

GRADE 8 ENGLISH NOTES

PARTS OF SPEECH

All words may be classified into groups called **parts of speech**. There are 8 parts of speech namely: **Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions** and **interjections**.

We shall now discuss these parts of speech one at a time:1

NOUNS

A **noun** is the part of speech that names a person, a place, a thing or an idea. You use nouns every day when you speak or write. Every day you probably use thousands of nouns. Because nouns name the objects and people and places around you, it would be very difficult to talk about anything at all without them. Many nouns name things you can see:

Persons Places Things

boy lake boot

student country shadow

John Kamau Nairobi chair

stranger Jupiter sweater

writer Kenyatta Market calendar

Barack Obama Sierra Leone short story

Some nouns name things you cannot see such as feelings, ideas and characteristics:

Feelings Ideas Characteristics

excitement freedom curiosity

fear justice cowardice

anger fantasy courage

happiness faith imagination

surprise evil self-confidence

Exercise 1

What words in each sentence below are nouns?

Example: John is a dancer – **John, dancer**

1. The students planned a party.
2. Three boys performed songs.
3. Excitement filled the air.
4. Joyce Chepkemai won a prize.
5. Otieno lives in a house on my street.

Exercise 2

Copy the nouns below and write whether it names a person, a place, a thing, or an

idea.

Example: river – place

1. Candle 5. Guitar
2. Wrestle 6. China
3. Joy 7. Hatred
4. Menengai Crater 8. Masanduku Arap Simiti

2

Exercise 3

Write down each noun in the following sentences.

Example: Kenya is a beautiful country – Kenya, country

1. The musicians played drums and trumpets.
2. Her family lives in a village.
3. Petronilla enjoyed the trip.
4. A festival was held in Kenyatta University.
5. People in costumes filled the streets.
6. Boys in Scouts uniforms were leading the parade.
7. The holiday was a great excitement.
8. A taxi brought the family to the airport.
9. Maryanne built a huge castle in the wet sand.
10. Her mother swam in the warm water.

There are different kinds of nouns:

Common and proper nouns

All nouns can be described as either **common** or **proper**. When you talk or write about a person, a place, a thing, or an idea in **general**, you use a **common noun**.

Example: Doctors work hard. They treat many patients.

A **proper noun** is the name of a particular person, place, thing, or idea. Proper nouns always begin with capital letters.

Example: Ephraim Maree is a doctor. He comes from **Kirinyaga**. **Note:** When a proper noun is made up of more than one word, only the important words in the noun will begin with a capital letter. Do not capitalize words such as **the, of, or for**.

Example: Gulf of Mexico, Statue of Liberty, the Commander-in-Chief.

Common and Proper Nouns

Common Proper Common Proper

street Kerugoya city Raila Odinga author South Africa ocean
Wanjohi

policeman Asia bed Moi Avenue

country Indian Ocean wardrobe Lake Victoria mountain England continent Dr. Frank Njenga lake Mandela assistant Professor Saitoti Proper nouns are important to good writing. They make your writing more specific, and therefore clearer.

Exercise 4

Which words are proper nouns and should be capitalised? Which words are common nouns?

Example: kenya **Proper:** Kenya

3

1. july 6. student 11. america

2. book 7. kendu bay 12. business 3. face 8. john hopkins 13. day

4. england 9. life 14. east africa 5. crocodiles 10. johannesburg

15. calendar **Exercise 5**

List the common nouns and the proper nouns in each of the following sentences.

Example: Nancy welcomed the guests.

Proper: Nancy **Common:** guests

1. Lucky Dube was a famous singer.

2. This dancer has performed in London and Paris.

3. His last flight was over the Mediterranean Sea.

4. She worked as a nurse during the Second World War.

5. Her goal was to educate students all over the world.

6. It was the worst accident in the history of Europe.

7. Bill Gates is best known for founding Microsoft.

8. The Pilot was the first woman to cross that ocean alone.

9. She grabbed a kettle and brought them water.

10. Professor Wangari Maathai won a Nobel Peace Prize.

Singular and Plural Nouns

A noun may be either singular or plural. A **singular noun** names one person, place, thing, or idea.

Example: The **farmer** drove to the **market** in his **truck**.

A **plural noun** names more than one person, place, thing or idea.

Example: The **farmers** drove to the **markets** in their **trucks**. **Rules for forming plurals**

The following are guidelines for forming plurals:

1. To form the plural of most singular nouns, add **-s**.

Examples: Street–streets, house–houses, painter–painters, shelter–shelters, event–events, hospital–hospitals.

2. When a singular noun ends in **s**, **sh**, **ch**, **x**, or **z**, add **-es**.

Examples: dress–dresses, brush–brushes, axe–axes, coach–coaches, box–boxes, bench–benches, dish–dishes, waltz–waltzes.

3. When a singular noun ends in **o**, add **-s** to make it plural.

Examples: Piano–pianos, solo–solos, cameo–cameos, concerto–concertos, patio–patios, studio–studios, radio–radios, rodeo–rodeos.

4. For some nouns ending with a consonant and **o**, add **-es**.

Examples: hero–heroes, potato–potatoes, echo–echoes, veto–vetoes, tomato

5. When a singular noun ends with a consonant and **y**, change the **y** to **i** and add **-es**.

Examples: Library – libraries, activity – activities, story – stories, city – cities, berry – berries.

6. When a singular noun ends with a vowel (**a, e, i, o, u**) followed by **y**, just add **-s**.

Examples: Valley – valleys, essay – essays, alley – alleys, survey – surveys, joy – joys.

7. To form the plural of many nouns ending in **f** or **fe**, change the **f** to **v** and add **-es** or **s**.

Examples: Wife – wives, thief – thieves, loaf – loaves, half – halves, shelf – shelves, leaf – leaves, scarf – scarves, life – lives, calf – calves, elf – elves. 8. For some nouns ending in **f**, add **-s** to form the plural.

Examples: proof – proofs, belief – beliefs, motif – motifs, cliff – cliffs. 9. Some nouns remain the same in the singular and the plural.

Examples: deer – deer, sheep – sheep, series – series, species – species, moose – moose, trout – trout.

10. The plurals of some nouns are formed in special ways.

Examples: foot – feet, child – children, mouse – mice, man – men, woman – women, ox-oxen, tooth – teeth.

NB: If you don't figure out the correct spelling of a plural noun, look it up in a dictionary.

Exercise 6

What is the plural form of each of the following nouns? **Example: scarf -scarves** 1.

tooth 9. cuff 17. moose 25. boss

2. wife 10. deer 18. child 26. fox

3. giraffe 11. cliff 19. echo 27. bunch

4. hero 12. auto 20. baby 28. ferry

5. radio 13. studio 21. sky 29. flash

6. potato 14. man 22. beach 30. ship

7. belief 15. roof 23. eye

8. thief 16. rodeo 24. Volcano

Exercise 7

Write the plural form of each noun in brackets to complete each sentence correctly.

Example: I bought two _____ from the shop. (loaf) **loaves** 1. I used two different _____ to cut the rope. (knife) 2. She peeled the _____ with a knife. (potato)

3. They are feeding the noisy _____. (goose)

4. The tools are placed on the _____. (shelf)

5. Mukami cut a few _____ for the salad. (tomato)

6. The _____ are playing in the field. (child)
7. Some _____ are hiding in the ceiling. (mouse)
8. The _____ of the buildings must be repaired. (roof) 9. The music helped them imagine the strange _____. (story) 10. Koech used creative _____ to help young people sharpen their imagination. (activity)

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Countable Nouns

These are nouns that take plurals and can be counted.

Examples:

Egg – eggs One egg, three eggs, ten eggs

Potato - Potatoes Twenty potatoes

Onion - Onions Two hundred onions

Such nouns are known as **COUNTABLE** or **COUNT NOUNS**

Uncountable Nouns

These are nouns that do not take plurals and cannot be counted.

Examples: salt, butter, cooking fat, milk, bread, jam

We do not say:

Two butters*

Ten milks*

Three breads*

Such nouns are known as **UNCOUNTABLE** or **MASS NOUNS**

Exercise 8

Rewrite the words below in two columns, COUNTABLE and UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

orange coffee

furniture tea

water gold

chair team

friend music

Plurals with uncountable Nouns

One way to express plurals of uncountable nouns is by use of **expressions of quantity**.

Example:

a piece of information - **pieces of** information

a loaf of bread - **four loaves of** bread

a tin of soup - **three tins of** soup

a piece of furniture - **several pieces of** furniture

a litre of milk - **twenty litres of** milk

a bottle of beer - **ten bottles of** beer

Exercise 9

Supply an appropriate **expression of quantity** for the following uncountable nouns 1.

- a.....of cigarettes.
2. two..... of cooking oil
3. three.....of jam.
4. ten.....of butter.
5. six.....of soda.
6. a..... of toothpaste
7. three.....of rice.
8. five of flour.
9. two of chocolate.
10. four..... of news.

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are nouns that represent **a group of people or things** as a single unit.

Some collective nouns can take plural forms

Examples:

crowd (s) flock (s)

group (s) herd (s)

team (s) committee (s)

pair (s)

Some collective nouns, however, **cannot** be used in the plural:

Examples:

furnitures* beddings*

equipments* informations*

luggages* baggages*

Exercise 10

When I arrived at the airport, there were.....1..... (crowd) of people blocking the entrance with their2.....(luggage). Near the customs sections, several.....3..... (group) of officials were standing, checking the4..... (equipment) that was being loaded onto a trolley. Most people were standing, waiting for...5..... (information) from the loudspeakers on the departures and arrivals of aircraft.

COMPOUND NOUNS

A compound noun is a noun that is made up of **two or more words**. The words that form compound nouns may be joined together, separated or hyphenated.

Examples:

Joined: bookcase, blackboard, pushcart

Separated: high school, rabbit hutch, radar gun

Hyphenated: go-getter, mother-in-law, sergeant-at-arms

Compound nouns are usually a combination of two or more word classes. The most common combinations are as follows:

a. Some are formed by joining **a noun** with **another noun**. Most of these compound nouns take their plurals in the last words.

Examples:

tableroom(s) grass root(s) prize-fighter(s)

cupboard(s) policeman/men rubber-stamp(s)

bookcase(s) farmhouse(s) sanitary towel(s)

cowshed(s) fruit machine(s) shoulder blade(s)

b. Some are formed by joining **a verb** and **an adverb**. Most of these compound nouns also take their plurals in the last words.

Examples:

breakfast(s) push-up(s) rundown(s)

takeaway(s) knockout(s) slip-up(s)

sit-up(s) meltdown(s)

c. Some compound nouns are formed by joining **an adjective** and **a noun**. Most of these also take their plurals in the last words.

Examples:

hotdog(s) polar bear(s) safe guard(s)

blackboard(s) quicksand

highway(s) remote control(s)

nuclear power right angle(s)

d. Some are formed by joining **a verb** and **a noun**. Most of these also take their plurals in the last words.

Examples:

driveway(s) playground(s) spend thrift(s)

breakdance(s) pushchair(s) go-getter(s)

mincemeat screwdriver(s)

password(s) spare wheel(s)

e. Some are formed by joining **an adverb** and **a noun**. Most of these also take their plural in the last words.

Examples:

overdraft(s) overcoats(s) backyards(s)

backbencher(s) undercoat(s) backbone(s)

backlog(s) underwear(s) oversight(s)

f. A few compound nouns are formed by joining **an adverb** and **a verb**. These ones also take their plurals in the last words.

Examples:

outbreak(s) backlash(es) output(s)

outburst(s) outcast(s) input(s)

g. A few others are formed by joining **a noun** and **a verb**. They also take their plurals in the last words.

Examples:

nosedive(s) nightfall(s)

h. A number of compound nouns are formed by **joining two nouns** by use of hyphens and **a short preposition in between**. These compound nouns always take their plurals in the first words.

Examples:

commander(s)-in-chief sergeant(s)-at-arms

mother(s)-in-law sister(s)-in-law

play(s)-within-a-play

Exercise 11

Underline the compound nouns in the following sentences and write down their plural forms where possible.

1. John wants to be a quantity surveyor when he grows up.
2. Rainwater had washed away all the top soil.
3. The footballer was shown a red card by the referee.
4. Neither candidate won the elections, forcing a runoff.
5. The goalkeeper saved a penalty in the second half.
6. He killed the wild pig with a sledge hammer.
7. Njoroge's tape-recorder was stolen yesterday.
8. The theatregoer was disappointed with the show.
9. Size 8's latest song has caused an uproar.
10. He attempted a creative writing workshop.

Possessive Nouns

A **possessive noun** shows who or what owns something. A possessive noun can either be **singular** or **plural**.

Singular possessive nouns

9

A **singular possessive noun** shows that one person, place, or thing **has** or **owns** something. To make a singular noun show possession, add **an apostrophe** and **s ('s)**.

Example:

the feathers of the chick – **the chick's feathers**

the hat that belongs to the man – **the man's hat**

Other examples:

the child's toy the fish's fins

Mark's bike the horse's tail

Using possessive nouns is shorter and better than other ways of showing possession.

Example:

LONGER: The **dog belonging to Papa** is barking.

BETTER: **Papa's dog** is barking.

Plural Possessive Nouns

A **plural possessive noun** shows possession or ownership of a plural noun.

Example:

The **cars that belong to the teachers** are parked here.

The **teachers' cars** are parked here.

When a plural noun ends in **s**, add only an apostrophe after the **s** to make the noun show possession.

Not all plural nouns end in **s**. When a plural noun does not end in **s**, add '**s** to form the plural possession.

Examples:

the shoes of the men – **the men's shoes**

the food of the children – **the children's food**

The noun following a possessive noun may either be the name of a **thing** or a **quality**.

Example:

Thing – Koki's raincoat Brian's umbrella

Quality – the judge's fury Bob's courage

Exercise 8

Change the following phrases to show possession in a shorter way.

Example: the claws of the leopard

the leopard's claws.

1. the tail of the lion
2. the dog that Cliff has
3. the hat of my mother
4. the book that Evans owns
5. the pot that the child has
6. the name of the doll
7. the mobile phone that Lucy owns
8. the shoes that Kimani has
9. the teeth that the fox has
10. the rabbit that my friend owns

Summary of rules of forming Possessive Nouns

1. For singular a noun, add an apostrophe and s.

Example: Mr. Mukui's car is a Toyota Corolla.

2. For plural noun ending in s, add an apostrophe only.

Example: The victims' property was stolen

3. For a plural noun that does not end in s, add an apostrophe and s.

Example: The women's boots were muddy.

Singular Noun Singular possessive Plural Noun Plural possessive boy boy's
boys boys'

child child's children children's mouse mouse's mice mice's deer

deer's deer deer's **Exercise 9**

Write the following phrases to show possession.

Example: teachers – pens = **teachers' pens**

1. cooks – aprons 6. women – sports

2. men – boots 7. carpenters – nails

3. countries – flags 8. sailors – uniforms

4. guests – coats 9. musicians – instruments

5. athletes – medal 10. neighbours – pets

Exercise 10

Rewrite the following sentences changing the **BOLD** words to **plural possessive nouns**.

Example: The players on the teams practised after school.

The teams' players practised after school.

1. Each day **the wealth of the couple** increased.

2. There was a **team of men** and a **team of women**.

3. The **uniforms that the teams** wore were new.

4. Numbers were printed on **the shirts of the athletes**

5. **Scores made by the team-mates** were put on the scoreboard.

6. The players enjoyed **the cheers of their friends**.

7. **The whistles of the coaches** stopped the game.

8. **The eyes of the children** were full of tears of joy.

11

9. **The soothing voices of their mothers** calmed them.

10. However, **the houses belonging to their neighbours** were destroyed.

PRONOUNS

A **pronoun** is a part of speech **that takes the place of a noun**. They include such words as **I, we, he, she, they, me** and **us**.

Pronouns enable you to avoid repeating the same names (nouns), when writing or speaking, which would otherwise make you sound very awkward and wordy. By

using pronouns effectively, you can make your writing and speaking flow smoothly. Pronouns can be classified into 6 types. These are **personal, indefinite, demonstrative, interrogative, reflexive** and **intensive pronouns**. **Personal pronouns**

A **personal pronoun** is a word that is used **in place of a noun or another pronoun**. They are used to refer to nouns that name **persons or things**.

Example:

Awkward: Kamau put on Kamau's gum boots. Then Kamau went to the shamba.

Improved: Kamau put on **his** gum boots. Then **he** went to the shamba. In the above example, the personal pronoun **his** helps the writer avoid repeating the same noun. The pronoun **he** acts as a bridge to connect the two sentences. Personal pronouns are further classified in terms of **person** and **gender**. **Person**

In terms of person, personal pronouns can be divided into three classes.

(i) **First person** – I, my, me, we, our and us.

These ones refer to the person(s) **speaking**.

Example: I always ride my bike to school.

(ii) **Second person** – you, your, yours

These refer to the person(s) **spoken to**.

Example: I will call **you** tomorrow.

(iii) **Third person** – he, his, him, she, hers, her, it, its, they, their, them. These ones refer to another person(s) or thing(s) that is being **spoken of**. The personal pronoun **it** usually replaces a noun that stands for a thing or an animal. **It** is never used in place of a person.

Gender

Personal pronouns can also be classified by **gender**. Gender can either be **masculine** (referring to male people), **feminine** (referring to female people) or **neuter** (referring to animals or things).

Examples:

12

Joseph cleaned **his** car. (**his** is the third person, masculine gender). Isabel said the dress was **hers** (**hers** is the third person, feminine gender). The dog wagged **its** tail. (**its** is the third person, neuter gender).

FORMS OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS

In English, personal pronouns have three forms: **the subject form, the object form and the possessive form**.

Examples:

She is a painter. (subject form)

He praised **her**. (Object form)

It is **her** best painting. (Possessive form)

Subject Pronouns

A **subject pronoun** takes the place of a noun as the **subject** of a sentence. These pronouns are:

- (i) Singular forms – I, you, he, she, it
- (ii) Plural forms – we, you, they

Examples:

Noun Subject Pronoun

The housegirl takes care of her. **She** takes care of her.

The dog guards the house. **It** guards the house.

Mark and Francis love swimming. **They** love swimming.

Subject pronouns also appear after forms of the linking verbs **be**.

Examples:

The watchman today is **he**.

The composers were **they**.

Exercise 1

Underline the subject pronouns in the following sentences.

Example: **She** ate a water melon

1. They ate fish and chips.
2. We like Italian food.
3. It is delicious.
4. The biggest eater was he.
5. You helped in the cooking.
6. The cooks were Tom and I.

Exercise 2

Replace the underlined words with subject pronouns.

Example: **Pio and Gama** are friends - **They**

1. **The glasses** were under the table.
2. **Emma** fed the chicken.

13

3. **The pears** were juicy.
4. **Uncle Ben and Lillian** visited the orphans.
5. The new waitress is **Jane**.
6. The fastest runners were **Tecla and Kirui**.
7. **Lisa** went to the hall.
8. **The chicken** was slaughtered.
9. **Lucky Dube and Brenda Fasie** were South African Singers.
10. Samuel **Wanjiru** has won many athletics medals.

Object pronouns

Object pronouns can replace nouns used **after action verbs**. These pronouns are:

- (i) Singular – me, you, him, her, it

(ii) Plural – us, you, them

Examples:

The driver drove **him**. (Direct object)

The parents thanked **us**. (Direct object)

The reporters asked **him** many questions. (Indirect object)

In the above examples, the personal pronouns are the direct or indirect objects of the verbs before them.

Object pronouns can also replace nouns after prepositions such as **to, for, with, in, at** or **by**. That is, they can be **objects of prepositions**.

Examples:

Gladys waved to **them**. (Object of a preposition)

The delivery is for **me**.

Ben went with **them** to the theatre.

Exercise 3

Choose the correct pronoun in the brackets in the following sentences.

Example: Irungu photographed (us, we). = us

1. Lisa asked (he, him) for a picture.
2. Adam sketched Lisa and (I, me).
3. He gave a photo to (us, we).
4. Ann and (she, her) saw Dave and Bob.
5. Adam drew Lisa and (they, them).
6. Mark helped (I, me) with the packing.
7. Loise praised (him, he) for his good work.
8. Everyone spotted (they, them) easily.
9. That night Mike played the guitar for (us, we).
10. (We, Us) drove with (they, them) to the mountains.

Possessive pronouns

14

A **possessive pronoun** shows **ownership**.

Example: My pen is black.

There are two kinds of possessive pronouns:

- i. Those used **as adjectives** to **modify nouns**. These possessive pronouns are:

Singular: My, your, his, her, its

Plural: Our, your, their

Examples:

My shirt is yellow. **Your** food is on the table.

His bag is green. This is **her** dress.

Its fur is soft. These are **our** parents.

Pay **your** bills. They removed **their** bats.

The above possessive pronouns always appear before nouns to **modify** them. Hence, they are called **modifiers**.

ii. Those that **stand alone** and **replace nouns** in sentences. These possessive nouns are:

Singular: mine, yours, his, hers, its

Plural: ours, yours, their

Examples:

The yellow shirt is **mine**. The food on the table is **yours**.

The green bag is **his**. This dress is **hers**.

Its is the soft fur. These crops are **ours**.

These bills are **yours**. Those hats are **theirs**.

Exercise 4

Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct possessive pronoun from the brackets.

Example: The lazy girl completed (her, hers) home work. = **her**.

1. (My, mine) journey to Mombasa was enjoyable.
2. Florence said (her, hers) was the best.
3. Are the pictures of Fort Jesus (your, yours)?
4. (Her, Hers) were taken at Jomo Kenyatta Beach.
5. Tomorrow we will make frames for (our, ours) pictures.
6. (My, mine) class is planning a trip to Mt. Kenya.
7. (Our, ours) trip will be taken on video.
8. Micere is excited that the idea was (her, hers).
9. Koki and Toti cannot hide (their, theirs) excitement.
10. (My, mine) dream is to climb to the highest peak of the mountain.

POINTS TO NOTE

1. The pronoun **I** is used as a subject or after forms of the linking verb be.

Examples:

15

Subject: **I** travel by bus.

After the linking verb be: Yesterday, the prefects on duty **were** Victor and **I**. 2. The pronoun **me** is used as an object after **action verbs** or words (prepositions) such as **to, for, with, in, or at**.

Examples:

Object: Rose met **me** at the gate.

After prepositions: Rose waited **for me** at the gate.

You are coming **with me**.

3. When using compound subjects and objects (i.e. subjects and objects comprising of a pronoun and a noun or another pronoun), always name yourself **last**. **Examples:**

Diana and **I** visited our grandmother yesterday.

Who appointed Chege and **me**?

Rose waited for her and **me** at the gate.

CONTRACTIONS WITH PRONOUNS

A **contraction** is a shortened form of two words. One or more letters are omitted and an apostrophe (') is used in place of the letters left out.

A contraction is formed by combining pronouns and the verbs **am, is, are, will, would, have, has, and had**.

Pronoun + verb Contraction Pronoun + verb Contraction I am

I'm I have I've

He is he's he has he's

It is it's it has it's

You are you're you have you've

They are they're they have they've

I will I'll I had I'd

You will you'll you had you'd

We would we'd we had we'd

Note:

1. Some contractions look the same but are formed from different words.

Examples:

he is, he has = he's

we had, we would = we'd

2. Some possessive pronouns sound like contractions. Because the words sound alike, they are sometimes confused.

Examples:

Possessive pronouns Contractions

its it's

your you're

16

their they're

whose who's

Incorrect: The team celebrated **it's** victory.

Correct: The team celebrated **its** victory.

Incorrect: **Your** late for the preps.

Correct: **You're** late for the preps.

Incorrect: **Whose** the fastest runner in the world?

Correct: **Who's** the fastest runner in the world?

Rules of using possessive pronouns and contractions correctly: 1. If the word you want to use stands for two words, it is a contraction and needs an apostrophe.

2. Never use an apostrophe in a possessive pronoun.

Exercise 5

Write the contractions for the following word pairs. **Example:** It has = it's

1. You will 3. He had 5. You have

2. We would 4. I am 6. They will

Exercise 6

What pronoun and verb make up each of the following contractions?

Example: It's = it is, it has

1. I'll 3. you'd 5. they're
2. we're 4. he's 6. she'd

Exercise 7

Choose the correct word given in brackets in the following sentences.

1. The Kenyan government has worked hard to improve (its, it's) educational system.
2. (Whose, Who's) going to decide where the guests will sleep?
3. (Their, They're) learning French in their school.
4. Only students (whose, who's) scores are excellent will join national schools.
5. (Its, It's) been estimated that about 8 million Kenyans are living with HIV AIDS.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

An **indefinite pronoun** is a pronoun that **does not refer to a specific person or thing**.

In English, there are singular indefinite pronouns, plural indefinite and both singular and plural indefinite pronouns.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

17

another anything everybody neither one
anybody each everyone nobody somebody anymore either everything no one
someone. An indefinite pronoun must agree with its verbs and in number with its possessive pronoun. The above indefinite pronouns are used with singular verbs. They are also used with singular possessive pronouns.

Examples:

Agreement with verbs

Correct: Everyone **has** heard of Lake Turkana.

Incorrect: Everyone **have** heard of Lake Turkana.

Correct: Nobody **knows** what happened to Samuel Wanjiru.

Incorrect: Nobody **know** what happened to Samuel Wanjiru.

Correct: Everything about the old man **remains** a mystery.

Incorrect: Everything about the old man **remain** a mystery.

Agreement in number with possessive pronouns

Correct: Neither believed **his/her** eyes.

Incorrect: Neither believed **their** eyes.

Correct: Each strained **his/her** neck to see.

Incorrect: Each strained **their** neck to see.

Plural indefinite pronouns

both many few several

These indefinite pronouns use plural verbs and possessive pronouns.

Examples:

Plural verbs

Correct: Few **know** about Lake Olbolosat.

Incorrect: Few **knows** about Lake Obolosat.

Correct: Both **stand** by what they believe.

Incorrect: Both **stands** by what they believe.

Plural possessive pronouns

Correct: Several reported **their** findings.

Incorrect: Several reported **his/her** findings.

Both singular and plural indefinite pronouns

all some any none

These indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural, depending on their meaning in the sentence.

Examples:

All of my story **is** true. – singular

All of the guests **are** here. – plural

None of the lake **is** foggy. – singular

18

None of the photos **are** spoiled. – plural.

EXERCISE 8

Underline the indefinite pronouns in the following sentences and then write the correct form of the verb or possessive pronoun in the brackets.

1. All the photographs of the killer (is, are) unclear.
2. (Has, Have) anybody seen my camera?
3. Many (believes, believe) a monster lives in the lake.
4. Each of the photographs (make, makes) people want more.
5. All of the evidence (indicates, indicate) that he was killed by his wife.
6. Everyone has taken (his, their) payment.
7. Several eyewitnesses volunteered to give (his, their) accounts.
8. Anyone can lose (her, their) eyesight.
9. Another reported (his, their) case to the police.
10. Somebody left (her, their) handbag in the lecture hall.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

A **demonstrative pronoun** is used to **single** or **point out** one or more persons or things referred to in the sentence. These pronouns are **this**, **that**, **these**, and **those**. **This** and **these** point to persons or things that are **near**.

Examples:

This is a gazelle.

These are the students of Kianjege West Secondary School.

That and **those** point to persons or things that are **farther away**.

Examples:

That is the city square.

Those are the lodging rooms.

This and **that** are used with singular nouns. **These** and **those** are used with plural nouns.

Exercise 9

Pick the correct demonstrate pronouns from the choices given in the brackets in the following sentences.

1. (This, That) is the canteen we are entering now.
2. (This, That) is the dispensary across the street
3. (These, Those) are beautiful flowers on the counter over there.
4. Are (those, these) chocolate bars on the far counter?
5. I think (these, those) are called Vuvuzelas.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

An **interrogative pronoun** is used to **ask a question**. These pronouns are **who**, **whose**, **whom**, **which** and **what**.

Examples:

19

Who is the mayor of this town?

Whose is the red car?

Which is her blouse?

What did she ask you?

Whom should I trust with my secret?

USING WHO, WHOM, AND WHOSE

Who, **whom**, and **whose** are often used to ask questions. Hence, they are interrogative pronouns.

WHO is the **subject** form. It is used as the subject of a verb.

Examples:

Who taught you how to play the guitar? (**Who** is the subject of the verb **taught**.)

WHOM is the **object** form. It is used as the **direct object** of a verb or as the object of a preposition.

Examples:

Whom did you meet? (**Whom** is the object of the verb **did meet**).

For **whom** is this trophy? (**whom** is the object of the preposition **for**).

WHOSE is the **possessive** form. It can be used :

- (i) To modify a noun

Example:

Whose umbrella is this? (**whose** modifies the noun umbrella)

- (ii) Alone as the subject or object of a verb

Examples:

Whose are those water melons? (**whose** is the subject of the verb **are**)

Whose did you admire? (**whose** is the object of the verb **did admire**)

Exercise 10

Pick the correct **interrogative pronouns** from the brackets in the following sentences.

1. (Who, Whom) owns that shop?
2. (Who, Whom) can we ask the way?
3. (Which, What) did they ask you?
4. (Which, What) are the objects on the table called?
5. To (who, whom) does the boutique belong?

Exercise 11

Complete the following sentences with **who**, **whom**, or **whose**.

1. _____ knows the origin of the Luos?
 2. _____ did you ask about it?
 3. To _____ did you give the letter?
 4. _____ is the most attractive painting?
- 20
5. _____ is likely to receive the Chaguo la Teeniez award?
 6. For _____ did you buy this doll?
 7. _____ skill in dancing is the best?
 8. _____ is the officer-in-charge here?
 9. _____ are you looking at?
 10. _____ are those healthy Merino sheep?

REFLEXIVE AND INTENSIVE PRONOUNS

Reflexive and **intensive** pronouns end in **-self** or **-selves**. These are **myself**, **yourself**, **herself**, **himself**, **itself**, **ourselves**, and **themselves**. There is, however, one difference between **reflexive** and **Intensive** pronouns.

A **reflexive pronoun** refers to **an action performed by the subject** of the sentence. The meaning of the sentence is incomplete without the reflexive pronoun.

Examples:

Monicah bought **herself** a new dress.

(The meaning of the sentence is incomplete without the reflexive pronoun because we do not know for whom Monicah bought the dress).

An **Intensive pronoun** is used to emphasise a noun or a pronoun. It does not add information to a sentence, and it can be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence.

I **myself** pulled the boy out of the river.

(If you remove **myself**, the meaning of the sentence does not change)

Exercise 12

Identify the **Reflexive** and **Intensive pronouns** in the following sentences, labelling them accordingly.

1. I myself have never tried mountain climbing.
2. He himself was taking the cows to graze in the forest.
3. My sister Anastasia mends her clothes herself.
4. She often challenges herself by doing strenuous activities.
5. You may ask yourself about the sanity of beer drinking competition.

SPECIAL PRONOUNS PROBLEMS

1. Double subjects

We all know that every sentence must have a subject. Sometimes we **incorrectly** use a double subject – a **noun** and a **pronoun** - to name the same person, place, or thing.

Incorrect Correct

21

Jane she is my cousin. **Jane** is my cousin.

She is my cousin.

Her scarf it is pretty. **Her scarf** is pretty.

It is pretty.

Jane and **she** should not be used as subjects together.

The subject **her scarf** should not be used together with **it**.

Use only a noun or a pronoun to name a subject.

2. Pronouns and their Antecedents

The **antecedent** of a pronoun is a noun or another pronoun for which the pronoun stands.

A personal pronoun, you will remember, is used in place of a noun. The noun is the word to which the pronouns refer and it is therefore its **antecedent**. The noun usually comes first, either in the same sentence or in the sentence before it.

Examples:

We met **Mureithi**. **He** is the medical doctor.

(**He** stands for **Mureithi**. **Mureithi** is the antecedent).

The students had come to school with **their** mobile phones.

(**Their** stands for **students**. **Students** is the antecedent).

Pronouns may be the antecedents of other pronouns.

Examples:

Does **everybody** have **his** booklet?

(**everybody**, which is a singular indefinite pronoun, is the antecedent of **his**).

All of the students have brought **theirs**.

(**All**, which is a plural indefinite pronoun, is the antecedent of **theirs**). Now, a pronoun must **agree** with its antecedent in number. **Agree** here means that the pronoun must be the same **in number** as its antecedent. The word **number** means **singular** or **plural**.

If the pronoun is singular, the word that it stands for must be singular, and it must be **plural** if the word it stands for is **plural**.

Examples:

Correct: The **scientists** tested **their** new discovery.

(**Scientists** is plural; **their** is plural.)

Incorrect: The **scientists** tested **his** new discovery.

Correct: **Mr. Kiama** turned on **his** TV.

(**Mr Kiama** is singular; **his** is singular)

Correct: **Nobody** left **her** workstation.

(**Nobody** is singular, **her** is singular)

22

NB: When the antecedent refers to both males and females, it is best to use the phrase **his or her**.

3. Use of we and us with nouns.

Phrases such as **we students** and **us girls** are often incorrectly used. To tell which pronoun to use, drop the **noun** and say the sentence without it. **Problem:** (We, Us) boys study hard.

Solution: We study hard. = **We boys** study hard.

Problem: The DC praised. (us, we) students.

Solution: The DC praised us. = The DC praised **us students**

4. Using the pronoun Them

The word **them** is always a pronoun. It is always used as the object of a verb or a preposition, never as a subject.

Examples:

Correct: The president greeted **them**. (direct object of the verb **greeted**)

Correct: She gave **them** a sandwich. (Indirect object of the verb **gave**)

Correct: The information was useful to **them**. (object of the preposition **to**)

Incorrect: **Them** they arrived late.

5. Using Those

Although we previously said that **those** is used as a **demonstrative pronouns**, it is sometimes used as an **adjective** i.e. a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun. If a noun appears immediately after it, **those** is now an adjective, not a pronoun.

Examples:

Those are the new desks that were bought. (**Those** is a **pronoun**, the subject of the verb **are**).

Those desks are attractive. (**Those** is an **adjective** modifying the noun **desks**).

Exercise 13

- Each of the following sentences has a double subject. Write each correctly.
1. Papa Shirandula he is a good actor.
 2. Many people they find him funny.
 3. The show it was on television for many years.
 4. Their daughter she is also in that show.
 5. The shoes they are beautiful.
 6. People they like our hotel.
 7. My brother he drives a matatu.
 8. Our hotel it is open seven days a week.
 9. The TV it is very clear today.
 10. My brother and sister they work in Nairobi.

Exercise 14

Pick the correct pronoun in the brackets in the following sentences.

23

1. (We, Us) students started a school magazine last month.
2. Many careers are unpromising. (Them, Those) are the ones to avoid.
3. One of (them, those) motivational speakers was especially interesting.
4. A financial analyst told (we, us) students about his work.
5. Finding jobs was important to (we, us) graduates.

VERBS

A **verb** is a word that:

- (i) expresses an action
- (ii) expresses the state that something exists, or
- (iii) links the subject with a word that describes or renames it.

Hence, there are two kinds of verbs. These are **action verbs** and **linking verbs**.

ACTION VERBS

Action verbs express **actions**. They show what the subject does or did. Most verbs are action verbs.

Examples:

Cats **drink** milk.

The ball **flew** over the goal post.

The farmer **tills** the land.

Robert **ran** to the house.

The action may be one that you can see.

Example:

They **crowned** their new King.

The action may be one that you cannot see.

Example:

She **wanted** recognition.

Whether the action can be seen or not, an action verb says that something is happening, has happened, or will happen.

LINKING VERBS

A linking verb **links** the subject of a sentence with a word or words that :

(i) express(es) the subject's state of being

Example:

She **is** here. (expresses state of being)

She **seems** ready. (state of being)

(ii) describe(s) or rename(s) the subject.

Examples:

Anna **is** a nurse. (**a nurse** describes Anna)

Joyce **is** cheerful. (**cheerful** describes Joyce)

The road **is** bumpy. (**bumpy** describes the road)

24

A linking verb does not tell about an action.

Common linking verbs

Am look grow are feel remain

is taste become was smell sound

were seem will be appear

NB: Some verbs can be either linking verbs or action verbs.

Examples:

The crowd **looked** at the mangled car. – ACTION

The driver of the car **looked** shocked. – LINKING

The chef **smelled** the food. – ACTION

The food **smelled** wonderful. – LINKING

EXERCISE 1

Identify the verb in each of the following sentences. Then label each verb **Action** or **Linking**.

1. Queen Elizabeth of England seems an interesting historical figure. 2.

We watched the Olympic games on television.

3. The crowd cheered loudly.

4. She seems calm.

5. PLO Lumumba is a quick thinker.

6. The hunter aimed the arrow at the antelope.

7. The referee blew the whistle to start off the game.

8. She was very tired after the journey.

9. She is careful when crossing the road.

10. The country seems prosperous.

VERB PHRASES

In some sentences, the verb is more than one word. It is in form of a phrase,

which is called a **verb phrase**. A verb phrase consists of a **main verb** and one or more **helping verbs**. The main verb shows the action in the sentence. The helping verb works with the main verb. Helping verbs do not show action. **Examples:**
Mark Francis **has passed** the examinations.

H.V. M.V.

He **will be admitted** to a national school.

H.V.H.V. M.V.

His parents **are happy** with him.

H.V. M.V.

Common helping verbs

am will can would is shall could
must are have may was has should

25

were had might

Some verbs, such as **do**, **have** and **be** can either be used as **main verbs** or as **helping verbs**.

Examples:

As main verbs As helping verbs

I will **do** the job. I **do** like the job.

Who **has** a pen? He **has** lost his pen.

They **are** my friends. They **are** coming today.

Sometimes helping verbs and main verbs are separated by words that are not verbs.

Examples:

I **do** not **ride** a bicycle any more.

Can we ever **be** friends again?

We **should** definitely **apologise** for the mistakes.

Exercise 2

Indicate H.V. under the Helping verb and M.V. under the Main verb in the following sentences.

1. The school choir is singing a new song.
2. The football season has finally begun.
3. This car just can travel very fast.
4. He had waited for this chance for years.
5. My parents will be visiting us soon.
6. Our friends have come for a visit.
7. You must buy your ticket for the game.
8. Sarah has chosen Kenyatta University for her degree course.
9. She is hitting her child with a rubber strap.
10. I will go for the game next week.

VERBS TENSES

The time of an action or the state of being is expressed by different forms of the verb. These forms are called the **tenses** of the verb.

There are three main forms of a verb: **the present, the past, or the future.**

The Present Tense

A verb which is in present tense indicates what the subject of the sentence is doing **right now.**

Example:

The teacher **sees** the students.

The verb **sees** tells that the teacher is seeing the students now. To show the present tense, an **-s** or **-es** is added to most verbs if the subject is singular. If the subject is plural, or I or You, the **-s**, or **-es** is not added.

26

Examples:

The bird **hatches** in the nest.

The stream **flows** down the hill.

The boys **rush** for their breakfast.

We **talk** a lot.

Rules for forming the Present Tense with Singular Subjects

1. Most verbs: add **-s**

get – gets play – plays eat – eats

2. Verbs ending in **s, ch, sh, x, and z**: add **-es**

pass – passes mix – mixes

punch-punches buzz – buzzes

push – pushes

3. Verbs ending with a **consonant** and **y**: change the **y** to **i** and add **-es**

try – tries empty – empties

Exercise 3

Write the correct present form of each verb in the brackets in the following sentences.

1. She carefully _____ the map. (study)

2. A fish _____ in the water near me. (splash)

3. She _____ her hands. (wash)

4. He _____ to the classroom. (hurry)

5. Bryan and I _____ the assignment. (discuss)

The Past Tense

A verb which is in past tense shows **what has already happened.**

Example:

Tito **liked** his grandmother's story.

The verb **liked** tells that the action in the sentence happened before now.

Rules for forming the Past Tense

1. Most verbs: Add **-ed** play – played

talk – talked

climb – climbed

2. Verbs ending with **e**: Add **-d** praise – praised hope – hoped

wipe – wiped

3. Verbs ending with **a consonant** and **-y**: Change the **y** to **i** and add **-ed**

bury – buried

carry – carried

study – studied

27

4. Verbs **ending with a single vowel** and **a consonant**: **Double the final consonant** and add **-ed** stop – stopped

man – manned

trip – tripped

Exercise 4

Write the past tense forms of each of the verbs in brackets in the following sentences.

1. John _____ his house burn into ashes. (watch)
2. The baby _____ loudly. (cry)
3. The teacher _____ at the naughty student. (yell)
4. The chef _____ a delicious cake. (bake)
5. We _____ for a present for our grandmother. (shop)

The Future Tense

A verb which is in future tense tells **what is going to happen**.

Examples:

Evans **will take** his car to the garage.

She **will** probably **come** with us.

The verbs **will take** and **will come** tell us what is going to happen. Hence, they are in future tense.

To form the future tense of a verb, use the helping verb **will** or **shall** with the main verb.

Exercise 5

Write the future tense forms of the verbs in the following sentences.

1. We write in exercise books.
2. The train stopped at the station.
3. He decides what he wants to do.
4. They practise in the football field.
5. Rats multiply very fast.

More Tenses

The above three forms of tenses can further be divided into:

1. **The simple tenses** - Present simple tense
 - Past simple tense
 - Future simple tense
2. **The perfect tenses** - Present perfect tense
 - Present perfect progressive - Past perfect tense
 - Future perfect
 - Future perfect progressive
3. **The progressive tenses** - Present progressive tense

28

- Past progressive tense
- Progressive tense
- Future perfect progressive tense.

The simple Tenses

The most common tenses of the verb are the **simple tenses**. You use them most often in your speaking and writing.

1. Present simple tense.

Look at the following sentences.

- (a) I **know** Kisumu.
- (b) He **goes** to school every day.
- (c) The sun **rises** from the east.

All the above sentences contain a verb in the present simple tense. This tense is used for different purposes.

- (i) To state **a personal fact**

Example: I **know** Kisumu.

- (ii) To point out **a regular habit**.

Example: He **goes** to school every day.

- (iii) To state **a known scientific fact**

Example: The sun **rises** from the east.

Exercise 6

Complete the following sentences putting the verbs in brackets in the present simple tense.

1. They _____ their new principal. (like)
2. Every morning, she _____ her teeth. (brush)
3. The earth _____ on its own axis. (rotate)
4. Twice a year, he _____ his family. (visit)
5. Air _____ when heated. (rise)

2. Past Simple Tense

The past simple tense is used when **an action has been completed**.

Examples:

We **cleaned** our classrooms yesterday.

He **drove** the car this morning.

She **planned** the whole incident.

Exercise 7

Write down the past simple tense of the following words and then use each of them in sentences of your own.

start breathe

add roam

trap obey

29

annoy worry

pity fit

3. Future Simple Tense

The future simple tense **places the action or condition in the future**. It is formed by using the word **shall** or **will** before the present form of the main verb.

Examples:

We **shall need** help with her load.

She **will eat** the bananas alone.

The dancers **will entertain** them.

Exercise 8

Use the following words in future simple tense in sentences of your own.

see develop

go begin

exist consume

introduce hunt

bring become

The Perfect Tenses

The perfect tenses are used to show **that an action was completed** or **that a condition existed before a given time**. The perfect tenses are formed using **has**, **have**, or **had** before the **past participles**, that is, verb forms ending in **-ed**.

Examples:

1. Present Perfect Tense:

Cesar **has** just **finished** his homework.

Kamau and Njoroge **have** now **agreed** to meet.

2. Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Kibet **has been working** in his shamba for two hours.

We **have been swimming** in this pool for ten minutes.

3. Past Perfect Tense

We **had completed** the work by the time the supervisor came.

Nobody knew that she **had** already **remarried**.

4. Past Perfect Continuous Tense

I **had been trying** to contact him for two hours before he finally appeared. Mrs.

Masumbuko **had been feeling** unwell the whole week before she decided to visit

a doctor.

5. Future Perfect Tense

Agege **will have sold** his goats by two p.m.

By next term, twenty students **will have dropped** from this school.

6. Future Perfect Continuous

30

The players **will have been playing** for twenty minutes by the time the President arrives.

By the end of this term, she **will have been living** with her aunt for five years.

Exercise 9

Rewrite the following sentence changing the verb into present perfect, present perfect progressive, past perfect, past perfect progressive, future perfect and future perfect progressive tenses. Make any necessary changes to make the sentences meaningful.

John comes here every year.

The Progressive Verb Forms

The progressive form of the verb **shows continuing action**.

Examples:

I am singing

She was dancing.

The progressive form is formed using various forms of the verb **be** plus the **present participle**, that is, a verb form that ends in **-ing**.

Examples:

1. Present Progressive Tense

I am reading a book about Red Indians.

Her mother **is preparing** dinner.

2. Present Perfect Progressive

He **has been cleaning** his car since morning.

They **have been exercising** for a week now.

3. Past Progressive Tense

She **was cooking** supper when I arrived.

They **were fighting** fiercely when the police arrived.

4. Past Perfect Progressive Tense

Sonko **had been wearing** an earring for years before he removed it.

Onyancha **had been killing** children before he was finally discovered. **5.**

Future Progressive

He **will be tilling** the land next week.

Joyce and Joan **will be washing** clothes all morning.

6. Future Perfect Progressive

The children **will have been sleeping** for two hours by the time their parents

arrive.

John **will have grown** a beard by the time he is twelve.

Exercise 10

Rewrite the following sentence changing the verb into present progressive, present perfect progressive, past progressive, past perfect progressive, future progressive

31

and future perfect progressive tenses. Make any necessary changes to make the sentences meaningful.

Jane plays the guitar well.

SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT

Present tense

A **verb and its subject** must **agree** in number. **To agree** means that if the subject is **singular**, the verb must be in **singular** form. If the subject is **plural**, the verb form must be **plural**.

Examples:

The **baby cries** every morning. - SINGULAR

The **babies cry** every morning. - PLURAL

Rules for subject-verb Agreement

1. Singular subject: Add -s or -es to the verb

The **man drives** a bus.

She teaches in a primary school.

He studies his map.

2. Plural subject: Do not add -s or -es to the verb

The **men drive** buses.

They teach in primary schools.

We study our maps.

3. For I or You: Do not add -s or -es to the verb

I hate books.

You like dogs.

I admire actors.

When a sentence has a **compound subject**, that is, two subjects joined by **and**, the plural form of the verb is used.

Examples:

John and James work at Naivas Supermarket.

The teachers and the students respect one another a lot.

Subject-verb Agreement with be and have

The verbs **be** and **have** change their forms **in special ways** in order to agree with their subjects.

Various ways in which be and have change in order to agree with their subjects

	Subject	Be	Have
--	---------	----	------

32

1.	Singular subjects: I You He, she, it Singular Noun	am, was are, were is, was is, was	have, had have, had has, had has, had
2.	Plural subjects: We You They Plural Noun	are, were are, were are, were are, were	have, had have, had have, had have, had

Exercise 11

Put appropriate Present tense verbs in the blank spaces in the following sentences. Ensure that the subject **agrees** with the verb and that the sentence makes sense. 1.

The dogs _____ their owners.

2. She _____ at the door.

3. They _____ the road at the Zebra-crossing.

4. Many blind people _____ dogs as guides.

5. We _____ dogs every day.

6. Mark always _____ his house.

7. I often _____ with June.

8. Mr. Mwangi _____ his aunt in Mombasa.

9. Jane and he _____ next month.

10. The directors _____ the company.

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS

We have learned in the previous chapter how to form the past tense and how to use helping verbs to show that something has already happened. We saw that for most verbs, we form the past tense and participles by adding **-d** or **-ed** to the verb. Verbs that follow this rule are called **Regular Verbs**.

Examples:

The farmer **planted** his crops last month. – past tense

The crops **have been planted** recently. – past participle.

For all regular verbs, the **past** and the **past participles** are spelled alike. They are made up by adding **-d** or **-ed** to the present form of the verb.

Examples:

Present	Past	Past Participles
help	helped	had helped

33

rescue rush support play talk live	rescued rushed supported played talked lived	had rescued had rushed had supported had played had talked had lived
---	---	---

The spelling of many regular verbs changes when **-d** or **-ed** is added, that is, the last consonant is doubled before adding **-d** or **-ed**. For those ending **-y**, it is dropped and replaced with **-i**:

Examples:

Present	Past	Past Participles
hop drug permit knit cry carry	hopped drugged permitted knitted cried carried	(had) hopped (had) drugged (had) permitted (had) knitted (had) cried (had) carried

Exercise 12

Write the present, past and past participles of the following verbs. Remember to change the spelling appropriately where necessary.

1. prevent
2. donate
3. hurry
4. worry
5. train
6. aid
7. relieve
8. share
9. enrol
10. save

Irregular Verbs

Some verbs do not form the past by adding **-d** or **-ed**. These verbs are called **irregular verbs**. There are only about sixty frequently used irregular verbs. For many of these, the past and the past participles are spelled the same but some are different.

Examples:

He **saw** great misery all around him. – past

He **has seen** great misery all round him. – past participle

Common irregular Verbs

Verb	Past tense	Past participles
begin	began	(had) begun

34

choose	chose	(had) chosen
go	went	(had) gone
speak	spoke	(had) spoken
ride	rode	(had) ridden
fight	fought	(had) fought
throw	threw	(had) thrown
come	came	(had) come
sing	sang	(had) sung
steal	stole	(had) stolen
swim	swam	(had) swum
make	made	(had) made
run	ran	(had) run
grow	grew	(had) grown
write	wrote	(had) written
ring	rang	(had) rung
drink	drank	(had) drunk
lie	lay	(had) lain
do	did	(had) done
eat	ate	(had) eaten
know	knew	(had) known

For a few irregular verbs, like **hit** and **cut**, the three principal parts are spelled the same. These ones offer no problems to learners. Most problems come from irregular verbs with three different forms. For example, the irregular verbs **throw** and **ring**.

throw threw had thrown

ring rang had rung

If you are not sure about a verb form, look it up in the dictionary.

Exercise 13

Write the past tense and past participles of the following irregular verbs and then use each of them in sentences of your own.

1. arise 6. fall

2. tear 7. blow

3. wear 8. freeze

4. lay 9. fly

5. see 10. write

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VERB FORMS

ACTIVE VOICE

A verb is in **active voice** when the subject of the sentence **performs** the action.

35

Examples:

Our teacher punished us for making noise in class.

Subject action

Players arrived for their first match early in the morning.

Subject action

In the above sentences, the subject is **who** performed the action. Hence, the verbs of these sentences are in **active voice**.

PASSIVE VOICE

The word **passive** means “acted upon”. When the subject of the sentence **receives** the action or **expresses** the result of the action, the verb is in **passive voice**. **Examples:**

We were punished by the teacher for making noise.

Sub action

He was helped by a passer-by.

Sub action

In the above sentences the subjects **we** and **he** receive the action. When we do not know who or what did the action, or when we do not want to say who or what did it, we use the **passive voice**.

The passive form of a verb consists of some form of **be** plus the **past participle**.

Examples:

Active Passive

Baabu explored the sea. The sea **was explored** by Baabu.

The captain helped him. He **was helped** by the captain.

Be+past participle

Exercise 14

Write the verbs from the following sentences and then label each one Active or Passive.

1. The guest of honour presented prizes to the best students.
2. The cattle were taken home by the herders.
3. The health officer ordered the slaughter house closed.
4. Peace and order has been restored in the area by the youth wingers.
5. The workers cleared the farm.
6. The crop was harvested by the hired workers.
7. The government stressed the importance of unity among tribes.
8. The farmers were urged to redouble their efforts in food production.
9. The K.I.E is developing support materials for the 8-4-4 system of education.
10. A fishing pond was started by the Wildlife Club in the school.

TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS

36

Some sentences express a complete thought with only a subject and an action verb.

Example:

The sun shines.

Subject Action verb

In other sentences, a **direct object** must follow the action verb for the sentence to be complete. A **direct object** is a noun or a pronoun that **receives** the action of the verb.

Example:

The goalkeeper caught the ball.

Subject action verb direct object

Transitive verbs

A **Transitive verb** is an **action verb** that must take a **direct object** for the sentence to express a complete thought. A direct object answers the question **what?** or **whom?**

Examples:

The captain steered the ship. (Steered what? **the ship**)

The teacher praised the students. (Praised whom? **The students**) Transitive verbs cannot be used alone without direct objects in sentences; they would not have complete meanings.

Exercise 15

What are the action verbs and the direct objects in the following sentences?

1. He carried his bag with him.

2. The two friends discussed the examination paper.
3. We took a trip to Nakuru last month.
4. The water splashed me.
5. He gave interesting facts about whales.
6. We searched the house for rats.
7. They cheered the team noisily.
8. My brother bought a camera.
9. Njoroge admires Papa Shirandula.
10. We viewed the shooting star at midnight.

Intransitive verbs

An **Intransitive verb** is an action verb that **does not require a direct object** for the sentence to have complete meaning.

Examples:

The ship sailed.

Subject action verb

37

The child smiled.

Subject action verb

They do not answer the questions **what?** or **whom?** Sometimes they answer the questions **how?** or **how often?**

Examples:

The ship sailed smoothly. (**How** did it sail? **Smoothly**)

The child smiled repeatedly. (**How often** did the child smile? **Repeatedly**)

Both transitive and intransitive verbs

Some verbs can be used both **transitively** and **intransitively**.

Examples:

We **cheered** our team noisily. (Transitive)

We **cheered** noisily. (Intransitive)

He **broke** the window pane. (Transitive)

The glass **broke**. (Intransitive)

NB: Only transitive verbs can be changed from active to passive voice.

Examples:

Active Passive

He **kicked** the ball. The ball **was kicked** by him.

She **bought** a new dress A new dress **was bought** by her. She **wailed** loudly ??

They **danced** well ??

Exercise 16

Indicate at the end of each of the following sentences whether the underlined verb is Transitive or Intransitive.

1. Some whales sing songs.
2. We gave our books to the gatekeeper.
3. She cried bitterly.
4. He made a sketch of the giraffe.
5. John danced to the music.
6. The bird flew in the air.
7. They located the lost ship.
8. She pleaded with him mercifully.
9. The children heard the sound from the cave.
10. It rained heavily.

TROUBLESOME PAIRS OF VERBS

Some pairs of verbs confuse learners of English because their meanings are **related** but not the **same**. Others confuse them because they **sound similar**, but

38

their **meanings are different**. Others are **similar in appearance** but **different in meanings**.

	The pair s	Meaning	Present tense	Past tense	Past participle	Examples of its usage
1	sit set	To be in a seated position To put or place	sit set	sat set	sat set	Sit on that chair. Set the cage down.
2	lie lay	To rest in a flat position To put or place	lie lay	lay laid	lain laid	The cat lies on the table. Lay the cloth on the table.
3	rise raise	To move upward To move something upward or to lift	rise raise	rose raised	risen raised	The children rise up early in the morning. The scout raised the flag.

4	let leave	To allow or permit To depart or to allow to remain where it is	let leave	let left	let left	Let the bird go free. Leave this house now! Leave the door closed.
5	learn teach	To gain knowledge or skill To help someone learn or to show how or explain	learn teach	learned taught	learned taught	I learned a lot in school. That teacher taught me in Biology.
6	can may	To be able To be allowed				I can ride my bike well. You may go out.

EXERCISE 17

Pick the correct verb from the ones given in brackets in the following sentences. 1. Studying spiders closely can (learn, teach) us how they get their food.

39

2. An insect that (lays, lies) motionless on a leaf can become prey to some other animal.
3. The lion will (lay, lie) there waiting for its prey.
4. The monster spider (sits, sets) patiently near its web.
5. Experience has (taught, learned) me not to take things for granted.
6. A bird (raises, rises) its body using its wings.
7. This (raises, rises) another question,
8. Nature has (learned, taught) spiders new tricks.
9. The watchman instantly (raises, rises) the alarm when there is danger.
10. The trappers have (lain, laid) fresh traps for the porcupines.

ADJECTIVES

An **adjective** is a word that **describes** or **modifies** a noun or a pronoun. To describe or modify means to provide additional information about nouns or pronouns. To modify further means to change something slightly.

Writers and speakers modify an idea or image by choosing certain describing

words, which are called **adjectives**. Hence, these adjectives are also called **modifiers**. Adjectives are like word cameras. They are words that describe colours, sizes and shapes. Adjectives help you capture how the world around you looks and feels.

Adjectives tell:

1. What kind?

Examples:

The **powerful** gorilla knocked down the hunter.

The **old** man walked slowly.

2. How many?

Examples:

Three zebras were resting.

He has **few** friends.

3. Which one(s)?

Examples:

This painting is attractive.

These farmers are clearing the field.

There are 5 main kinds of adjectives, namely:-

1. Descriptive adjectives
2. Definite and indefinite adjectives
3. Demonstrative adjectives
4. Interrogative adjectives
5. Articles and possessive adjectives

40

Descriptive adjectives

Descriptive adjectives tell us the size, shape, age, colour, weight, height, make, nature and origin of the nouns they are describing.

Examples of descriptive Adjectives:

Size	Shape	Age	Colour	Weight	Height	Make	e	Origin
------	-------	-----	--------	--------	--------	------	---	--------

big huge small tiny thin fat wide shall ow slend er	oval circul ar triang ul ar rectang ular round square twisted pointed	old youn g aged	red gree n whit e blue brow n blac k maro on purpl e pink	heav y light	tall short	woo de n plast ic meta l stony glass mud	warm cold shy famo us peace f ul brave powe rf ul gentle kind	Kenya Americ an Tanzani a Italian South African Ugand an Korean
---	---	--------------------------	---	--------------------	---------------	--	---	--

Descriptive adjectives are of two types:

1. Common descriptive adjectives – these are adjectives that give general features of somebody or something. They are the adjectives of size, shape, age, colour, weight, height, make and nature. Refer to the examples in the diagram above. 2. Proper adjectives – These ones are formed from proper nouns. They are always **capitalized**. They always appear **last** in a string of adjectives modifying the same noun, just before the noun itself.

Examples:

The **Japanese** ambassador

A **Mexican** carpet

An **Italian** chef

Note that when a proper adjective comprises of two words, both are capitalized.

Examples:

A **South African** farmer

A **North American** cowboy

Exercise 1

Find the adjectives in the following sentences and indicate what types they are. 1.

Alaska is the largest state in the USA.

41

2. The Alaskan Senator is Lord John Mc Dougal.

3. Mt. Kenya is the tallest mountain in Kenya.

4. Alaska has a tiny population of one and a half million people. 5.

Northern Province has small, scattered towns.

6. A trip to Northern Kenya will take you across vast wilderness.
7. American tourists are fond of wild animals.
8. There is a huge lake in the Rift Valley Province.
9. I sent a letter to my Australian pen pal.
10. I have a beautiful Egyptian robe.

Demonstrative Adjectives

A **demonstrative adjective** tells **which one** or **which ones**. They are used before nouns and other adjectives.

There are 4 demonstrative adjectives in English: **This**, **that**, **these** and **those**. **This** and **these** are used to refer to nouns **close** to the speaker or writer. **That** and **those** refer to nouns **farther away**. This and that are used before singular nouns while these and those are used before plural nouns.

Examples:

This picture is very beautiful.

Singular noun

That one is not as beautiful.

Singular noun

These drawings are very old.

Plural noun

Those ones were painted in Uganda.

Plural noun

Exercise 2

Choose the word in brackets that correctly completes each of the following sentences.

1. My bus left the station before (that, those) matatus.
2. (Those, These) chairs behind me were occupied.
3. My seat has a better view than (this, that) one over there.
4. (Those, That) man should fasten his seat belt.
5. (This, That) car is old, but that one is new.
6. (These, Those) clouds are far away.
7. (This, That) window next to me has a broken pane.
8. (That, This) chair near me is broken.
9. My car is moving faster than (these, those) buses over there.
10. (These, Those) goats grazing over there are my uncle's.

Definite and indefinite adjectives

42

These are adjectives which tell **how many** or **how much**. They give the **number** or the **quantity**, either specific or approximate, of the noun in question. **Examples:**

Three elephants were killed by the game rangers.

He bought **several** houses in Kileleshwa.

Don't put **much** sugar in the tea!

More examples

Numbers	Amount	Approximate
Three Ten Five Hundred Twenty	Much All Some Any Few	Several Some Little Many Few Each Every Numerous

Adjectives that are in form of numbers are used with countable nouns:

Examples:

Two calves were born yesterday.

Five chimpanzees performed funny tricks.

Many children like dinosaurs.

A definite or indefinite adjective may look like a pronoun, but it is used differently in a sentence. It is an adjective used to modify a noun. Adjectives that are in form of quantity are used with uncountable nouns. **Examples:**

Do you have **any** water in the house?

How **much** flour did you buy?

Interrogative Adjectives

The **interrogative adjectives** are used with nouns to **ask questions**. Examples are **what**, **which**, and **whose**.

Examples:

What movie do you want to see?

Which leaves turn colour first?

Whose son is he?

An interrogative adjective may look like an interrogative pronoun but it is used differently. It is an adjective, used to modify a noun.

Exercise 3

Underline the adjectives in the following sentences.

43

1. Twenty bulls were slaughtered for the wedding.
2. Few people know the name of our president.
3. They stole all the money in the safe.
4. There isn't much sugar in the dish.
5. Numerous disasters have hit China this year.

6. What game is playing on TV tonight?
7. Whose car is that one over there?
8. Which house was broken into?
9. I don't know what misfortune has faced him.
10. Nobody knows which table was taken.

Articles and Possessive Pronouns

Two special kinds of adjectives are the **articles** and the **possessive pronouns**.

Articles

Articles are the words **a**, **an** and **the**. **A** and **an** are special adjectives called **indefinite articles**. They are used when the nouns they modify **do not** refer to any particular thing.

Examples:

A student rang the bells. (No specific student)

An orange is good for your health. (No specific orange)

A is used before a noun that begins with a **consonant** sound. **An** is used before a noun that begins with a **vowel** sound. Note that it is the **first sound** of a noun, not **the spelling**, that determines whether to use **a** or **an**.

Examples:

An hour an heir

A hall

The is a special adjective known as the **definite article**. It is used to refer to particular things.

Examples:

The tourist was robbed. (A particular tourist).

The team began practising at 8 o'clock. (A particular team).

All articles are adjectives. **The** is used with both singular and plural nouns, but **a** and **an** are used with singular nouns

Examples:

The tourist, the tourists, a tourist

The adjective, the adjectives, an adjective

Exercise 4

Choose the correct article from the choices given in brackets in the following sentences.

1. (A, An) mountain climber climbed Mt. Elgon.

44

2. He went up a cliff and was stranded on (a, an) jagged rock.
3. No one knew (a, the) route he had taken.
4. (The, An) climber's friend called the local police.
5. The police began the search within (a, an) hour.
6. A police dog followed (a, the) climber's scent.
7. A helicopter began (a, an) air search of the mountain.

8. The dog followed the climber's scent to (a, the) jagged edge of the cliff. 9. A climber from (a, the) police team went down the jagged rock. 10. (A, An) rope was tied to the climber and he was pulled to safety. **Possessive Pronouns**
The words **my, her, its, our** and **their** are possessive pronouns, but they can also be used as adjectives. These modifiers tell **which one, which ones** or **whose**?

Examples:

My brother likes Sean Paul, but **his** sister does not.

Of **his** songs, *Ever Blazing* is **his** favourite.

Our school produces heroes, **its** fame is widespread.

Exercise 5

Write the adjectives from the following sentences and the nouns they modify.

1. In her lifetime, Brenda Fasie composed many songs.
2. Her early songs entertained her fans all over the world.
3. Our first performance was successful.
4. Her coughing grew worse with time.
5. They agreed that it was their best goal in ten years.

Position of adjectives in sentences

1. Most adjectives appear immediately **before** the nouns they are modifying e.g.

Descriptive: The **beautiful** house belongs to my uncle.

Demonstrative: **That** house belongs to my uncle.

Numerals: **Two** houses were burned down.

Articles: **The** house on fire belongs to her sister.

Possessive pronouns: **Their** house was burned down.

2. Predicate Adjectives

Some adjectives appear **after** the nouns that they are modifying. These adjectives are always used after **linking verbs** that separate them from the words they modify. An adjective that follows a linking verb and that modifies the subject is called a **predicate adjective**.

Examples:

Joyce seemed **lonely**.

Her brother was **upset**.

He became **concerned**.

Exercise 6

Identify the predicate adjectives in the following sentences.

1. Her early songs were often quiet and serious.
2. One of her songs, Vulindlela, is very popular.
3. The dark city below the sky seems calm and peaceful.
4. Her performance in K.C.S.E. was brilliant.
5. The West African singer Kofi Olominde is extraordinary.

COMPARING WITH ADJECTIVES

We have seen that adjectives describe nouns. One way in which they describe nouns is by **comparing** people, places or things.

To compare **two** people, places or things, we use the **comparative form** of an adjective. To compare **more than two**, we use the **superlative form** of the adjective.

Examples:

ONE PERSON: Kimenju is **tall**.

TWO PERSONS: Kimenju is **taller** than James.

THREE OR MORE: Kimenju is **the tallest** of all.

THE COMPARATIVE

The comparative form of the adjective is used to compare one thing, person or place with another one. It is formed in two ways.

1. For **short** adjectives, add **-er**.

Examples:

great + er = greater sweet + er = sweeter

big + er = bigger light + er = lighter.

2. For longer adjectives, the comparative is formed by using the word **more** before them.

Examples:

More handsome more remarkable

More attractive more hardworking

Most adjectives ending in **-ful** and **-ous** also form the comparative using **more**.

Examples:

More successful more curious more ferocious

More beautiful more generous more prosperous

THE SUPERLATIVE

The **superlative form** of the adjective is used to compare a person, a place or a thing with **more than one** other of its kind.

Examples:

46

Elephants are the **largest** animals in the jungle.

However, they are the **most** emotional animals.

The superlative form of an adjective is formed in two ways. 1.

By adding **-est** to the short adjective

Examples:

great + est = greatest sweet + est = sweetest

big + est = biggest light + est = light

2. For **longer** adjectives, use **most** before them.

Examples:

most mysterious most awkward

most successful most attractive

The ending **-er** in the comparative becomes **-est** in the superlative while **more** becomes **most**.

Adjective comparative superlative

strong stronger strongest

quick quicker quickest

adventurous more adventurous most adventurous co-operative

more co-operative most co-operative **Summary of rules
comparing with adjectives:**

	Rule	Examples
1 .	For most short adjectives: Add -er or -est to the adjective	bright dark smart brighter darker smarter brightest darkest smartest
2 .	For adjectives ending with e : Drop the e and add -er or -est	safe nice wide safer nicer wider safest nicest widest
3 .	For adjectives ending with a consonant and y : Change the y to i and add -er or -est	Busy crazy happy Busier crazier happier Busiest craziest happiest
4 .	For single-syllable adjectives ending with a single vowel and a consonant: Double the last consonant and add -er or -est	Flat slim fat Flatter slimmer fatter Flattest slimmest fattest

5 .	For most adjectives with two or more syllables: Use more or most	careful generous more careful more generous most careful most generous
--------	--	---

Points to note about Adjectives:

1. A comparative is used to compare two persons, or things or two groups of persons or things.

Examples:

A rat is **smaller** than a mouse.

Buffaloes are **larger** than domestic cows

2. A superlative is used to compare a thing or a person to more than one other of its kind.

Examples:

Lions are the **bravest** of all animals.

Elephants are the **largest** of all herbivores.

3. You must use the word **other** when comparing something with everything else of its kind.

Examples:

Leopards are more ferocious than any **other** cat.

4. Do not use both **-er** and **more**, or **-est** and **most**.

Incorrect: Men die **more earlier** than women.

Correct: Men die **earlier** than women.

Incorrect: My father is the **most oldest** of the three brothers.

Correct: My father is the **oldest** of the three brothers.

Exercise 7

Write the adjectives in brackets in the following sentences correctly. 1. My next sculpture will be even _____ (beautiful). 2. That was the _____ cartoon I have ever watched (funny). 3. English is my _____ subject of all (enjoyable).

4. Job is the _____ person in his family. (energetic)

5. She is the _____ of the three nurses. (helpful)

6. That story sounds _____ than fiction. (strange)

7. He is _____ than a cat. (curious)

8. Her school grades are _____ than mine. (high)

9. You are _____ than Maria. (creative)

10. My next test will be _____ than this one. (simple)

Irregular comparisons

Some adjectives have **special forms** for making comparisons. That is, they do not form their comparatives by use of **-er** or **more**, or their superlatives by use of **-est** or **most**. Instead, these adjectives **change the words** completely to form comparatives and

superlatives.

Examples:

Adjectives Comparative Superlative

good better best

well better best

bad worse worst

ill worse worst

little less or lesser least

much more most

many more most

far farther farthest

Example of use in sentences:

The presentation of our play was **good**.

Our second performance was **better**.

But our last performance was the **best**.

Exercise 8

Write the correct forms of the adjectives in brackets in the following sentences. 1.

The comedy was the _____ show of the three. (good) 2. Mary had a _____ cold yesterday. (bad)

3. It was her _____ performance this year. (good)

4. Her illness is getting _____ every day. (bad)

5. The old woman received the _____ amount of money from the MP. (little)

6. Smoke your cigarette _____ away from the children. (far) 7. There was _____ noise in the classroom than yesterday. (little)

8. The musician said that that was a very _____ year for him. (good)

9. This year's songs were much _____ than last year's. (good) 10. He has the _____ pairs of shoes in the school. (many)

PREPOSITIONS

A **preposition** is a word that shows the **relationship** between **other words** in a sentence.

Examples:

The cat lay **under** the table.

The preposition **under** connects the verb **lay** with **table**. **Under** points out the relationship between **lay** and **table**.

Hence a preposition is a word that **links** another word or word group to the rest of the sentence. The noun or pronoun after the preposition is called the **object of the preposition**. The **table** is the object of the preposition **under** in the above sentence. The preposition **under** relates the verb **lay** to the noun **table**.

More examples:

She gave it **to** me.

(The preposition **to** relates the pronoun **me** with the action **gave**).

I liked the bike **with** the metal handles.

The preposition **with** relates the noun **handles** with the noun **bike**.

COMMON PREPOSITIONS

about	before	except	on	toward
above	behind	for	onto	under
aboard	below	from	out	underneath
across	beneath	in	outside	until
after	beside	inside	over	up
against	between	into	past	upon
along	beyond	like	since	with
among	by	near	through	within
around	down	of	throughout	without
at	during	off	to	

From the above list of prepositions, you will note that some of them tell **where**, others indicate **time**, others show **special relationships** like **reference** or **separation**.

Changing one preposition with another in a sentence changes the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

The cat lay **under** the table.

The cat lay **on** the table.

Lying under the table means below the surface of the table but **on** means above the surface.

Exercise 1

Write the preposition in each of the following sentences and say what relationship it indicates.

1. Sometimes they lie on the ground.
2. They have grown maize for food.
3. The children played with the dolls.
4. A man found some treasure in the cave.
5. They make clothes from cotton.

Exercise 2

Use the most appropriate preposition to complete the sentences below.

1. Driving had been my dream _____ years.
2. _____ 1990, I bought a second-hand car.
3. _____ that year, I learned how to drive.
4. I rolled the car _____ the road _____ more than two kilometres.
5. I was really thrilled _____ the experience.

PREPOSITION PHRASES

A **prepositional phrase** consists of a **preposition**, its **object** and **any words that modify the object**.

Examples:

The school children waited **for the green light**.

In this sentence, the preposition is **for**, its object is **light**, and the modifier, or adjective, is **green**. The entire preposition phrase modifies the verb **waited**.

Sometimes two or more nouns or pronouns are used as objects in a prepositional phrase.

Example:

He needs a worker **with diligence** and a good **character**.

The preposition **with** has two objects: **diligence** and **character**.

Exercise 3

Identify the prepositional phrase in each of the following sentences. Underline the preposition once and its objects twice.

1. Donkeys help people in many ways.
2. They bring happiness to the people around them.
3. In large cities, they help to carry water.
4. On farms, they carry heavy loads.
5. How could you travel across a river?
6. You might swim to the other side.
7. You might cross at a shallow place.
8. You can cross by boat.
9. Bridges are a better solution to the problem.
10. Most bridges are built over water.

Types of prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases can either be:

(i) **Adjective prepositional phrases** - these prepositional phrases, just like adjectives, modify **nouns** and **pronouns**.

Example:

A scout leader wears a uniform **with many badges**.

In this sentence, **with many badges** is an adjective prepositional phrase modifying the noun **uniform**.

(ii) Adverb prepositional phrases – these ones, just like adverbs, modify **verbs, adjectives or other adverbs**.

Examples:

Scouts rain **for many hours**.

(The adverb prepositional phrase **for many hours** modifies the verb **train**.)

They are active **in all public functions**.

(The adverb prepositional phrase **in all public functions** modifies the adjective **active**.)

The scout leader commands forcefully **with a loud voice**.

(The adverb prepositional phrase **with a loud voice** modifies the adverb **forcefully**.)

We have seen that the object of a preposition is the **noun** or **pronoun** that follows the preposition. When the object of the preposition is a pronoun, we use an **object pronoun** like **me, you, him, her, it, us, and them**. (And **not** a subject pronoun like **I, he, she, we, and they**).

Examples:

Correct: I gave a present to **her**.

Incorrect: I gave a present to **she**.

Correct: I gave a present to Jane and **her**.

Incorrect: I gave a present to Jane and **she**.

Exercise 4

Choose the pronoun in brackets that correctly completes each of the following sentences.

1. The dog chased after Travis and (her, she).
2. Cleaning the house was a tasking job for Evans and (I, me).
3. We planned a family picture of our parents and (us, we).
4. The victory belonged to (he, him).
5. Michael and Bernard stood behind Mom and (she, her).
6. The crowd around (we, us) started cheering.
7. My little sister ran behind Sammy and (I, me).
8. The toys belong to Karen and (him, he).
9. Johnny sat between James and (me, I).
10. I went to the cat race with Jim and (she, her).

Sometimes one prepositional phrase immediately follows another.

Examples:

The thief entered the house **through the door on the right**.

(**through the door** modifies the verb **entered** and tells **where**. **on the left** modifies the noun **door** and tells **which one**.)

A prepositional phrase can be at the **beginning**, in the **middle**, or at the **end** of a sentence.

Examples:

BEGINNING: **At dusk** we closed the shop.

MIDDLE: The chief **of the area** was helpful.

END: The path went **through the village**.

Preposition or Adverb?

Sometimes the same word can be used as either a preposition or an adverb. How can you tell the difference between the two?

Examples:

PREPOSITION: He has a box **inside** the house.

ADVERB: They ran **inside**.

You can tell the difference by remembering the following:

(i) A preposition **never** stands alone. It is always followed by **its object**, a noun or a pronoun.

Examples:

The helicopter flew **past** the airport. (Preposition)

The aircraft was parked **inside** the hangar. (Preposition)

(ii) An adverb is **never** followed by a noun or a pronoun, may be by an adverb.

Examples:

The helicopter flew **past**. (Adverb)

The aircraft was parked **inside**. (Adverb)

The helicopter flew **past** noisily. (Adverb)

Therefore, if a word begins a prepositional phrase, it is a preposition. If it stands alone or is followed by an adverb, it is an adverb.

Some words that can be used either as prepositions or adverbs.

above	down	over
along	in	out
around	Inside	outside
below	near	under
by	off	up

Exercise 5

Indicate after each of the following sentences if it has a preposition or an adverb.

1. Jack stood outside the shop.
2. He was curious and went inside.
3. He saw strange things in every corner.
4. An old coat and several sweaters lay over a chair.
5. Blue and green umbrellas stood above the fire place.

6. He looked up suddenly.
7. He sat down heavily.
8. Then he lifted the curtain and peeped outside.
9. A jogger ran by
10. Jack ran out.

NEGATIVES

Negatives are words that mean “no” or “not”. These words are **adverbs** and not prepositions!

Examples:

She has **no** more work.

There are **none** left.

Other common negatives

not	nowhere	nobody	aren't	haven't
never	nothing	no one	doesn't	wouldn't

The combination of a **verb** and **not** also form a contraction which is also a negative. The letters **n't** stand for **not**.

Examples:

They **won't** be able to attend the funeral.

He **couldn't** make a speech.

Double negatives:

A sentence should have only **one negative**. Using double negatives in a sentence is usually incorrect. A **double negative** is the use of two negative words together when only one is needed.

Examples:

Incorrect

We **don't** need **no** money.

She **hasn't** bought **nothing**.

Mark **hasn't** **no** homework.

Mark has **no** homework.

Correct

We **don't** need any money.

She **hasn't** bought anything.

Mark **hasn't** any homework. Or

Mark has **no** homework.

When you use contractions like **don't** and **hasn't**, **do not** use negative words after them. Instead, use words like **any**, **anything**, and **ever**.

Examples:

We **don't** have **any** work.

He **hasn't** **any** work.

I **won't** **ever** respond to the summons.

Other negatives include **hardly**, **barely**, and **scarcely**. They are **never** used after contractions like **haven't** and **didn't**.

Examples:

Incorrect: We **couldn't hardly** continue with the work.
hardly continue with the work.

Correct: We **could**

Incorrect: The child **can't barely** walk.

Correct: The child **can barely** walk.

Exercise 6

Write the following sentences choosing the correct negatives from the ones given in brackets.

1. They (have, haven't) nothing to eat.
2. Isn't (anyone, no one) at home?
3. Didn't you (ever, never) swim in that river?
4. There isn't (anybody, nobody) weeding the farm.
5. Ann and Martin haven't (anywhere, nowhere) to sleep.
6. Our friends (had, hadn't) none of the fun.
7. Isn't (anybody, nobody) watching *Tahidi High*?
8. Hasn't (anyone, no one) thought of washing the utensils?
9. Tabby (hasn't, has) had no luck.
10. We haven't (ever, never) tried.

CONJUNCTIONS

A **conjunction** is a word that **connects** words or groups of words. Like prepositions, conjunctions show a **relationship** between the words they connect. But, unlike prepositions, conjunctions do not have objects.

There are 3 main categories of conjunctions;

- (1) **Coordinating conjunctions**
- (2) **Subordinating conjunctions**
- (3) **Correlative conjunctions**

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Coordinating conjunctions connect **related** words, groups of words, or sentences. There are **three** coordinating conjunctions: **and**, **but** and **or**. **And** is used to join words, groups of words, or sentences together. **But** shows contrast while **or** shows choice.

Examples:

The bull **and** the cart are inseparable. (Connects two subjects).

The cart carries the farmer **and** his tools. (Connects two direct objects).

The food was hard **and** tasteless. (Connects two predicate adjectives).

Each night, the dancers danced in a circle **or** in several other patterns. (Connects two prepositional phrases).

Some people died in the fracas, **but** most managed to escape, alive. (Connects two sentences).

Exercise 1

Complete each of the following sentences using the most appropriate coordinating conjunction

1. Bats and insects fly, _____ only birds have feathers.
2. Eagles build nests on cliffs _____ in tall trees.
3. Parrots live in wild places _____ in zoos.
4. Swallows _____ sparrows often build nests in buildings.
5. Hummingbirds are tiny _____ very brave.
6. Many birds fly south in winter, _____ others do not.
7. Their feathers keep them warm _____ dry.
8. A bird can fly forward _____ backward.
9. Many birds shed old feathers _____ grow new ones.
10. Their legs are weak _____ their wings are strong.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Subordinating conjunctions connect two or more clauses to form **complex sentences**. (Refer to Part Two of this handbook). Subordinating conjunctions **introduce** subordinate clauses. They include **because, since, if, as, whether, and for**.

Examples:

If I go home, my dog will follow me.

(The subordinating conjunction **if** connects the subordinate clause **I go home** with the main clause **my dog will follow me**.)

The stayed inside the church **because** it was raining.

He was always rude **since** he was a child.

The rain fell **as** they entered the building.

The pastor asked the congregation **whether** they were happy.

The man rejoiced **for** he had won a prize.

Exercise 2

Join the following pairs of sentences using the most appropriate subordinating conjunctions.

1. They arrived late. It was raining heavily.
2. John worked hard. He wanted to buy a house.

3. I won't carry the umbrella. You need it.
4. I drove the car madly. I was late for the meeting.
5. He will come. The meeting ends.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Correlative conjunctions are conjunctions that are used in pairs to connect sentence parts. These include **either or, neither nor, not only..... but also, whether or** and **both and**.

Examples:

Both boys **and** girls attended the conference.

People brought **not only** food **but also** clothes for the victims of the floods.

The students ride **either** on bicycles **or** motorbikes.

The sailor had to decide **whether** to sail on **or** head back when the weather changed.

Neither John **nor** James was moved by the shocking news.

Exercise 3

Join the following pairs of sentences using the correlative conjunctions in brackets.

1. The vehicles stopped for repairs. The vehicles stopped for fuel. (either....or)
2. The drivers knew they had to travel more than fifty kilometres. If they did not travel more than fifty kilometres, they would have to endure harsh storms. (either....or).
3. Many people build their own homes. Many people grow their own food. (not only...but also)
4. Men wanted to buy the pictures. Women also wanted to buy the pictures.(both.... and)
5. Maize is an important part of a Kenyans' diet. Meat is important too. (both... and)

INTERJECTIONS

An interjection is either a **single word** or a **short group of words** that is used to express a **feeling** or **emotion**. Interjections can express such feelings as **urgency, surprise, relief, joy, or pain**. An interjection that expresses **strong emotion** is often followed by an **exclamation mark**. An interjection that expresses **mild emotion** is usually followed by a **comma**.

Examples:

Let's go! We can't sleep before we find the missing boy. (urgency)

Phew! I was afraid we would never find him. (relief)

Oh, you have grown so big. (surprise)

Well, I have never been so happy. (joy)

Exercise 1

Identify the interjection in the following sentences and indicate what feeling or emotion it expresses.

1. Say, have you heard about Nameless and Jua Kali, the famous Kenyan musicians?
2. Wow! Seeing the calf being born was exciting.
3. “All right!” I yelled to him. “This is not the right thing to do.”
4. Boy! Some people felt wonderful being in the air balloon, but I felt nervous.
5. Oh, did that boat rock back and forth for a while.

FORMATION AND ORIGIN OF WORDS

Some words in the English language have unique origins and formations.

1. Sound words (onomatopoeias)

Some of the words imitate the sounds they represent. These words are called **sound** or **onomatopoeic** words. For example, the words **bang** and **crash** describe a loud, sudden noise. The word **murmur** describes a low, soft noise that keeps going.

Many English words imitate noises made by animals. For example, the word **chirp** imitates the short, high sound made by a small bird or a cricket.

Other examples of sound (onomatopoeic) words

beep	gobble	neigh	squeal
blast	growl	purr	tick
buzz	hiss	quack	zip
clang	honk	rip	
clatter	hum	roar	
crack	meow	smash	
crunch	moo	splash	

Exercise 1

Write a sound word for each of the following descriptions.

1. The sound of something breaking
2. The loud, deep sound of a lion.
3. The sound of a clock.
4. The sound of an angry dog.
5. The sound of a loud bell.
6. The sound made by a duck.
7. The sound of a bottle opening.
8. The sound of a cat drinking milk.

9. The sound of a bomb exploding.

10. The sound of a snake.

2. Words that come from names of people and places (Eponyms)

Some of the words in the English language come from the **names of people and places**.

Examples:

Word	Meaning	Named after
Sandwich	Two or more slices of bread with meat between them.	John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, who liked eating meat between slices of bread.
Maverick	A person who breaks from conventional actions	Samuel Maverick, a Texas cattle owner who refused to brand the calves of one of his herds as per the requirements.
Saxophone	A musical wind instrument	Adolphe Sax, the Belgian inventor of the musical instrument.
Madras	A cotton cloth with a design or pattern on plain background	Madras, a city in India, where it was invented.
Rugby	A game	Rugby school, England, where rugby was invented.
Tarantula	A large, hairy spider	Taranto, a town in Italy where Tarantulas are found.
Shylock	A greedy money-lender	The relentless and vengeful money-lender in Shakespeare's play, The Merchant of Venice.
Sousaphone	A musical instrument	John Phillip Sousa, an American composer who invented the Sousaphone.

There are many more words in the English language which originated from names of people or places.

Exercise 2

Find out from your dictionary the origins and meanings of the following English words.

1. lima bean

6. guppy

11. guillotine

2. cardigan

7. cheddar

12. macadam

3. bloomer

8. quisling

13. pasteurisation

4. canary birds

9. silhouette

14. watt

3. Words formed from blending two or more words (portmanteau words)

Some words in the English language are a **blend** of two or more words or morphemes.

Examples:

Word	Combination of	Meaning
Smog	Smoke + fog	A combination of smoke and fog in the air.
Fantabulous	Fantastic + fabulous	Incredible, astonishing, unbelievable, wonderful
Brunch	Breakfast + lunch	A late breakfast taken some hours before lunch
Wikipedia	Wiki + encyclopaedia	A website
Comcast	Communication + broadcast	A television system that more than the usual number of lines per frame so its pictures show more detail.
Spork	Spoon + fork	An eating utensil that is a combination of a spoon and a fork.
Skort	Skirt + shorts	An item of clothing that is part skirt and short.
Simulcast	Simultaneous + broadcast	To broadcast a programme on television and radio at the same time
Cyborg	Cybernetic + organism	A fictional or hypothetical person whose physical abilities are superhuman
Motel	Motor + hotel	A roadside hotel

Exercise 3

Identify the words that are blended to form the following words. Find out their meanings from your dictionary.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| 1. slithy | 6. breathalyser |
| 2. chortle | 7. cable gram |
| 3. galumph | 8. camcorder |
| 4. bash | 9. edutainment |
| 5. blog | 10. email |

4. Words formed by use of prefixes and suffixes

Some words are formed by addition of prefixes and suffixes to other words.

Prefixes

A **prefix** is a word part that is added to the **beginning** of a word to form another word or to change its meaning. The word to which the prefix is added is called the **base word**.

Examples:

Prefix	Base word	New word
un	friendly	unfriendly
pre	pay	prepay

A prefix changes the meaning of the base word. For example, the prefix **un-** above means “not”. Hence, unfriendly means “not friendly”. Each prefix has its own meaning.

More examples of common English prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
mis-	wrong, incorrectly	misspell – to spell incorrectly
re-	again	revisit – visit again
pre-	before, in advance	preschool – before school
ante-	before, preceding	antecedent, ante-room
anti-	opposing, against, the opposite	anti-aircraft, antibiotic, anticlimax
contra-	against	contraceptive, contraband
counter-	opposition, opposite direction	counter-attack, counteract
en-	put into or on	engulf, enmesh
extra-	outside, beyond	extraordinary, extracurricular
inter-	between, among	interact, interchange
intra-	inside, within	intramural, intravenous
non-	absence, negation	non-smoker, non-alcoholic
over-	excessively, completely	overconfident, overjoyed
post-	after in time, or order	postpone, post-mortem
pre-	before in time, place order or importance	precondition, preadolescent
pro-	favouring, in support of	Pro-African
re-	again	repaint, reawaken
semi-	half, partly	semicircle, semi-conscious
trans-	across, beyond	transnational, transatlantic
un-	not	unacceptable, unreal, unhappy, unmarried
under-	beneath, below	underarm, undercarriage

Exercise 4

Give the meaning of the following prefixes and write two examples each of words in which they are used. Use your dictionary.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. ultra- | 6. infra- |
| 2. syn- | 7. hypo- |
| 3. sub- | 8. hemi |
| 4. peri- | 9. ex- |
| 5. out- | 10. dia- |

Suffixes

A **suffix** is a word part that is added to the **end** of a base word to form a new word or to change its meaning.

Example:

Enjoy + able = enjoyable

Each suffix has its own meaning. The suffix “able” means “capable of”. Hence **enjoyable** means “**capable of being enjoyed**”.

Common English suffixes

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
Noun Suffixes		
-acy	state or quality	privacy, advocacy
-al	act or process of	refusal, dismissal
-ance, -ence	quality of	Maintenance, eminence
-dom	place or state of being	freedom, kingdom
-er, -or	one who	trainer, protector
-ism	doctrine, belief	Communism, Marxism
-ist	one who	chemist, pharmacist
-ity, -ty	quality of	veracity, curiosity
-ment	condition of	argument, armament
-ness	state of being	heaviness, fearlessness
-ship	position held	fellowship, headship
-sion, -tion	state of being	concession, transition
Verbs suffixes		
-ate	become	eradicate, fumigate
-en	become	enlighten, freshen
-ify, -fy	make or become	terrify, specify
-ize, ise	become	civilize, apologize
Adjective suffixes		
-able, -ible	capable of being	edible, presentable
-al	pertaining to	regional, sectional
-esque	reminiscent of	picturesque
-ful	notable for	fanciful, colourful
-ic, -ical	pertaining to	musical, mythic

-ious, ous	characterized by	nutritious, portentous
-ish	having the quality of	fiendish, greenish
-ive	having the nature of	creative, abusive
-less	without	endless, pointless
-y	characterized by	sleazy, cheeky

Exercise 5

Add an appropriate suffix to each of the following words and then give the meaning of the new word.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. hope | 6. green |
| 2. read | 7. wear |
| 3. child | 8. fear |
| 4. grey | 9. kind |
| 5. play | 10. wash |

WORDS USAGE

Words in English language have various meanings depending on their usage in sentences.

1. HOMOGRAPHS

Homographs are words which are **spelled the same** but have **different meanings**. They usually appear as separate entries in a dictionary.

Examples:

The man dug a **well** in his compound.

They worked **well** together.

In the first sentence, the noun **well** means “a spring of water”. In the second sentence, the adverb **well** means “in a good manner”.

Examples of common homographs in the English Language

Homograph	Meaning	Examples
bear	(V) to support or carry (N) an animal	I will bear the burden. The bear killed the hunter.
sow	(V) to plant seed (N) female pig	The farmer sowed the seeds. The sow is very fat.
lead	(V) to guide (N) a metal	The mother duck can lead her ducklings around. Gold is heavier than lead .

close	(Adv) near	The tiger was now so close that I could smell it.
wind	(V) lock (V) turning something around (N) moving air	“Will you please close that door?” Wind your watch. The wind howled through the woodlands.
date	(V) to determine the age (N) to “go out” (N) a kind of fruit (N) a calendar time	Can you date this sculpture? I have a date with Mary. Dates are grown in South Africa. What is the date today?
fast	(Adj) quick (V) to choose not to eat food	He is a fast runner. The Christians fast just before Easter.
hide	(N) animal skin (V) to conceal	He is tanning the hide . They hide their money under their pillows.
net	(N) woven trap made of rope or cord (Adj) amount remaining after deductions.	They caught fish using a net . His net pay is thirty thousand shillings per month.
pick	(N) a kind of tool (V) to choose	He used a pick to dig the hole. Pick the dress that you want.

Some homographs are spelled the same but pronounced differently.

Example:

The **wind** is strong today.

This path **winds** through the hills.

Exercise 6

Write two meanings of the following homographs and use each of them in sentences of your own.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. pen | 6. act |
| 2. tire | 7. arms |
| 3. dove | 8. block |
| 4. wound | 9. box |
| 5. mean | 10. bank |

2. HOMOPHONES

Homophones are words that **sound the same** but have **different spellings** and **meanings**.

Example:

She will **buy** music composed **by** my favourite artist.

Homophones are often confused when writing by many students because of similarity in pronunciation.

Examples of common homophones in English

Homophones	Meaning	Examples
aisle isle	(V) the walkway (N) island	I quickly walked down the aisle . He grew up on the isle of Elba.
allowed aloud	(V) permitted (Adv) not silently	His mother allowed him to stay up late. She read the story aloud .
ate	(V) past tense of "eat"	She ate a quick lunch.
eight	(N) number	I bought eight tickets.
ball bawl	(N) a round object used in games (V) to cry	He took the ball to the beach. Please don't bawl ! It's not that bad.
Bear bare	(V) to stand something (Adj) naked	He can't bear exams. He stood outside in the rain completely bare .
base bass	(N) the bottom support of something (N) the lowest pitches in music	We need a new base for that lamp. I sang bass in the church choir.

More examples of homophones

lead, led least, leased loan, lone male, mail meet, meat mind, mined morning, mourning	wear, where weather, whether week, weak weight, wait while, wile wood, would write, right	cereal, serial check, cheque chord, cord cite, site, sight coo, coup cue, queue dam, damn
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naval, navel new, knew no, know one, won pear, pair pie, pi piece, peace pier, peer poor, pour rain, reign raw, roar read, reed road, rode sale, sail saw, sore see, sea sun, son tail, tale tea, tee there, they're they're, there tide, tied too, to two, too wail, whale warn, worn weal, wheel	yew, you your, you're acetic, ascetic axle, axial formerly, formally ion, iron loch, lock holy, wholly heal, heel ad, add ail, ale all, awl alms, arms altar, alter arc, ark aren't, aunt anger, augur aural, oral away, aweigh awe, oar, or, ore bale, bail band, banned bean, been blew, blue brake, break cell, sell cent, scent, sent	dew, due die, dye doh, doe, dough earn, urn ewe, yew, you faint, feint fair, fare feat, feet few, phew find, fined fir, fur flaw, floor flea, flee flew, flue flour, flower for, fore, four foreword, forward fort, fought gait, gate genes, jeans gnaw, nor, gorilla, guerrilla grate, great groan, grown guessed, guest hale, hail hair, hare
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Exercise 7

Give the homophones and the meanings of the following words.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. in | 6. knight |
| 2. heard | 7. knows |
| 3. horse | 8. tick |
| 4. hey | 9. rung |
| 5. need | 10. sees |

3. SYNONYMS

Synonyms are words that have **almost the same meaning** but **different spelling** and **pronunciation**.

Examples:

Slender–thin

finish–end

sick–ill

Some words have several synonyms. For example, **happy** has such synonyms words like **light-hearted**, **pleased**, and **cheerful**.

Synonyms help vary the writing, just like pronouns do. For example, the word **happy** and its synonyms help vary the writing.

Daniel felt **happy** – Daniel felt **light-hearted**.

She was **happy** with her grade – She was **pleased** with her grade.

They sang a **happy** song – They sang a **cheerful** song.

Examples of common synonyms in English

about, approximately accomplish, achieve administer, manage admit, confess almost, nearly annoy, irritate answer, reply arise, occur arrive, reach begin, start belly, stomach bizarre, weird brave, courageous chop, cut clerk, receptionist close, shut contrary, opposite correct, right daybreak, dawn demonstrate, protest denims, jeans desert, abandon devil, Satan disappear, vanish eager, keen emphasize, stress enormous, huge, immense enquire, investigate evaluate, assess fanatic, enthusiast	formerly, previously fragrance, perfume function, operate garbage, rubbish gay, homosexual grab, seize gut, intestine hard, tough hashish, cannabis hawk, peddle hint, trace, tip homicide, murder hunger, starvation hurry, rush idler, loafer if, whether illustrate, demonstrate imitate, mimic immediate, instant immobile, motionless impartial, neutral impasse, deadlock impolite, rude inconsiderate, thoughtless infamous, notorious informal, casual inheritor, heir instructions, directions jealous, envious	lousy, awful madness, insanity magnify, exaggerate manmade, artificial material, fabric merciless, cruel midway, halfway mind, intellect mirror, reflect mistrust, distrust modern, contemporary movie, film murderer, assassin naked, bare nameless, anonymous nightfall, dusk noon, midday numerous, many object, thing outside, external overlook, miss peaceable, peaceful poisonous, toxic post-mortem, autopsy praise, compliment reasonable, fair refrain, chorus religious, devout respond, reply scarcity, shortage
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fool, idiot sincere, honest skull, cranium soiled, dirty suggest, propose sunrise, dawn temper, mood trustworthy, reliable	joy, delight lacking, missing lethal, deadly ultimate, final uncommon, unusual uncooked, raw unforeseen, unexpected unfortunate, unlucky unmarried, single untimely, premature	signal, sign silly, foolish vain, useless vary, differ vast, huge winery, vineyard withstand, resist zenith, peak
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Exercise 8

Give the synonyms of the following words:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1.start | 6. collect |
| 2.come | 7. assist |
| 3.lengthy | 8. build |
| 4.shattered | 9. reply |
| 5.Fix | 10. purchase |

4. ANTONYMS

Antonyms are words that have **opposite meanings**. Antonyms also add variety to your writing.

Examples:

Cold-hot heavier – lighter fearful – brave.

Some words have more than one antonym. Some of these antonyms can be formed by adding a prefix to a base word.

Examples:

Kind – cruel, unkind like – hate, dislike

Examples of common antonyms in English

absent – present absurd – sensible abundant – scarce accidental – intentional accuse – defend accurate – incorrect admit – deny advance – retreat after – before alien – native alone – together	enemy – friend evil – good exhale – inhale expensive – cheap fail – succeed fat – skinny fertile – barren floor – ceiling former – latter funny – serious generous – stingy	permit – forbid polite – rude positive – negative private – public push – pull question – answer quick – slow reckless – cautious rival – friend sane – insane servant – master
--	---	---

always – never amuse – bore anger – kindness applaud – boo asleep – awake beautiful – ugly beg – offer below – above bitter – sweet buy – sell careful – careless cease – begin civilian – military closed – open condemn – praise crooked – straight dangerous – safe dead – alive deep – shallow destroy – create drunk – sober east – west	genuine – fake guilty – innocent humble – arrogant husband – wife illegal – lawful import – export indoor – outdoor inferior – superior intelligent – stupid joy – grief kind – mean king – commoner lazy – industrious lock – unlock majority – minority man – woman merciful – cruel moist – dry nervous – calm obey – disobey original – copy patient – impatient	sick – well simple – complex slavery – freedom smart – dumb solid – gas spend – save stranger – friend strong – weak sudden – gradual suffix – prefix tame – wild temporary – permanent thaw – freeze tough – tender unique – common vacant – occupied victory – defeat villain – hero war – peace young – old
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Exercise 9

Give the antonyms of the following words:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. easy | 6. sweat |
| 2. whisper | 7. stationary |
| 3. triumph | 8. strengthen |
| 4. dull | 9. precious |
| 5. dangerous | 10. naked |

5. IDIOMS AND SAYINGS

An idiom is a phrase that has a **special meaning** as a whole. The meaning of an idiom is different from the meanings of its separate words.

Examples:

It was **raining cats and dogs**.

(The idiom **raining cats and dogs** does not mean that cats and dogs were falling out of the sky! It means “**raining heavily**”.)

I **put my foot in my mouth** today.

(The idiom **put my foot in my mouth** means “**to say the wrong thing**”. Sometimes the context in which an idiom is used can give a hint of its meaning.)

Example:

Jeff is **talking through his hat** when he says that he can spell every word in the English language.

(This idiom clearly means that Jeff cannot possibly spell every word in the English language. Hence, the idiom **talking through his hat** means **talking nonsense**.)

More examples of idioms in the English language

	Idiom	Meaning
1	It was a blessing in disguise .	Something good that is not recognised at first.
2	He is a doubting Thomas .	A sceptic who needs physical or personal evidence in order to believe something.
3	That scandal was a drop in the bucket .	A very small part of something big or whole.
4	The punishment was a slap in the wrist .	A very mild punishment.
5	The thief received a taste of his own medicine .	He was mistreated the same way he mistreats others.
6	Don't add fuel to the fire !	When something is done to make a bad situation even worse than it is.
7	The principal is just all bark but no bite .	When someone is threatening and/or aggressive but not willing to engage in a fight.
8	The theory is all Greek to me .	Meaningless and incomprehensible.
9	We are all in the same boat .	When everyone is facing the same challenges.
10	The house cost him an arm and a leg .	Very expensive. A large amount of money.
11	The teacher has an axe to grind with the bursar.	To have a dispute with someone.
12	Joyce is the apple of my eye .	Someone who is cherished above all others.

13	The boy did the work at the drop of a hat .	Willing to do something immediately
14	The politician is a back seat driver .	People who criticize from the sidelines
15	They were back to square one in their search for the treasure.	Having to start all over again.
16	The government has to go back to the drawing board on the issue of the New Constitution.	When an attempt fails and it's time to start all over again.
17	The exam was a piece of cake .	A task that can be accomplished very easily.
18	The investigator realised he was barking the wrong tree .	A mistake made in something you are trying to achieve.
20	Stop beating around the bush .	Avoiding the main topic, not speaking directly about an issue.
21	I will bend over backwards to see you through school.	Do whatever it takes to help. Willing to do anything.
22	She was caught between a rock and a hard place .	Stuck between two very bad options.
23	You are biting off more than you can chew .	To take on a task that is way too big.
24	John decided to bite his tongue .	To avoid talking.

25	Tom has a cast iron stomach.	Someone who has no problems, complications, or ill effects with eating or drinking anything.
26	That is a cock and bull story.	An unbelievable tale.
27	I will have to win, come hell or high water.	Any difficult situation or obstacle.
28	Don't cry over spilt milk.	When you complain about a loss from the past.
29	He likes crying wolf.	Intentionally raise a false alarm.
30	Tim is a dark horse.	One who was previously unknown and now is prominent.
31	Kinyua is a devil's advocate.	Someone who takes a position for the sake of argument without believing in that particular side of the argument.
32	My father drinks like a fish.	To drink very heavily.
33	This problem is driving me up the wall.	To irritate or annoy very much.
34	The students had a field day with the visiting guests.	An enjoyable day or circumstance.
35	The food was finger licking good.	Very tasty food or meal.
36	He changed from rags to riches.	To go from being very poor to being very wealthy.
37	I need to get over it.	Move beyond something that is bothering you.
38	She got up on the wrong side of the bed	To someone who is having a horrible day.
39	Joan is a good Samaritan.	Someone who helps others when they are in need without expecting a reward.

40	I have a gut feeling she will die.	A personal intuition you get, especially when you feel something may not be right.
41	The player lost his head when he missed the goal.	Angry and overcome by emotions.
42	He was head over heels in love with her.	Very excited and joyful, especially when in love.
43	He gave her a high five when he won the contest.	Slapping palms above each other's heads as a celebration gesture.
44	Let us hit the books!	To study, especially for a test or exam.
45	I will hit the hay now.	Go to bed or go to sleep.
46	The preacher hit the nail on the head.	Do or say something exactly right.
47	She hit the sack after a hard day's work.	Go to bed or sleep.
48	Hold your horses , the speaker is coming.	Be patient.
49	The certificate was an icing on the cake after the monetary reward.	When you already have it good and get something on top of what you already have.
50	The girl became careless in the heat of the moment.	Overwhelmed by what is happening at the moment.
51	The policeman kept an eye on him.	Carefully watch somebody.
52	He kept his chin up during the burial.	To remain joyful in a tough situation.
53	The old man kicked the bucket.	Die
54	Lend me your ear.	To politely ask for someone's full attention.
55	You let the cat out of the bag.	To share a secret that wasn't supposed to be shared.

56	The by-election was not a level playing field .	A fair competition where no side has an advantage.
57	He ran all over like a chicken with its head cut off .	To act in a frenzied manner.
58	Mr. Gumo is a loose cannon .	Someone who is unpredictable and can cause damage if not kept in check.
59	I am not interested in his mumbo jumbo .	Nonsense or meaningless speech.
60	She is the new kid on the block .	Someone new to the group or area.
61	He started off on the wrong foot .	Getting a bad start on a relationship or task.
62	The accused man is now off the hook .	No longer have to deal with a tough situation.
63	I said that off the record !	Something said in confidence that the speaker doesn't want attributed to him or her.
64	I was on pins and needles .	Anxious or nervous especially in anticipation of something.
65	The prefects sit on the fence when there is a strike.	Undecided.
66	The dog appeared out of the blue .	Something that suddenly and unexpectedly occurs or appears.
67	You will get the job over my dead body .	When you absolutely will not allow something to happen.

68	Mark is fond of passing the buck to his brother.	Avoid responsibility by giving it to someone else.
69	Dennis is a peeping Tom .	Someone who observes people in the nude or sexually active people, mainly for his own gratification.
70	“Pipe down! We have heard you!	To shut up or be quiet.
71	You are pulling my leg .	Tricking someone as a joke.
72	Rise and shine! It’s time to go to school.	Time to get out of bed and get ready for work or school.
73	The businessman has run out of steam nowadays.	To be completely out of energy.
74	The convict was saved by a bell .	Saved at the last possible moment.
75	He was a scapegoat for the amorous politician.	Someone else who takes the blame.
76	The naughty boy got away scot-free .	To escape and not have to pay.
77	She was sick as a dog .	To be very sick (with flu or a cold).
78	He has a sixth sense .	A paranormal sense that allows you to communicate.

Common idiomatic expressions and sayings

1. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. – Having something that is certain is much better than taking a risk for more, because chances are you might lose everything.
2. A fool and his money are easily parted. – It’s easy for a foolish person to lose his/her money.
3. A house divided against itself cannot stand. – Everyone involved must unify and function together or it will not work out.
4. A leopard can’t change his spots. – You cannot change who you are.

5. A penny saved is a penny earned. – By not spending money you are saving money (little by little).
6. A picture paints a thousand words. – A visual presentation is far more descriptive than words.
7. Actions speak louder than words. – It's better to actually do something than just talk about it.
8. Curiosity killed the cat. – Being inquisitive can lead you into a dangerous situation.
9. Don't count your chickens before they hatch. – Don't rely on it until you are sure of it.
10. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. – When someone gives you a gift, don't be ungrateful.
11. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. – Do not put all your resources in one possibility.
12. Drastic times call for drastic measures. – When you are extremely desperate you need to take extremely desperate actions.
13. Elvis has left the building. – The show has come to an end. It's all over.
14. Every cloud has a silver lining. – Be optimistic, even difficult times will lead to better days.
15. Great minds think alike. – Intelligent people think like each other.
16. Haste makes waste. – Doing things quickly may result in a poor ending.
17. Idle hands are the devils' tools. – You are more likely to get in trouble if you have nothing to do.
18. If it's not one thing, it's another. – When one thing goes wrong, then another, and another
19. It takes two to tango. – A conflict involves two people and both must cooperate to have it resolved.
20. It's a small world. – You cannot hide from your evil deeds in this world.
21. Let bygones be bygones. – To forget about a disagreement or argument.
22. Let sleeping dogs lie. – To avoid restarting a conflict.
23. Never bite the hand that feeds you. – Don't hurt anyone that helps you.
24. Practice makes perfect. – By constantly practising, you will become better.
25. Rome was not built in one day. – If you want something to be completed properly, then it's going to take time.
26. The bigger they are, the harder they fall. – The bigger and stronger opponent may be more difficult to beat, but when he does, he suffers a much bigger loss.
27. Variety is the spice of life. – The more experiences you try the more exciting life can be.
28. When it rains, it pours. – Since it rarely rains, when it does it will be a huge storm.
29. You are what you eat. – In order to stay healthy, you must eat healthy foods.
30. You can't judge a book by its cover. – Decisions shouldn't be made primarily on appearance.

Exercise 10

Give the meaning of the italicized idioms in the following sentences.

1. I was completely *at sea* when the Prime Minister visited my house.
2. Jane *has her hands full*. She can't take on more work.
3. Do you have *a bone to pick* with me?
4. I can't *make heads or tails* of this story.
5. The test was *as easy as pie*.
6. I am *sick and tired* of doing nothing at work.
7. I am *broke*! I have to borrow some money.
8. She *dropped me a line* yesterday.
9. He *filled in* for her when she fell sick.
10. My business is *in the red*.

PHRASES

A **phrase** is a group of words without a **subject** or a **predicate** or **both** and does not express **a complete thought**. Therefore, a phrase can never stand on its own as a complete sentence. Using different kinds of phrases enables a writer or a speaker to create informative and descriptive sentences that vary in structure. Phrases combine words into a larger unit that can function as a sentence element.

The most common kinds of phrases in English are: **Noun phrases**, **verb phrases**, **prepositional phrases**, **gerund phrases** and **participial phrases**.

1. NOUN PHRASES

A **noun phrase** consists of a **noun** and **all its modifiers**. It can function as a **subject**, **object**, or **complement** in the sentence. The modifiers may include **articles**, **prepositions** and **adjectives**.

Examples:

(a) Noun phrases as subjects

The lazy old man sleeps all day long.

Some school boards reward teachers who produce good results.

(b) Noun phrases as objects

Teachers rejected **the proposed performance contracts**.

Critics opposed **the controversial marriage bill**.

(c) Noun phrases as complements

Teaching is **a valuable profession**.

Sheila is **a hardworking no-nonsense lady**.

Exercise 1

Identify the noun phrases in each of the following sentences and indicate whether it functions as a subject, object or complement.

1. I saw a TV show yesterday.
2. Playful animals really fascinate me.
3. Yesterday, I had a thrilling adventure.
4. Swimming is an exciting activity.
5. Twenty university students were expelled last month.
6. She is a certified public health officer.
7. Many of the soldiers were killed in the battle.
8. The old woman carried a heavy load of firewood on her back.
9. Peter seems a very complicated man to understand
10. A devastating earthquake hit China yesterday.

2. VERB PHRASES

A **verb phrase** consists of **a main verb** and **its helping verbs**. It can function as the **predicate** of a sentence. The predicate tells what the subject **does** or **is**. (It tells something about the subject).

Examples:

John **was born** in Malindi.

This problem **may have contributed** to the collapse of the economy.

Without highly-trained workers, many Kenyan companies **would be forced** to close down.

Sometimes the parts of a verb phrase are separated from each other by words that are not verbs.

Examples:

He **is** finally **buying** a new house.

Salesmen **must** occasionally **travel** long distances.

Some words are joined with other words to make contractions.

Examples:

He **hasn't turned up** for the meeting. (has + not)

We **couldn't tell** what had killed the cow. (could + not)

I've ordered them to leave the house. (I + have).

NB: The word **not** and the contraction **n't** are **adverbs**. They are never part of a verb or verb phrase.

Exercise 2

Write the verb phrase in each of the following sentences.

1. We should have taken pictures of the wild animals.
2. You must have seen the posters of the event.
3. They should have been told to come with flowers to plant in the school compound.
4. Mr. Muchira would have told some interesting stories.
5. Scientists must've visited the Menengai Crater.
6. He must have seen some wonderful places.
7. Many advocates do fear the new Chief Justice.
8. The scouts have often made camp here.
9. The bull fighters would sometimes stampede noisily.
10. I could have read the book if he had allowed me.

3. PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A **prepositional phrase** is made up of a **preposition**, the **object of the preposition**, and **all the words between them**. It often functions as an **adjective** or **adverb**, but it can function as a **noun** as well.

Examples:

We carried the fruits **in our school bags**. (Adverb telling where)

The plane flew **through the cloud**. (Adverb telling where)

Almost half of Africa's population suffers **from water – related diseases**. (Adverb modifying suffers).

The water supply **in the United States** is expected to decline dramatically. (Adjective modifying water supply).

The best time to practise water conservation is **before a water shortage**. (Noun functioning as a complement).

In sentence 1 above, the preposition is **in**, the object of the preposition is **bags**, and the modifiers or adjectives are **our** and **school**.

Sometimes two or more nouns or pronouns are used as objects in a prepositional phrase.

Example:

He needs a wife **with** diligence and a good character.

Diligence and **character** are objects of the preposition **with**.

When prepositional phrases function as adjectives and adverbs in sentences, they are called **adjectival** and **adverbial** phrases respectively.

(a) **An adjectival prepositional phrase** modifies **nouns** or **pronouns**.

Examples:

The woman wears shoes **with sharp heels**. (An adjectival phrase modifying the noun **shoes**)

The man **with a funny-looking dog** crossed the road. (An adjectival phrase modifying the noun **man**)

(b) **An adverbial prepositional phrase** modifies **verbs**, **adjectives**, or **other adverbs**.

Examples:

Soldiers train **for many months**. (An adverbial phrase modifying the verb **train**)

People are lazy **in the afternoons**. (An adverbial phrase modifying the adjective **lazy**.)

She arrived late **in the night**. (An adverbial phrase modifying the adverb **late**).

Sometimes one prepositional phrase immediately follows another.

Example:

The man led him **through the door on the left**.

Note that the prepositional phrase **through the door** is an adverbial phrase modifying the verb **led** and tells **where**? The second prepositional phrase **on the left** is an adjectival phrase modifying the noun **door** and tells **which one**?

A prepositional phrase can be at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence.

Examples:

At dusk, we began to walk home.

The map **of the area** was very helpful.

The path went **by a forest and a large lake**.

Exercise 3

Underline the prepositional phrases in the following sentences and indicate what type each of them is.

1. The oldest building is found in Mombasa.
2. Five companies around the country have bought new fire engines.
3. The barking of the dog scared the strangers.
4. Bulls are bred for hard work.
5. Most bridges are built over water.
6. Travellers were spared many miles of travel.
7. I went by bus to the market.
8. At the market, I saw beautiful and unusual people.
9. I also saw a display of colourful clothes.
10. She took him through the lesson with professional expertise.

4. GERUND PHRASES

A **gerund** is a verb form **used as a noun**. It is formed by adding **-ing** to the present tense of a verb. Gerunds can be used as subjects, direct objects, objects of prepositions, and complements.

Examples:

Subject: **Fishing** is a popular activity in Nyanza Province.

(**Fishing** is a gerund, the subject of the verb **is**)

Direct object: The sport involves **riding**. (**riding** is a gerund, the direct object of the verb **involves**)

Object of preposition: The sport is similar to **fencing**. (**fencing** is a gerund, the object of the preposition **to**).

A **gerund phrase** includes a gerund, its modifiers, objects or complements. It always functions as a noun.

Examples:

Becoming a Tusker Project fame finalist was Msechu's lifetime dream. (The gerund phrase is the **subject** of the sentence.)

Msechu dreamt all his life about **winning the top award**. (The gerund phrase is an **object** of the preposition **about**).

One of Msechu's biggest disappointments was **losing to Alpha**. (The gerund phrase is a **complement**).

The game involves **jumping over hurdles**. (The gerund phrase is an **object** of the verb **involves**).

Exercise 4

Underline the gerund or gerund phrases in the following sentences and label each one subject, direct, object, object of preposition, or complement accordingly

1. In early days, golfing was a game for the rich.
2. The rich were mostly interested in protecting their status.
3. Playing golf with a commoner would mean lowered status.
4. Much of the rich people's time was spent playing the game.
5. Training thoroughly improved a golfer's accuracy in the game.
6. There he learned about playing the game.
7. Later, he started contesting with other junior golfers.
8. At fifteen or sixteen, he began playing with the professionals.
9. Participating in international tournaments was the golfer's dream.
10. But the greatest dream was winning an international title.

5. PARTICIPIAL PHRASES

A **participle** is a verb form that always acts as **an adjective**. There are two types of participles:

(a) The past participle – it is usually formed by adding **-d**, or **-ed** to the present tense.

Examples:

Fooled, the shopkeeper bought fake products. (**Fooled** is a past participle modifying the noun **shopkeeper**)

Shaken, he dashed to the police station.

(**Shaken** is a past participle modifying the pronoun **he**)

The participles of irregular verbs, however, do not follow the above rule: run-run, throw-thrown.

(b) The present participle – it is usually formed by adding **-ing** to the present tense of any verb.

Examples:

Smiling, the conman stepped out of the shop. (**Smiling** is a present participle modifying the noun **conman**).

Using participles is a simple way of adding information to sentences and to vary sentences beginnings.

A **participial phrase** consists of a **present** or **past participle** and **its modifiers, objects, or complements**. It always functions as an **adjective**.

Examples:

Rounding the corner, the conman met two policemen.

(**Rounding the corner** is a present participial phrase modifying the noun **conman**).

Surprised by the appearance of the conman, the policemen started blowing their whistles.

(**Surprised by the appearance of the conman** is a past participial phrase modifying the noun **policemen**).

A participle or participial phrase is **not always** at the **beginning** of a sentence. Sometimes it may appear in the **middle** but it should be **near** the noun or pronoun it modifies.

Examples:

The skilled policemen, **seeing a chance of a lifetime**, arrested the conman.

The conman, **losing control**, fought the policemen fiercely.

Points to note

Both the gerund and the present participle are created by adding **-ing** to the present tense of a verb. BUT how can you tell whether a word is a gerund or a participle? It all depends on **how** the word is used in a sentence.

(i) A **participle** is used as a **modifier** in a sentence.

Example:

Gaining courage, the conman attempted to escape. (**Gaining courage** is a participial phrase modifying **conman**).

(ii) A **gerund** is used as a **noun** in a sentence.

Example:

Gaining courage made the conman look aggressive. (**Gaining courage** is a gerund phrase, the **subject** of the verb **made**).

Exercise 5

Underline the participial phrases in the following sentences, indicating whether it is a past or present participial phrase and the noun or pronoun it modifies.

1. Defying all odds, Kiso Munyao attempted to climb to the highest peak of Mt. Kenya for seven times.
2. Failing each time, he refused to give up.
3. Seeing his passion to scale the peak, the government offered him financial assistance.
4. The climber ascended slowly, making steady progress.
5. Pleased with his progress, he camped at eleven thousand feet.
6. The climber, determined to hoist the Kenyan flag, progressed on the following morning.

7. Slipping on the snow, Munyao fell on a dry tree trunk.
8. A rope worn from too many climbs then broke.
9. One of his hot water bottles, slipping to the bottom of the cliff, broke into pieces.
10. Munyao, overcome with joy, finally hoisted the flag at Point Batian.

6. INFINITIVE PHRASES

An **infinitive** is a verb form that usually appears with the word **to** before it. **To** is called **the sign of the infinitive**.

Examples:

to lift to eat to launch to register

To is a **preposition** if it is followed by a noun or noun phrase, but it is **a sign of the infinitive** if it is followed by a verb or verb phrase.

Examples:

Joseph longed for a flight **to the moon**. (Prepositional phrase)

Not until 1985 was he able **to succeed**. (Infinitive)

An **infinitive phrase** consists of **an infinitive** and **its modifiers, objects or complements**. It can function as a **noun, adjective, or adverb**.

Examples:

To write clearly and concisely can be difficult sometimes. (Infinitive phrase functioning as **a noun** and the **subject** of the sentence).

Proofreading your writing is a good way **to ensure the absence of typing mistakes**. (Infinitive phrase functioning as **an adjective** modifying the noun **way**).

To greatly increase the amount of stress in your life, leave your writing task until the night before it is due. (Infinitive phrase functioning as **an adverb** modifying the verb **leave**).

Exercise 6

Underline the infinitive phrases in each of the following sentences and state whether it is functioning as a noun, adjective or adverb.

1. To climb Mt. Kenya was the dream of Kisoï Munyao.
2. The freedom hero decided to climb the mountain on the eve of the country's independence.
3. He was one of the first Kenyans to try this risky climb.
4. His determination helped him to make rapid progress to reach Point Batian.
5. Munyao was able to reach the peak with very limited climbing gear.
6. To reach Point Batian was Munyao's ultimate goal.
7. At first few other climbers bothered to listen to Munyao.
8. He was even forced to finance much of his expedition himself.
9. Munyao worked hard to achieve his dream of hoisting the Kenyan flag.
10. His success made it easier for other climbers to scale the tallest mountain in Kenya.

SENTENCES

What is a sentence?

A **sentence** is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. A complete thought is clear. A sentence always begins with a capital letter. It ends with a full stop (.), a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!).

Examples:

Ted sent me a letter.

Jane slept soundly.

Sentence fragments

A **sentence fragment** does not express a complete thought. The reader or listener cannot be sure what is missing in or the meaning of a sentence fragment.

He or she will be left wondering: What is this about? What happened?

Examples:

Fragment: The huge boat. (What happened?)

Sentence: The huge boat sails down the river.

You can correct a sentence fragment by supplying the missing information.

Subjects and predicates

The two fundamental parts of every English sentence are **the subject** and **the predicate**.

A **subject** can be described as **the component that performs the action** described by the predicate. It tells **who** or **what** does or did the action. It may also name the **topic**.

The **predicate** tells about the subject. It tells what the subject does or is.

Examples:

Subject

(Who or what)

The antelope

Pigs

Predicate

(What is said about the subject)

jumped over the high fence.

eat anything is sight when hungry.

In a sentence, a few **key** words are more important than the rest. These key words make the basic framework of the sentence. The **verb** and its **subject** are the key words that form the basic framework of every sentence. The rest of the sentence is built around them.

Examples:

Sentence

The young **kids jumped** playfully.

Key words

kids, jumped

Their **faces shone** brightly.

faces, shone

To find out the **subject**, ask **who** or **what** before the verb.

Examples:

Who jumped playfully? – kids

What shone brightly? – faces

To find out the **verb**, ask **what** after the subject.

Examples:

The young kids did what? – jumped

Their faces did what? – shone

The key word in the subject of a sentence is called the **simple subject**. For example, **kids, faces**. The **complete subject** is the simple subject plus any words that modify or describe it. For example, **The young kids, Their faces**.

The key word in the predicate is called the **simple predicate**. For example, **jumped, shone**. The **complete predicate** is the verb plus any words that modify or complete the verb's meaning. For example, **jumped playfully, shone brightly**.

The simple subjects and predicates may sometimes be more than one word. For simple subjects, it may be the name of a person or a place.

Examples:

Barack Obama won the US presidential race.

South Africa is the home of many bats.

The simple predicate may also be more than one word. There may be a main verb and a helping verb.

Tanya **has acted** in many TV shows.

She **will be performing** again tonight.

Objects

An **object** in a sentence is a word or words that complete the meaning of a sentence. It is involved in the action but does not carry it out. The object is the person or thing **affected** by the action described in the verb. It is always a **noun** or a **pronoun** and it always comes after the verb.

Example:

The man climbed **a tree**.

Some verbs complete the meaning of sentences without the help of other words. The action that they describe is complete.

Examples:

It **rained**.

The temperature **rose**.

Some other verbs do not express a complete meaning by themselves. They need to combine with other words to complete the meaning of a sentence.

Examples:

Christine saw **the snake**.

Rose wears **goggles**.

He opened **the door**.

In the above examples, **the snake**, **goggles** and **the door** are **the objects** as they are the things being affected by the verbs in the sentences.

(Refer to the topic on **Transitive** and **Intransitive** Verbs under the main topic **VERBS** in **Chapter One**).

Exercise 1

Which groups of words are sentences and which ones are sentence fragments?

1. A huge storm was coming.
2. Behind the wattle tree.
3. After the earthquake.
4. The wind broke several houses.
5. Surprised by a loud noise.
6. Winds of high speed.
7. Rescue workers arrived.
8. From different parts of the world.
9. Many people were injured.
10. In the weeks after the earthquake.

Direct and indirect objects

Objects come in two types, **direct** and **indirect**:

Direct objects

The **direct object** is the word that **receives** the action of a verb.

Examples:

Christine saw **a snake**. (**a snake** receives the action of **saw**)

Rose wears **goggles**. (**goggles** receives the action of **wears**)

Sometimes the direct object tells the **result of an action**.

Examples:

Tecla won **the race**.

She received **a trophy**.

To find the direct object first find the verb. Then ask **whom** or **what** after the verb.

Examples:

Christine saw a snake.

Verb: **saw**

Saw what? **a snake**

Tecla won the race

Verb: **won**

Won what? **the race**

Rose wears goggles

verb: **wears**

wears what? **goggles**

She received a trophy

verb: **received**

received what? **a trophy**

Remember, we said earlier that a verb that has a direct object is called a **transitive verb** and a verb that does not have an object is called an **intransitive verb**. We also said that a verb may be intransitive in one sentence and transitive in another. Other verbs are strictly intransitive, e.g. disagree.

Indirect objects

The **indirect object** refers to a person or thing who **receives** the **direct object**. They tell us **for whom** or **to whom** something is done. Others tell **to what** or **for what** something is done.

Examples:

I gave **him** the book.

He is the **indirect object** as he is the beneficiary of **the book**.

Direct object or adverb?

Direct objects are sometimes confused with adverbs. The direct object tells **what** or **whom** as we have seen earlier. Adverbs on the other hand tell **how**, **where**, **when** or **to what extent**. They modify the verbs.

Examples:

Brian Swam **slowly**. (**slowly** is an adverb telling **how**)

Brian Swam **a tough race**. (**race** is a direct object telling **what**).

Verbs can also be followed by a phrase that tells **how**, **when**, or **where**. This kind of a phrase is **never** a direct object but an **adverbial phrase**.

Example:

Brian swam **across the pool**. (**across the pool** tells **where** Brian Swam).

Therefore, to decide whether a word or a phrase is a direct object or adverb, decide first what it tells about the verb. If it tells **how**, **where**, **when** or **to what extent**, it is an **adverb**. If it tells **what** or **whom**, it is a **direct object**.

Exercise 2

Identify the objects or the adverbs/adverbial phrases in the following sentences. If the sentence has two objects, indicate the direct object and the indirect object.

1. Nanu sings pop music.
2. Nanu sings sweetly.
3. He spoke very quietly.
4. I have read that book three times.
5. She has gone to the bank.
6. David gave her a present.
7. David disagreed bitterly.
8. The player sat on his heels.
9. She made a list of the items to buy.
10. They offered him help.

Complements

Some sentences do not take objects or adverbs (or adverbial phrases) after the verbs. Instead, they take **complements**. A **complement** is the part of the sentence that **gives more information** about the subject (subject complement) or about the object (object complement) of the sentence.

Subject complements

Subject complements normally follow certain verbs like **be**, **seem**, **look**, etc.

Examples:

He is **British**. (**British** gives more information about **he**)

She became **a nurse**. (**a nurse** gives more information about **she**)

Object complements

Object complements follow the direct objects of the verb and give more information about those direct objects.

Examples:

They painted the house **red**. (**red** is a complement giving more information about the direct object **house**)

She called him **an idiot**. (**an idiot** is a complement giving more information about the direct object **he**).

The complement often consists of an **adjective** (e.g. red) or a **noun phrase** (e.g. an idiot) but can also be a **participle phrase**.

Example:

I saw her **standing there**. (**standing there** is a complement telling more about **her**).

Exercise 3

Pick out the complements in the following sentences and indicate whether subject, object or participial complements.

1. The tourist is a German citizen.
2. She seems a very arrogant lady.
3. You look tired.
4. They painted the car green.
5. James nicknamed Lucy the queen.
6. I saw him stealing the mango.
7. They beat the thief senseless.
8. The priest looks a kind person.
9. We left her crying.
10. Job left her trembling.

TYPES OF SENTENCES

Sentences can be categorised in terms of **structure** or in terms of **purpose**.

(A) IN TERMS OF STRUCTURE

Sentences can be categorised into 3 main types:

- (i) **Simple sentences**
- (ii) **Compound sentences**
- (iii) **Complex sentences.**

(i) SIMPLE SENTENCES

A **simple sentence** contains a **single subject** and **predicate**. It describes only **one** thing, idea or question, and has only **one verb**. It contains **only** an independent (main) clause. Any independent clause **can stand alone** as a sentence. It has **a subject** and **a verb** and **expresses a complete thought**.

Examples:

Bill reads.

Jack plays football.

Even the addition of adverbs, adjectives and prepositional phrases to a simple sentence does not change its structure.

Example:

The **white** dog **with the black collar** **always** barks **loudly**.

Even if you join several nouns with a conjunction, or several verbs with a conjunction, it remains a simple sentence.

Example:

The dog barked **and** growled loudly.

(ii) COMPOUND SENTENCES

A **compound sentence** consists of **two or more simple sentences** joined together using a **co-ordinating conjunction** such as **and, or** or **but**.

Example:

The sun was setting in the west **and** the moon was just rising.

Each clause can stand alone as a sentence.

Example:

The sun was setting in the west. The moon was just rising.

Every clause is like a sentence with a subject and a verb. A **coordinating conjunction** goes in the middle of the sentence; it is the word that joins the two clauses together.

Other examples:

I walked to the shops, **but** my wife drove there.

I might watch the film, **or** I might visit my aunt.

My friend enjoyed the film, **but** she didn't like the actor.

Note

Two simple sentences should be combined to form one compound sentence **only if the ideas they express are closely related**. If the ideas are not closely related, the resulting sentence may not make sense.

Examples:

Incorrect: The car is old, **and** Dan likes sociology.

Correct: The car is old, **but** it functions superbly.

Punctuating compound sentences

When writing some compound sentences, a **comma** is used before the conjunction. The comma tells the reader **where to pause**. Without a comma, some compound sentences can be quite confusing.

Examples:

Confusing: Jane studied the specimen and her sister took notes.

(The sentence might cause the reader to think that Jane studied both the specimen and her sister).

Better: Jane studied the specimen, and her sister took notes.

(The comma makes the sentence to be clear).

Sometimes the parts of a compound sentence can be joined with a **semicolon (;)** rather than a comma and a conjunction.

Example:

Jane studied the specimen; her sister took notes.

Never join simple sentences with a comma alone. A comma is not powerful enough to hold the sentences together. Instead use a semicolon.

Example:

Incorrect: My father enjoyed the meal, he didn't like the soup.

Correct: My father enjoyed the meal; he didn't like the soup.

Correct: My father enjoyed the meal, **but** he didn't like the soup.

(iii) COMPLEX SENTENCES

A **complex sentence** contains **one independent (main) clause** and **one or more subordinate (dependent) clauses**. They **describe more than one thing or idea** and have **more than one verb** in them. They are made up of more than one clause, an independent clause (that can stand by itself) and a dependent clause (which cannot stand by itself).

Example:

The picture looks flat because it is colourless.

(**The picture looks flat** is the independent (main) clause whereas **because it is colourless** is the subordinate (dependent) clause)

CLAUSE

What is a clause?

A **clause** is a group of words that contains a **verb** and its **subject**. There are two types of clauses – **main clauses** and **subordinate clauses**.

MAIN CLAUSES

A **main clause** is a clause that **can stand as sentence by itself**. A compound sentence contains two or more main clauses, because it is made up of two or more simple sentences. Each of these simple sentences is a main clause.

Example:

Robots operate machines, and they solve many labour problems.

Robots operate machines and **they solve many labour problems** are both main clauses. They are also simple sentences. Main clauses are sometimes called **independent clauses**.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Subordinate clauses are clauses that do **not express a complete thought**. So they **cannot stand by themselves**.

Examples:

If technology will improve When robots can do the work

While electronics will work After the system is complete

None of the above clauses express a complete thought. They are **sentence fragments** that leave the reader wondering **then what?**

Subordinate clauses are introduced by **subordinating conjunctions** such as **if, when, while, and after**.

Other examples of subordinating conjunctions:

Although	because	so that	until
as	before	than	whatever
as if	in order that	though	wherever

as long as	provided	till	whenever
as though	since	unless	where

Now we can understand a complex sentence better. We have said that it contains one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Main clause

subordinate clause

The bell started ringing

before we were out of bed.

The battery needs recharging

so that it can work tonight.

The subordinate clause can sometimes appear **before** the main clauses.

Examples:

When the power failed, the computer stopped.

Before you know it, your flat screen television will be stolen.

The subordinate clause can also sometimes appear **in between** the sentence.

Example:

The medicine man, **who knew many tricks**, cheated the man that he had been bewitched.

TYPES OF SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Subordinate clauses may be used in sentences as **adjectives**, **adverbs** and **nouns** in complex sentences. Such clauses are called **adjectival**, **adverbial** and **noun clauses** respectively. They add variety to one's writing. They can also make one's writing more interesting by adding details.

Examples:

Without subordinate clause: The bushman told us about the hidden cave.

With subordinate clause: The bushman, **who knew the forest well**, told us about the hidden cave.

(i) Adjectival clauses

An **adjectival clause** acts as **an adjective** in a sentence, that is, it **modifies** a noun or a pronoun.

Examples:

The bushman, **who knew the forest well**, told us about the hidden cave.

(**who knew the forest well** is an adjectival clause that modifies the noun **bushman**).

The bushman told us a legend **that involved the cave**.

(**that involved the cave** is an adjectival clause that modifies the noun **legend**).

An adjective clause usually comes immediately **after** the noun it modifies.

More examples:

People still search for the treasure **that the pirate hid**.

As can be seen from the above examples, adjectival clauses, like adjectives, modify nouns or pronouns answering questions like **which?** or **what kind of?**

Adjective

Adjective clause

The **red** coat

the coat **which I bought yesterday**

Like the adjective **red**, the adjectival clause **which I bought yesterday** modifies the noun coat. Note that an adjectival clause usually comes **after** what it modifies while an adjective comes **before**.

Relative pronouns

Besides use of subordinating conjunctions, adjectival clauses can be introduced by **relative pronouns**. Relative pronouns are the words **who**, **whom**, **whose**, **that** and **which**. These words relate the subordinate clauses to the word it modifies in the main clause.

Examples:

The books **that people read** were mainly religious.

Some fire-fighters never meet the people **whom they save**.

The meat **which they ate** was rotten.

In the last sentence, the relative clause (called so because it is introduced by the relative pronoun **which**) **which they ate** modifies the noun **meat** and answers the question **which meat?**

More examples:

They are searching for the one **who borrowed the book**.

The relative clause **who borrowed the book** modifies the pronoun **one** and answers the question **which one?**

Besides relating the adjectival clause to a noun or pronoun in the main clause, a relative pronoun may also act as the **subject**, **object**, **predicate pronoun**, or **object of a preposition** in the clause.

Examples:

Subject: This is the forest **that has a secret cave**.

(**that** is the subject of **has**)

Object: The map, **which you saw**, guides the way.

(**which** is the object of **saw**)

Object of a preposition: The map leads to the cave **of which the bushman spoke**.

(**which** is the object of the preposition **of**)

In **informal** writing or speech, you may leave out the relative pronoun when it is not the subject of the adjectival clause, but you should usually include the relative pronoun in **formal** academic writing.

Examples:

Formal: The books **that** people read were mainly religious.

Informal: The books people read were mainly religious.

Formal: The map **which** you saw guides the way.

Informal: The map you saw guides the way.

But **never** omit the relative pronoun if it is in the clause.

Examples:

Correct: This is the forest **that** has a secret cave.

Incorrect: This is the forest has a secret cave.

Commas are put around adjectival clauses **only if** they merely add additional information to a sentence.

Example:

The map, **which you saw**, shows the way.

This adjective clause can be left out without affecting the grammatical structure of the sentence. It is merely adding information to the sentence by telling us **which map?**
The map shows the way.

(ii) **Adverbial clauses**

An **adverbial clause** is a subordinate clause which takes the place of **an adverb** in a sentence. Just like adverbs and adverbial phrases, adverbial clauses answer the questions **where, when, how, to what extent, with what goal/result** and **under what conditions**. In addition, an adverbial clause may tell **why**.

Note how an adverb clause can replace an adverb and an adverbial phrase in the following example:

Adverb: The Prime Minister gave a speech **here**.

Adverbial phrase: The Prime Minister gave a speech **in the afternoon**.

Adverbial clause: The Prime Minister gave a speech **where the workers were striking**.

Usually, an adverbial clause is introduced by a **subordinating conjunction** like **because, when, whenever, where, wherever, since, after** and **so that**.

Note that a subordinate adverb clause can **never** stand alone as a complete sentence.

Example:

after they left dining hall

The above adverbial clause will leave the reader asking **what happened after they left the dining hall?**

Adverbial clauses express relationships of **cause, effect, place, time** and **condition**.

Cause

Adverb clauses of cause answer the question **why?**

Example:

Njoroge wanted to kill his uncle **because he had murdered his father**.

Effect

Adverbial clauses of effect answer the question **with what goal/result?**

Example:

Njoroge wanted to kill his uncle **so that his father's murder would be avenged**.

Time

Adverbial clauses of time answer the question **when?**

Example:

After Njoroge's uncle married his mother, he wanted to kill him

Condition

Adverbial clauses of condition answer the question **under what conditions?**

Example:

If the uncle cooperates, Njoroge may decide to pardon him.

Place

Adverbial clauses of place answer the question **where?**

Example:

Njoroge organised a demonstration **where his father's murder occurred.**

Note that an adverbial clause can appear either **before** or **after** the main clause of the sentence.

(iii) Noun clauses

A **noun clause** is a clause which takes the place of a **noun** or a **noun phrase**. It can be used in any way that a noun is used. That is, it can act as the **subject, object, object of a preposition, or predicate noun** in a sentence. Just like a noun, a noun clause answers the questions **who, when, or what?**

Examples:

As subjects

Noun: **Kamau** is unknown

Noun phrase: **Their destination** is unknown

Noun clause: **Where they are going** is unknown.

The noun clause **where they are going** is the subject of the verb **is**.

As objects

Noun: I know **French**.

Noun phrase: I know **the three ladies**.

Noun clause: I know **that Latin is no longer spoken as a native language**.

In the first sentence, the noun **French** acts as the **direct object** of the verb **know**. In the third sentence, the entire clause **that Latin is no longer spoken as a native language** is the direct object of the verb **know**.

As objects of the preposition

Noun: He talked about **him**.

Noun phrase: He talked about **the funny items**.

Noun phrase: He talked about **what you bought at the supermarket**.

In the first sentence the pronoun **him** is the object of the preposition **about**. In the third sentence, **what you bought at the supermarket** is the object of the preposition **about** and answers the question **about what?**

As predicate nouns

Her first day in school was **what shaped her life**.

The adverbial clause **what shaped her life** gives more information about the subject of the sentence **Her first day in school**.

Words often used to introduce noun clauses

that	when	whose
what whatever	whoever	
how	who	whoever
where	whom	

Note:

You **cannot** tell the kind of a clause from the word that introduces it. You **can** tell the kind of clause **only** by the way it is used in a sentence. If the clause is used as a **noun**, it is a **noun clause**. If the clause is used as a **modifier**, it is an **adjectival clause** or an **adverbial clause**.

Examples:

Whoever built the house was not an expert. (**Noun clause** as a subject)

No one knew **where he came from**. (**Noun clause** as a direct object)

He left the construction site **whenever he wished**. (As an adverbial clause)

This is the layout **which he left behind**. (As an adjectival clause).

Exercise 4

Identify the following sentences as simple, compound or complex. If it is a complex sentence, indicate whether it has an adjective, an adverb or a noun subordinate clause.

1. The hotel is not very old.
2. The hotel is not very old; it was constructed in 1987.
3. It has a strange name, but it attracts many tourists.
4. Whoever broke the mirror will have to pay for it.
5. The Gor Mahia fans hope that the team will win again.
6. Did I tell you about the author whom I met?
7. They are searching for the man who stole the cow.
8. People began riding horses at least five thousand years ago.
9. Some people watch the moon as though it affects their lives.
10. Some superstitions were developed when people felt helpless about the world around them.
11. The parachute was really a sail that was designed for skiing.
12. The moon orbits the earth every 29¹/₂ days.
13. My dog loves bread crusts.
14. I always buy bread because my dog loves the crusts.
15. Whenever lazy students whine, Mrs. Ndegwa throws pieces of chalk at them.
16. The lazy students whom Mrs. Ndegwa hit in the head with pieces of chalk complained bitterly.
17. My dog Shimba, who loves bread crusts, eats them under the kitchen table.
18. A dog that drinks too much milk will always be alert.
19. You really do not want to know what Aunt Lucy adds to her stew.

20. We do not know why, but the principal has been away from school for two months.

(B) IN TERMS OF PURPOSE

We have seen how sentences are categorised into **simple, compound** and **complex** depending on their **internal structures**. Now, we shall see how they can be categorised in terms of **purpose**.

There are **five** kinds of sentences classified **according to their end marks** and the different jobs they do:

- (i) Declarative sentences
- (ii) Interrogative sentences
- (iii) Exclamatory sentences
- (iv) Imperative sentences
- (v) Conditional sentences

(i) Declarative sentences

A **declarative sentence** simply **states a fact** or **argument** without requiring either an answer or action from the reader or listener. It is punctuated with a **simple period**.
(fullstop)

Examples:

Nairobi is the capital of Kenya.

He asked which path leads back to the park.

Deserts are dry.

The declarative sentence is the most important type of sentences. You can write an entire essay or report using **only** declarative sentences, and you should always use them more often than any other type. Some declarative sentences contain **indirect questions** but this does not make them into interrogative sentences.

Examples:

He asked **which path leads back to the park**.

(ii) Interrogative sentences

An **interrogative sentence** asks a **direct question** and always ends in a **question mark**.

Examples:

How many roads lead into Mombasa city?

Does money grow on trees?

Do you like deserts?

Note that an indirect question does not make a sentence interrogative.

Examples:

Direct/interrogative

When was Professor Saitoti the Vice President of Kenya?

Indirect/Declarative

I wonder when Professor Saitoti was the Vice President of Kenya.

A direct question **requires an answer** from the reader or listener, while an indirect question **does not**. A special type of direct questions is **the rhetorical question**. A rhetorical question is one that you do not expect the reader or listener to answer.

Example:

Why did the Mau Mau war take place? Some people argue that it was simply a way of Kenyan Africans saying “enough is enough”.

Rhetorical questions can be very effective way to introduce new topics or problems in one’s writing or speech. But if you use them too often, you sound patronising or even monotonous or mediocre!

(iii) Exclamatory sentences

An **exclamatory sentence** expresses **strong feeling, emphasis or emotion**. It is actually a more forceful version of a declarative sentence that is marked at the end with **an exclamation mark**.

Examples:

It was so cold!

How beautiful this picture is!

You look so lovely tonight!

Exclamatory sentences are very common in speech and sometimes in writing (but rarely).

Note that an exclamation mark can appear at the end of an imperative sentence, but this does not make it into an exclamatory sentence.

(iv) Imperative sentences

An **imperative sentence** gives a **direct command** to someone. This sentence can end either with a **period** or with **an exclamation mark**, depending on **how forceful** the command is.

Examples:

Sit!

Read this book tomorrow.

Always carry water.

Wash the windows!

Note

You should **not** usually use an exclamation mark with the word “please”.

Example:

Close that door, please!

Please close that door.

In an imperative sentence, **you** is always the subject. It is usually not stated in the sentence. We say that **you** is the “**understood**” or “**implied**” subject.

Examples:

(You) Please bring my camera.

(You) Take your medicine before going to bed.

(v) Conditional sentences

A **conditional sentence** expresses **what one would do if a condition were or were not met**.

The condition in the conditional **if-clause** will determine the fulfilment of the action in the main clause.

Examples:

If I had a million dollars, I would buy a Hummer.

John would be very successful if he had more brains.

In sentence 1, the condition of **having a million dollars** will determine whether the speaker **will buy a hummer** or not. In sentence, the condition of **John not having more brains** determines that **he is not very successful**.

Exercise 5

Label each of the following sentences declarative, imperative, exclamatory, interrogative or conditional

1. There is a terrible storm tonight.
2. Try to cover yourself with a blanket.
3. How strong the winds are!
4. If the storm continues, we shall have to go down into the bunker.
5. Do you think it will rip off the roof?
6. Look at that that flash of lightning!
7. What an amazing sight that is!
8. The night looks dark and scary.
9. Please tell the children to stop screaming.
10. Susan will sit beside me if the storm continues.
11. We are hopeful all will be well.
12. Dive under the table if it breaks the roof.
13. How will I find my way?
14. Can I take a glass of water?
15. John wants to know what will happen if our house collapses.
16. There goes the thunder!
17. We shall have to move to another city if we get out of this alive.
18. Tell me a good city where we can move to.
19. The storm is subsiding.
20. Hooray! Safety at last!

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

DIRECT SPEECH

Direct speech is used to give a speaker's **exact words**. It is also referred to as direct quotation. Direct speech is always enclosed within quotation marks.

Examples:

Hemedi announced, "My aunt works in a biscuit factory."

"Creating jobs will be my first priority," the governor said.

A **comma** always separates the quoted words from the speaker's name, whether the name comes before or after the quotation

Examples:

Jim asked, "Who are you voting for?"

"I don't know yet," answered Carol.

A direct quotation always begins with a capital letter

Example:

Senator Karaba said, "You must believe in the new constitution."

When a direct quotation is divided by speech tags, the second part of the quotation must begin with a small letter.

Example:

"Register to vote," said the senator, "before the end of the day".

If the second part of the quotation is a complete sentence, the first word of this sentence is capitalized.

Example:

"I did register," said Carol. "It took only a few minutes"

Commas and full stops are placed inside quotation marks

Example:

"Last night," said Joyce, "I listened to a debate."

Quotation marks and exclamation marks are placed inside a quotation mark if they belong to the quotation. If they do not, they are placed outside the quotation.

Examples:

Joyce asked, "Whom are you voting for?"

Did Carol say, "I don't know yet"?

I can't believe that she said, "I don't know yet"!

Speech tags may appear before, in the middle or at the end of the direct speech.

Examples:

He said, "You know quite well that you have to vote."

"You know quite well," he said, "that you have to vote."

"You know quite well that you have to vote," he said.

Exercise 6

Rewrite the following sentences correctly in direct speech. Ensure you punctuate them accordingly.

1. John said there was a terrible accident in Nairobi.
2. Petro added it happened in Umoja Estate.
3. It involved a train and a bus added John.
4. Sarah asked did anyone die.
5. No one died, but the railway line was destroyed answered Peter.
6. Over the months said John the railway line has been rebuilt.
7. How lucky that no one died exclaimed Sarah.
8. I think they should put a railway-crossing sign board Petro said it would help bus drivers a lot.
9. Or they should put bumps on both sides of the railway line to slow down the buses John suggested
10. Who knows what might happen next wondered Sarah

INDIRECT SPEECH

Indirect speech is used to refer to a person's words **without quoting him or her exactly**. It is also referred to as **indirect quotation** or **reported speech**. The original spoken words are not repeated. The exact meaning is given without repeating the speaker's words.

Example:

Direct speech: The governor said, "Creating new jobs will be my first priority."

Indirect speech: The governor said that creating new jobs would be his first priority.

Several changes do occur when changing a sentence from direct to indirect speech

A. Quotation marks

Quotation marks are left out when writing a sentence in direct speech.

Example:

Direct: Hemedi announced, "My aunt works in a biscuit factory"

Indirect: Hemedi announced that his aunt worked in a biscuit factory.

B. Tense - The tense of a verb in the direct sentence will change in indirect speech

Examples:

1. Simple present changes to past simple

Direct: John said, "She **goes** to school early."

Indirect: John said that she **went** to school early.

2. Simple past changes to past perfect

Direct: John said, "She **went** to school early."

Indirect: John said that she **had gone** to school early.

3. Present progressive changes to past progressive

Direct: "The baby **is eating** a banana," the nurse said.

Indirect: The nurse said that the baby **was eating** a banana.

4. Present perfect changes to past perfect

Direct: “South Sudan **has become** a republic,” the new president declared.

Indirect: The new president declared that South Sudan **had become** a republic.

5. Past progressive changes to past perfect progressive

Direct: “I **was dreaming** when the fire started,” the boy said.

Indirect: The boy said the he **had been dreaming** when the fire started.

6. Future simple changes to modal

Direct: “I **will visit** you tomorrow,” my desk mate said.

Indirect: My desk mate said the he **would visit** me the following day.

7. May changes to might

Direct: I **may** also visit you too,” I replied.

Indirect: I replied that I **might** also visit him too.

Sometimes the verb in indirect speech **does not change tense**. This occurs in sentences that are universal truths

Direct: Our Geography teacher said “The earth **rotates** round the sun.”

Indirect: Our Geography teacher said that the earth **rotates** round the sun.

C. Words referring to place also change

Examples:

Direct: “I live **here**,” retorted the old man.

Indirect: The old man retorted that he lived **there**.

Direct: “**This place** stinks,” noted the boy.

Indirect: The boy noted that **that place** stunk.

D. Words referring to time also change

Examples:

Direct: “I will visit you **tomorrow**,” he shouted.

Indirect: He shouted that he would visit me the **following/next day**.

Direct: “He died last year,” the policeman reported.

Indirect: The policeman reported that he had died the **previous year/ the year before**.

E. Demonstrative pronouns also change:

Examples:

Direct: “**This** book is mine,” Jane claimed.

Indirect: Jane claimed that **that** book was hers.

Direct: “**These** are hard times,” observed the president.

Indirect: The president observed that **those** were hard times.

F. Pronouns also change

Examples:

Direct: “**My** car is better than **yours**,” the teacher bragged.

Indirect: The teacher bragged that **his/her** car was better that **his/hers/theirs**.

Exercise 7

Change the following sentences from Direct to Indirect speech.

1. “Did you see the fire at the West gate Mall?” asked Joel.
2. Njagi said, “Ten fire-engines arrived in fifteen minutes.”
3. Patty exclaimed, “It destroyed an entire block of building!”
4. “One fire fighter was slightly injured,” said Joel.
5. Njagi said, “Several people working in the building escaped unhurt.”
6. “Tell me what will happen to them,” said Patty.
7. “Other people are giving them food and clothes,” replied Joel.
8. Njagi added, “They are resting in the school for now.”
9. “These terrorists will finish us!” exclaimed Patty.
10. “Don’t worry,” Joel said “They will be apprehended tomorrow.”

QUESTION TAGS

A **question tag** or a **tag question** is a phrase that is added at the **end of a statement to turn into a question**. When a speaker uses a question tag at the end of a statement, he/she is seeking for **approval, confirmation or correction**.

Examples:

APPROVAL: I look smart today, **don’t I?** Yes you do.

CORFIRMATION: These are the new students, **aren’t they?** Yes they are.

CORRECTION: I paid your money yesterday, **didn’t I?** No you didn’t.

Many learners face a problem of supplying the correct question tags to sentences. This is because they fail to observe the following rules of question tags:

1. A **comma** must be put to separate the statement with the question tag. A question **mark** must be placed at the end of the question tag.

Examples:

Rufftone has released a new album, **hasn’t he?**

He is pushing for a decision by tomorrow, **isn’t he?**

2. The **auxiliary verb** in the statement **must be repeated** in the question tag

Examples:

Nelson Mandela **was** in prison for 27 years, **wasn’t he?**

The people of South Africa **have** lost a great hero, **haven’t they?**

3. When there is **no auxiliary verb** in the statement, the appropriate form of the auxiliary verb **Do** must be used in the question tag

Examples:

Mark Francis **wakes** up very early, **doesn’t he?**

Peter Bryan **bought** an I-pad phone, **didn’t he?**

4. **The subject** in the statement must be **repeated** in the question tag. If it is a noun in the statement, it changes to the appropriate pronoun. If it is a pronoun in the statement, it remains a pronoun in the question tag.

Examples:

Fatou Bensouda is a prosecutor in ICC, isn't **she**?

She does her work meticulously, doesn't **she**?

5. When **the statement is positive** (i.e. It does not have the word **not** in it), **the question tag must be negative** (i.e. must use the negative word **not**) and vice versa.

Examples:

David Rudisha **has** broken another record, **hasn't** he?

Catherine Ndereba **hasn't** been very active, **has** she?

Douglas Wakiihuri **does not** run any more, **does** he?

Ezekiel Kemboi **entertains** the audience after winning, **doesn't** he?

You will note from the above examples that the auxiliary verb is usually contracted (joined) with the negative indicator **not** when using question tags. However, this does not apply when using primary auxiliary verb **am** and the modal auxiliary verbs **will** and **shall**. **Am** does not allow contraction with **not**, **will** and **shall** usually change their forms to allow contraction.

Examples:

WRONG: I am the next speaker, **amn't** I?

CORRECT: I am the next speaker, **am I not**?

WRONG: They will be late for church, **willn't** they?

CORRECT: They will be late for church, **won't** they?

WRONG: We shall attend the Memorial service, **willn't** we?

CORRECT: We shall attend the memorial service, **shan't** we?

6. Whereas there is no inversion in the statement, **inversion** must occur in the question tag i.e. the auxiliary verb comes before the subject

Examples:

President Uhuru Kenyatta **has** won the case, **hasn't** **he**?

Subject verb verb subject

He **can** now relax and attend to his duties, **can't** **he**?

Subject verb verb subject

7. For sentences that are in form of **requests and commands**, the question tags will commonly take the auxiliary verb **will** or **shall** followed by the appropriate pronoun.

Examples:

Please help me with your pen, **will** **you**?

Let us go for a swim, **shall** **we**?

Bring me that chair, **will you?**

Stop that noise, **will you?**

Kneel down right away, **will you?**

Those are the rules that govern question tags and if followed well, the learners will not have any problems with question tags.

Exercise 8

Supply the appropriate question tags in the following sentences.

1. The marriage caused a rupture in her relationship with her mother, _____?
2. She didn't think anyone would be interested in a woman like her, _____?
3. The troops are on standby in case chaos erupt, _____?
4. The Prime Minister must take a firm stand against extremists in his party, _____?
5. I am the best so far, _____?
6. The amendments will strengthen the bill, _____?
7. The new tax is tantamount to stealing from the poor, _____?
8. Please send all your remarks to Prof Kibwana as soon as possible, _____?
9. She raised the gun and pulled the trigger, _____?
10. We need to learn to prioritize, _____?
11. Get out of this room now, _____?
12. We've made a reservation for next week, _____?
13. They couldn't conceal the secret any more, _____?
14. We shall not accept anything less, _____?
15. I am not a conman, _____?
16. Jonny wanted to pursue a career in theatre, _____?
17. Sharon's parents claim that the house is legally theirs, _____?
18. I haven't told you my name, _____?
19. Come and visit us tomorrow, _____?
20. Time will tell whether he made the right choice, _____?

CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION

Capitalization

Capitalization is the writing of a word with its first letter as an upper case and the remaining letters in lower case. The following are the cases when capitalization is used:

A. Abbreviations

Abbreviations begin with a capital letter.

1. Titles of persons

Examples:

Prof. George Saitoti

Mr. Stephen Kiama

Dr. Ephantus Maree

Mrs. Teresa Ndegwa

Lt. James Conary

Ms. Jacinta Atieno

Note that all the above abbreviations **end with a period**. Miss is not an abbreviation, so it doesn't end with a period.

2. Words used as addresses

Examples:

St. (street)

Blvd. (Boulevard)

Ave. (Avenue)

Rte. (Route)

Rd. (Road)

Apt. (Apartment)

3. Words used in businesses

Examples:

Co. (Company)

Inc. (Incorporation)

Corp. (Corporation)

Ltd. (Limited)

4. Some abbreviations are written in all capital letters, with a letter standing for each important word.

Examples:

P.O. (Post Office)

USA (United States of America)

P.D. (Police Department)

E.A. (East Africa)

5. Initials of names of persons

Examples:

E.W. Gichimu

D.M. Weyama

W.W. Muriithi

Everlyne **A.** Kira

B. Titles of books, newspapers, magazines, TV shows and movies.

Examples:

The Minister's Daughter (book)

Tahidi High (TV show)

The Daily Nation (newspaper)

Harry Potter (movie)

Drum Magazine (magazine)

The Day of the Jackal (book)

Capitalize the **first** and **last** words only. Do not capitalize little words such as a, an, the, but, as, if, and, or, nor etc.

C. Titles of short stories, songs, articles, book chapters and most poems.

Examples:

Half a Day (short story)

Kigeugeu (song)

Three Days on Mt. Kenya (short story)

The Noun Clauses (chapter in a book)

Grass Will Grow (a poem)

D. Religious names and terms

Examples:

God Allah Jesus the Bible the Koran

Do not capitalize the words **god** and **goddess** when they refer to mythological deities.

E. Major words in geographical names

Examples:

Continents – Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia

Water bodies – the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Nile River, RiverTana, Lake Victoria.

Landforms – the Rocky Mountains, the Aberdares Mountains, the Rift Valley, the Sahara Desert.

Political Units – the Kirinyaga County, the Central Province, Inoi Sub-location.

Public Areas – Nairobi National Park, Wajee Nature Park.

Roads and Highways – Jogoo Road, Kenyatta Avenue, Uganda Road.

F. Names of organisations and institutions

Examples:

Kianjege West Secondary School, United Nations, University of Nairobi, Nairobi Women's Hospital

Note that here you capitalize only the important words. Do not capitalize such words such as **a**, **in**, and **of**. Do not capitalize such words as school, college, church and hospital when they are not used as parts of names.

Example:

There will be a beauty contest at school.

G. Months, days and holidays

Examples:

June Labour Day

Tuesday December

Kenyatta Day Mashujaa Day

Do not capitalize names of seasons: **autumn**, **summer**, **winter**, **spring**

H. Languages, races, nationalities and religions

Examples:

Chinese Kikuyu Christianity Caucasian

Bantu Nigerian Muslim Oriental

I. The first word of every sentence

Example:

What an exciting day it was!

J. The pronoun I

Example:

What should I do next?

K. Proper Nouns

Examples:

Lang'ata Cemetery

Ann Pauline Nyaguthii

Kangaita Women's Group

Muhigia Teachers Sacco

L. Proper Adjectives

Examples:

We ate at an **I**talian restaurant.

She is a **G**erman.

M. The first word in greetings and the closing of a letter

Examples: