)
- My grandmother makes *down* comforters. (**Adjective**)
- The tired runner fell *down*. (**Adverb**)

The following sentence contains all of the parts of speech. Each is labelled to give you an idea of ways the words will appear in regular use.

**Oh, they polluted the formerly crystal-blue water in the lake on the Johnson's farm, and it is thick and murky from the chemicals.**

**Oh** (*interjection*), **they** (*pronoun*) **polluted** (*verb*) **the** (*adjective*) **formerly** (*adverb*) **crystal** (*adjective*) **blue** (*adjective*) **water** (*noun*) **in** (*preposition*) **the** (*adjective*) **lake** (*noun*) **on** (*preposition*) **the** (*adjective*) **Johnson's** (*adjective*) **farm** (*noun*), **and** (*conjunction*) **it** (*pronoun*) **is** (*verb*) **thick** (*adjective*) **and** (*conjunction*) **murky** (*adjective*) **from** (*preposition*) **the** (*adjective*) **chemicals** (*noun*).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Academic Writing Centre**  
 478 and 470 Sunset Avenue  
 Windsor, Ontario, Canada, N9B 3P4  
**Phone:** 519-253-3000 Ext 3405  
**Fax:** 519-561-1410  
**Online:** [www.uwindsor.ca/awc](http://www.uwindsor.ca/awc)

