

a glossary of grammatical terms

revised 05.07.16 ('PHRASAL VERBS' EDITED; 'CLAUSAL VERBS' ADDED]

• RE REFERENCES TO 'COMPLEX SENTENCES': THERE IS A LINK ON THE 'MAIN PAGE'

ACTIVE VOICE

TRANSITIVE VERBS are in the ACTIVE VOICE or the PASSIVE VOICE; for example: "Jack broke the window." (ACTIVE); "The window was broken." (PASSIVE)

ADJECTIVE

ADJECTIVES are one of the seven word classes or 'parts of speech' in English. For more on word classes, see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*.

ADJUNCT

ADJUNCTS are one of the three types of adverbial. They are words or PHRASES, or CLAUSES that are used to add meaning to VERB PHRASES. For example, the phrase, 'on the shelf' is an adjunct in the sentence, "Mary put the jar on the shelf." For more on adjuncts and other adverbials, see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*.

ADVERB

An ADVERB is a word like 'quickly', or 'happily' or 'soon' that is used to MODIFY a VERB. Adverbs are one of the seven 'word classes' or 'parts of speech'. (For more on word classes see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*.)

ADVERBIAL

ADVERBIALS are one of the five SENTENCE PARTS. For more on 'adverbials' see Chapter 2 of *Complex Sentences*.

APOSTROPHE

An APOSTROPHE is a PUNCTUATION mark that looks like a single QUOTATION MARK. It is used to show that letters have been left out in a CONTRACTION, for example, "I'm" or "she's". Apostrophes are also used in POSSESSIVES, for example, "Betty's book is black."

ARTICLE

ARTICLES (and other 'determiners') are one of the seven WORD CLASSES of English. The articles are 'a', 'an' and 'the'. They are always used before nouns.

AUXILIARY VERB

An AUXILIARY VERB is VERB which appears in a VERB PHRASE, but is not the MAIN VERB. For example, in the verb phrase 'has been working' 'has' and 'been' are auxiliary verbs and 'working' is the main verb.

BASE FORM OF VERB

The base form of a verb is simply the verb itself, without any ‘ending’ and not preceded by ‘to.’ The only irregular form is ‘be.’ The base form is used, for example, following a MODAL AUXILIARY (“Tom should wait for Dick and Harry.”) and in the noun clause following a verb of perception (“Jack watched Jill fall down the hill.”)

CLAUSE

A CLAUSE is a grammatically well-formed group of words that centers on a VERB PHRASE. (By contrast, a PHRASE is a grammatically well-formed group of words that centers on a noun.)

(For more on clauses see Chapter 3 of *Complex Sentences*)

CLAUSAL VERB

A clausal verb is a type of multi-word verb. Clausal verbs such as ‘to change one’s mind’ or ‘to go shopping’ have a single meaning just like other types of multi-word verb — but unlike ‘ordinary’ multi-word verbs, clausal verbs contain, not just adverbial particles such as ‘in’ or ‘over’ but content words such as ‘shopping’ or ‘mind’ — or ‘television’ in ‘get on television.’ These content words are similar to OBJECTS, and therefore the verb itself is similar to a CLAUSE.

COLLOCATION

When two words tend to be used in association with one another, we speak of a COLLOCATION. For example, when we are talking about people’s ‘reputations’ we often speak of their reputations being ‘damaged.’ To an English speaker ‘damage’ seems, naturally, to be just the right verb to use in this situation. Knowledge of collocations is useful to anyone who is trying to learn to write natural, English.

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE is language that is standard and correct but is used only in speech or very informal writing. For example, the word ‘guys’ in “Those guys are still sitting there.”

COMMA

A COMMA is a PUNCTUATION MARK that looks like this. (,). Its most important use is to separate parts of a sentence such as CLAUSES and PHRASES from each other.

COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE

A COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE is a special sort of ADJECTIVE which is used when making a comparison. For example, ‘Jill is fatter than Jack.’ or “Jill is more attractive than Jack.” (One-SYLLABLE adjectives form their comparatives by adding ‘er’; two-syllable adjectives ending in ‘y’ form their comparatives by dropping the ‘y’ and adding ‘ier’ as in ‘happier’. Other adjectives form their comparatives by placing the word ‘more’ before the adjective.)

COMPLEMENTS

COMPLEMENTS are one of the five SENTENCE PARTS. There are two types of complement, subject complements and object complements. Like OBJECTS, subject complements follow VERB PHRASES, but unlike objects they refer to the same thing as the subject. In the sentence “Dick became a doctor,” the phrase, ‘a doctor’ is a subject complement. Some verbs take both OBJECTS and object complements. The verb ‘elect’ for example can be used in sentences like, “They elected Jill their leader.” In this sentence ‘Jill’ is the object and ‘their leader’ is the object complement.

COMPOUND SENTENCE

A COMPOUND SENTENCE is made up of two or more CLAUSES that are ‘independent’ of each other — in other words neither clause is inside another clause. The clauses in a compound sentence are joined to each other with COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS.

CONJUNCTS

CONJUNCTS are one of the three types of ADVERBIAL. (The other two types are ADJUNCTS and DISJUNCTS.) Conjuncts are often called ‘transition words.’ ‘However’, ‘otherwise’, ‘for example’, ‘then’, and ‘however’ are examples of conjuncts. These words and phrases are used to clarify or emphasize the connections between the meaning of two SENTENCES or CLAUSES. It is important to distinguish between conjuncts and CONJUNCTIONS. Unlike conjunctions, conjuncts cannot be used to make a *grammatical* connection between clauses. For more on adverbials see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*. For a more detailed explanation of conjuncts see ‘Explanation: Conjuncts’.

CONJUNCTION

CONJUNCTIONS are words like ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘when’, ‘because’. they are used to join clauses to each other as in “He finished the work [first clause] and he went to bed [second clause].”

CONNOTATION

The CONNOTATION of a word is the feeling, or emotion that goes with it. A word with a NEGATIVE CONNOTATION carries a bad feeling, a word with a POSITIVE CONNOTATION carries a good feeling. For example, although the three words, ‘skinny’, ‘thin’, and ‘slim’ all refer to the same thing, ‘skinny’ has a negative connotation, ‘slim’ has a positive connotation and ‘thin’ has no connotation.

CONTENT WORD

A CONTENT WORD is an ordinary word like ‘table’ or ‘chair’ which has a meaning even when it is not being used in a sentence or a phrase. The opposite of a content word is a FUNCTION WORD.

CONTRACTION

In speaking sounds are often omitted in common words, especially auxiliary verbs. Contractions are also used in INFORMAL WRITING — writing that is closer to speech than FORMAL WRITING. When they are written contractions are indicated by omitting one or more letters and substituting an APOSTROPHE.

COORDINATE CLAUSE

A COORDINATE CLAUSE is a CLAUSE that is joined, with a COORDINATING CONJUNCTION to one or more other clauses to form a COMPOUND SENTENCE. (The clauses in a compound sentence are ‘independent’ of each other: they are not inside another clause. By contrast, the clauses in a COMPLEX SENTENCE, are not independent; at least one of them will be inside another clause and ‘subordinate’ to it (or ‘dependent’ on it.)

COORDINATING CONJUNCTION

The most important COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS are ‘and,’ ‘but,’ and ‘or.’ These conjunctions are used to join ‘independent’ clauses in forming COMPOUND SENTENCES.

DIRECT OBJECT

A DIRECT OBJECT is simply an OBJECT, one of the five SENTENCE PARTS. Sometimes ‘objects’ are referred to as ‘direct objects’ in order to distinguish them from INDIRECT OBJECTS. (See the entry on INDIRECT OBJECTS.)

DISJUNCT

DISJUNCTS are one of the three types of ADVERBIAL. (The other two types are ADJUNCTS and CONJUNCTS.) Disjuncts are used to show the speaker’s or writer’s attitude toward what is being said in a sentence. The word ‘unfortunately,’ in the sentence “Unfortunately Mary forgot to put the jar on the shelf,” is an example of a disjunct.

DIRECT QUOTATION

In a DIRECT QUOTATION a person’s exact words are given and QUOTATION MARKS are used to show that this is so. In another type of QUOTATION, INDIRECT QUOTATION the speaker’s exact words are not given, but only the ‘content’ or meaning of what they said.

DITRANSITIVE VERB

A DITRANSITIVE VERB is a verb, such as ‘write,’ ‘give,’ or ‘tell,’ that can take an INDIRECT OBJECT as well as a DIRECT OBJECT.

EMPHASIS

Generally speaking when someone EMPHASIZES something, they say it in a particular way — loudly or in a special tone of voice — to make it clear that in their opinion what they are saying is important or that it has strong feeling behind it. In writing, a statement can be emphasized by italics or underlining or exclamation marks — and also by repetition or choosing strong words.

Emphasis can also be indicated grammatically in many ways: by the use of auxiliary verbs in positive statements, as in, “But you’re wrong, I *did* tell the truth” or by the use of words like ‘even’ or ‘at all’ which do not add meaning to a statement but simply strengthen it.

EXPRESSION

As the word is used in the ‘Grammar and Meaning Notes’ an EXPRESSION is a phrase in (a) which the words work together to produce a single meaning — as if they were one word and (b) in which one or more of the words is used METAPHORICALLY. (An example of an expression is the phrase ‘a price to pay’ is in the sentence “There’s a price to pay for getting drunk and having a good time.”) (There is a close connection between the idea of an IDIOM and the idea of an EXPRESSION and in fact, the phrase ‘idiomatic expression’ is often used.)

FORMAL/INFORMAL WRITING

Writing that is intended for a special, serious purpose — such as legal, academic or scientific — is generally written in a FORMAL style. This means, among other things, that SLANG and COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE are avoided. MULTI-WORD VERBS are also generally avoided.

FUNCTION WORD

A FUNCTION WORD is a short, common word needed to make grammatical PHRASES and SENTENCES. (For example, ‘him’, ‘and’, ‘the’). The opposite of a function word is a CONTENT WORD. (For example, ‘table’ and ‘chair’)

FUTURE IN THE PAST

The phrase, ‘future in the past’ refers to a situation where something that happened at a particular time in the past is described from ‘the point of view’ of an even earlier time. In other words, it is described from the point of view of a time when it *was* in the future. This can be done in two ways: by using the verb ‘go’ in the PAST PROGRESSIVE as in “When Jill got home last night, she was going to go to bed right away, but then the phone rang”; it can also be done by using the MODAL AUXILIARY ‘would’ as in “When Jill left, she kissed her mother goodbye. She would never see her again.” (The two forms cannot always be substituted for one another, however.)

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE

A GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE is an abstract pattern of FUNCTION WORDS and types of CONTENT WORD.

HOMONYM

If two or more words have exactly the same sound, they are HOMONYMS. ('Pear,' 'pair,' and 'pare' are good examples.) Sometimes, as with the noun, 'bear' and the verb, 'bear', homonyms have the same spelling as well as the same sound.

IDIOM

In IDIOMATIC language words are used in a special way — not according to their general meaning. They may be used in combination with other words in such a way that the meaning of a PHRASE cannot be understood simply on the basis of understanding the meaning of the individual words; PHRASAL VERBS are often idiomatic in this way. Or it may be that words have an idiomatic meaning when they are used in a special grammatical contexts, as for examine when 'suppose' is used idiomatically in the passive voice.

IMPLY

One statement IMPLIES another if it indicates that the other statement is true without actually saying so 'explicitly' — or 'in so many words.' For example, the statement "When Dick saw the snake he screamed," 'implies' that Dick was afraid of the snake although it does not say so explicitly.

INDIRECT OBJECT

OBJECTS are one of the five types of SENTENCE PART. INDIRECT OBJECTS are a type of object. Typically the 'object' of an ACTIVE SENTENCE or CLAUSE is the person or thing to which something is done — or, as it is sometimes put, the person or thing that 'receives' the action. Some verbs called DITRANSITIVE VERBS can take two objects; in cases like this we speak of DIRECT OBJECTS and INDIRECT OBJECTS. For example, in the sentence, "Jack sent Jill a letter," 'a letter' is the direct object and "Jill" is the indirect object. Typically, the word or phrase that is the indirect object refers to a person — the person who 'gets' the thing that is referred to by the direct object. There is an alternative 'prepositional form' for indirect objects. For example, instead of saying, "Jack sent Jill a letter," we can say, "Jack sent a letter to Jill."

INDIRECT QUOTATION

In INDIRECT QUOTATION the meaning or 'content' of what someone said is stated, but the speaker's exact words are not given. Usually a 'THAT'-CLAUSE is used — often with 'that' omitted. For example, "Dick said he would phone Jane at 8:00 p.m.," or "Dick said that he would phone Jane at 8:00 p.m."

-ING CLAUSE

A CLAUSE that has an -ING FORM as its VERB PHRASE. -ING clauses are types of NOUN CLAUSE.

-ING FORM

The -ING FORM is the form of a verb which ends in 'ing.' (For example, 'reading,' 'riding,' 'running.'

INTRANSITIVE VERB

An INTRANSITIVE VERB is a verb which cannot be used with an object, for example, 'work.' "Jack works" is a grammatical sentence, but "Jack works a job" is not. By contrast a TRANSITIVE VERB is one which *must* have an object and an INTRANSITIVE/TRANSITIVE VERB is one which sometimes has an object and sometimes does not. [See TRANSITIVE VERB and TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE VERB]

IRREGULAR VERB

An IRREGULAR VERB is one whose PAST FORM and PAST-PARTICIPLE FORM do not both end in 'ed'.

LITERAL MEANING

When a word is used LITERALLY, it is used to mean what it originally, primarily means. (See the entry for METAPHOR.)

MAIN VERB

The MAIN VERB is the final verb in a VERB PHRASE and the one that gives the phrase its meaning. If the verb phrase is 'simple', the main verb is the only verb. Verbs in the verb phrase other than the main verb are AUXILIARY VERBS.

METAPHOR

When a word is used METAPHORICALLY it is used, not with its 'primary', LITERAL meaning but with another meaning that is connected to its literal meaning. For example, in the sentence "The sun is bright," the word 'bright' is used literally, but it is used metaphorically in the sentence, "Bob is bright" to mean that Bob is intelligent.

MODAL AUXILIARIES

The MODAL AUXILIARIES (or 'modals') are 'can,' 'could,' 'will,' 'would,' 'shall,' 'should,' 'might,' 'may,' and 'must.'

The modals are a small set of auxiliary verbs which, like the AUXILIARY VERBS, 'be,' 'do,' and 'have' are used along with a MAIN VERB to create a grammatical VERB PHRASE. Unlike the ordinary auxiliaries, however, the modals are not purely grammatical or 'functional': they actually contribute to the meaning of the verb.

MODIFY

This word is used to describe the relationship between a NOUN and the ADJECTIVE that MODIFIES it or a VERB and the ADVERB that modifies it. (For example, in the phrase 'red car', the adjective 'red' modifies the noun 'car'.)

MULTI-WORD VERB

A multi-word verb is a verb that contains more than one word. There are at least three kinds of multi-word verb: PHRASAL VERBS, PREPOSITIONAL VERBS, AND CLAUSAL VERBS.

NARRATIVE

A NARRATIVE is a description of a series of past events. It is similar in its meaning to the word 'story' but more general: news reports, novels, history books are all 'narratives.'

NEGATIVE STATEMENT

A NEGATIVE STATEMENT is a statement in which the VERB PHRASE does not contain 'not'.

NOUN

An NOUN is a word like 'table', or 'chair', or 'cup' that is used to refer to a thing. Nouns are one of the seven 'word classes' or 'parts of speech'. (For more on word classes see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*.)

NOUN CLAUSE

A NOUN CLAUSE is a clause that is in the SUBJECT or OBJECT position in a sentence (or in another clause). For example, "What he said next was very surprising," "I believed what he said." (For more on noun clauses see Chapter Six of *Complex Sentences*.)

NOUN PHRASE

A NOUN PHRASE is a grammatically well-formed group of words in which a noun is the central word. 'A horse' is a noun phrase; so is 'a tired old horse ridden by a fat ugly man.'

OBJECT

OBJECTS are one of the five 'sentence parts'. In the sentence "Jack hit the ball," 'the ball' is the 'object.' There is an important distinction between DIRECT OBJECTS and INDIRECT OBJECTS. There is also an important distinction between ordinary 'objects' and PREPOSITIONAL OBJECTS. (For more on the sentence parts see Chapter One of *Complex Sentences*.)

PARENTHESES

PARENTHESES are pairs of marks like these: (). They are used to separate a sentence or phrase that is not directly connected to the rest of a text. (The ADJECTIVE form is 'parenthetical'.)

PASSIVE VOICE

TRANSITIVE VERBS are in the ACTIVE or the PASSIVE; for example: "Jack broke the window." (ACTIVE); "The window was broken." (PASSIVE).

The passive voice is formed by taking the object of an active SENTENCE or CLAUSE and making it into the subject of a passive sentence or clause. The MAIN VERB is then put into the PAST PARTICIPLE FORM and an appropriate form of the verb 'to be' is added as an auxiliary.

PAST PARTICIPLE

Words in the VERB word class, have several forms. The BASE FORM, for example, 'eat', the TO-FORM, 'to eat', the S-FORM, 'eats', the ING-FORM, 'eating', the PAST FORM, 'ate', and the PAST-PARTICIPLE form 'eaten'. In the case of REGULAR VERBS, and many IRREGULAR VERBS, the past-participle form and the past form are identical.

PAST PERFECT TENSE

The PAST PERFECT is formed by using the past tense of the verb 'to have' as an AUXILIARY and the PAST PARTICIPLE of the main verb. The main use of the past perfect is to indicate that the event being referred to happened *before* another event. For example, "When Jack arrived at the party, Jill had already left."

PAST PROGRESSIVE TENSE

The PAST PROGRESSIVE (also called the 'past continuous') is formed by using the past tense of the verb 'to be' as an AUXILIARY and 'ING-FORM' of the main verb. Its most common use is to indicate that one event or situation is 'inside' another event or situation, as in "Jill smoked a cigarette while she was waiting for Jack."

PERIOD

A PERIOD is the PUNCTUATION MARK ('.') Its most important use is to indicate the end of a sentence. Periods are also called 'full stops.'

PERSON (OF VERBS AND PRONOUNS)

We speak of verbs being in the 'first,' 'second,' or 'third' person, singular and plural. "I run" is the first person singular; "We run," "I" is the first person singular; "You run," is the second person singular and plural; "He runs," "She runs," and "It runs" are the third person singular and "They run," is the third person plural.

PHRASAL VERB

A phrasal verb is a multi-word verb in which an adverb has been added to a one-word verb in order to make a new verb with a special meaning. Often, phrasal verbs have an **IDIOMATIC** meaning; in other words, it is not possible to understand them just by understanding the meaning of the words they contain. (For example, it is not possible to know what the phrasal verb, 'count on' means just by understanding the meaning of the words 'count' and 'on.')

Some phrasal verbs are 'separable.' In other words, the object of the verb can be put between the main word and the adverb, as in "“She tore the bill up.” Other phrasal verbs such as 'look after' are 'inseparable.'

PHRASAL/PREPOSITIONAL VERB

A **PHRASAL/PREPOSITIONAL** verb is a verb that is **both** phrasal and prepositional. The verb 'run up to' is an example: it is phrasal because a new meaning is created by combining 'run' and 'up' and it is prepositional because its **OBJECT** must be preceded by the **PREPOSITION** 'to.'

PHRASE

a **PHRASE** is a grammatically well-formed group of words which is not a **SENTENCE** or a **CLAUSE**. (For example, 'on the table', 'the comfortable chair'.

POSITIVE STATEMENT

A **POSITIVE STATEMENT** is an 'ordinary' statement — one that is not a **NEGATIVE STATEMENT** or a question.

POSTPONED SUBJECT

The usual position for a subject is before the verb. In a **SENTENCE** or **CLAUSE** with a **POSTPONED SUBJECT**, the long **NOUN CLAUSE** that is the subject of the sentence has been placed in unusual position, **after** the verb and 'it' has been put in front of the verb as a replacement. For example, "That it took him so long to understand what she was doing is strange," is a grammatical sentence but it sounds clumsy. The sentence can be improved by moving the subject and replacing it with it: "It is strange that it took him so long to understand what she was doing."

POSSESSIVES

A **POSSESSIVE** is a noun to which an 's' has been added in order to show that something belongs to someone. For example, "Betty's book is black." In writing the 's' is separated from the noun by an **APOSTROPHE**.

PREFIX

A **PREFIX** is a 'word part' which is used at the beginning of various words to change their meaning in a systematic way. 'Un' (as in 'unnecessary') and 'sub' (as in 'subhuman') are examples of prefixes. A similar word part placed at the end of a word is called a **SUFFIX**.

PREPOSITION

A **PREPOSITION** is a word like ‘in’, ‘at’ or ‘about’ that is used at the beginning of a **NOUN PHRASE**. Prepositions are one of the seven ‘word classes’ or ‘parts of speech’. (For more on word classes see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*.)

PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT

A **PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT** is an **OBJECT** that follows a **PREPOSITIONAL VERB**. (See the entry, **PREPOSITIONAL VERB**)

PREPOSITIONAL VERB

A prepositional verb is a type of multi--word. When a prepositional verb is used **TRANSITIVELY** — in other words, when it is used with an **OBJECT** — a **PREPOSITION** must be put between the verb and the object. For example ‘listen’ is a prepositional verb because, although it can be used without a preposition in a sentence like “Jack listened carefully,” it must be followed by the preposition, ‘to’ in a sentence like, “Jill didn’t listen to Jack.” An object that follows a prepositional verb is called a **PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT**.

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

The **PRESENT PERFECT** tense is formed with the simple present of ‘have’ as an **AUXILIARY** followed by the **PAST PARTICIPLE** of the **MAIN VERB**. Its most important use is to refer to past events when the time the event happened is not mentioned. If the time is mentioned, then the present perfect cannot be used. It is not generally used in **NARRATIVES**, except perhaps at the beginning. (For example: “Jack has started [present perfect] a new job. He began [simple past] this morning.”)

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE

The **PRESENT PROGRESSIVE** tense is formed with the **SIMPLE PRESENT** of ‘be’ as an **AUXILIARY** followed by the **ING-FORM** of the **MAIN VERB**. Its most important use is to refer to events that are happening at the time of writing or speaking. For example, “Right now, Jill is talking to Jack.”

PRONOUN

PRONOUNS are one of the seven **WORD CLASSES** of English. They are used to replace nouns — in order to make language more efficient and clear. In the pair of sentences, ‘Jack smiled at Jill. Jill smiled back at Jack,’ pronouns have not been used. In the pair of sentences ‘Jack smiled at Jill. She smiled back at him,’ pronouns have been used. For more on pronouns and the other word classes see Chapter Two of *Complex Sentences*.

PUNCTUATION MARKS

PUNCTUATION MARKS such as **PERIODS** and **COMMAS** are used to separate **SENTENCES** from one another and to separate parts of sentences from one another. The main purpose of punctuation is to make writing easier to understand.

QUOTATION

A QUOTATION is a statement about what a person says. There are two ways of 'quoting' someone: DIRECT QUOTATION and INDIRECT QUOTATION.

QUOTATION MARKS

QUOTATION MARKS are pairs of PUNCTUATION MARKS that have the same shape as COMMAS. They can be single (' ') or double (" "). Quotation marks are used to show that words or sentences were *spoken* by someone as in 'Betty said, "My book is black."' They are also used when a writer wants to say something about a word as in "The word 'black' has five letters." They are also used to show that a word is being used in a special or incorrect way as in "The general brought 'democracy' to his country."

REGULAR VERB

A REGULAR VERB is a verb whose PAST FORM and PAST-PARTICIPLE FORM both end in 'ed'. A verb whose past and past-participle forms do not end in this way is an IRREGULAR VERB.

SENTENCE

A SENTENCE is a grammatically well-formed group of words with a SUBJECT and a VERB PHRASE. It has a capital letter at the beginning and a period at the end.

SENTENCE PARTS

The SENTENCE PARTS are the five 'parts' into which all English sentences and clauses can be analyzed. The five parts are: SUBJECTS, OBJECTS, COMPLEMENTS, VERB PHRASES, and ADVERBIAL.

SET PASSIVE

A SET PASSIVE is a verb that is usually used in the passive voice. Often, such verbs have a different meaning in the passive than they do in the active — and the passive meaning is often IDIOMATIC. Examples: 'be used to,' 'be supposed to,' 'be involved with.'

S-FORM OF VERB

The S-FORM OF A VERB is made by adding the sound [s] to the BASE FORM TO the base form (or in writing, adding 's' or 'es' or 'ies'). It has only one use: forming the third PERSON singular of the SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE.

SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

The SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE is formed with the S-FORM of the verb. The only irregular cases are 'is' for the verb 'to be,' 'has' for 'have,' and 'does' (irregular in spelling and pronunciation) for 'do.'

The most common use of this tense is to describe 'habitual activity,' for example, "Dick spends Friday evenings with Jane."

SIMPLE PAST

The SIMPLE PAST of REGULAR VERBS is formed by adding 'ed' to the base form. The most important use of the simple past is to refer to a past event when the time the event happened is indicated, for example, "Jill started a new job last week." When the time the event happened is not indicated, the PRESENT PERFECT is often used instead. The simple past is also generally used to refer to past events in a NARRATIVE whether or not there is an indication of the time the events happened.

SLANG

SLANG is specialized language used by a particular social group such as teenagers or criminals.

SUBJECT

A SUBJECT is one of the five basic 'sentence parts'. Subjects usually come at the beginning of a SENTENCE or CLAUSE, and they usually refer to the thing that the sentence or clause is 'about'. In the sentence, "The angry old woman shouted at Dick," the subject is the phrase, 'the angry old woman.'

The other sentence parts are VERB PHRASES, OBJECTS, COMPLEMENTS and ADVERBIALS. For more on the 'sentence parts' see Chapter One of *Complex Sentences*.

SUFFIX

A SUFFIX is a 'word part' which is used at the beginning of various words to change their meaning in a systematic way. 'Ize' (as in 'politicize') and 'ness' (as in 'drunkenness') are examples of suffixes. A similar word part placed at the beginning of a word is called a PREFIX.

SYLLABLE

A SYLLABLE is part of the sound — or the pronunciation — of a word. Each 'breath' or burst of air that is required to say a word counts as a syllable. (For example, 'dock' has one syllable, 'doctor', has two and 'doctorate' has three.)

SYNONYM

A SYNONYM is a word that has the same meaning as another word. 'Shout' and 'yell' for example, are synonyms. They both mean to speak very loudly.

(But this pair of synonyms illustrates the fact that *exact* synonyms are rare. 'Shout' and 'yell' don't have exactly the same meaning because 'yell' has a slightly NEGATIVE CONNOTATION: it's often used when we're criticizing someone or complaining about the noise they're making.)

‘THAT’-CLAUSE

A ‘THAT’-CLAUSE is a NOUN CLAUSE that begins with the CONJUNCTION, ‘that’. Often the word ‘that’ can be omitted. For example, “Jack told Jill that he had sold his car” and “Jack told Jill he had sold his car” are both grammatical.

‘TO’-CLAUSE

A CLAUSE that has a TO-FORM (or ‘infinitive’) as its VERB PHRASE. To-clauses are a type of NOUN CLAUSE.

‘TO’-FORM

A verb form that is made by placing ‘to’ in front of the base form of the verb.

TRANSITIVE VERB

A TRANSITIVE VERB is a verb that **must** have an OBJECT, for example ‘love.’ “Jack loves Jill” is a grammatical sentence, but “Jack loves” is not. An INTRANSITIVE verb, by contrast is one that cannot have an object, and a TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE one that can form grammatical clauses with or without an object. [See INTRANSITIVE VERB and TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE verb.]

TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE VERB

A TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE VERB is one which can form grammatical CLAUSES with or without an object. For example, “Jack smokes.” is a grammatical sentence and so is “Jack smokes cigars.” [See INTRANSITIVE VERB and INTRANSITIVE VERB.]

VERB PHRASE

A VERB PHRASE is one of the five basic ‘sentence parts’. It is the ‘verb of’ a sentence or clause. It may contain only one word as in “Dick smokes cigars” or as many as four as in “Dick must have been smoking that cigar.” All the words in a verb phrase belong to the WORD CLASS, of VERBS. The other sentence parts are SUBJECTS, OBJECTS, COMPLEMENTS and ADVERBIALS. For more on the sentence parts, see Chapter One of *Complex Sentences*.

VERB

A VERB is a word that belongs to the verb WORD CLASS. Verbs are always part of the VERB PHRASE of a sentence or clause — and all the words in a verb phrase are verbs.

WORD CLASS

All the words in English sentences belong to one or another of the seven WORD CLASSES — NOUNS, ARTICLES, PRONOUNS, ADJECTIVES, VERBS, ADVERBS and conjunctions. For more on word classes and their relation to SENTENCE PARTS, see Chapters One and Two of *Complex Sentences*.