

## **ENGLISH LESSON 2**

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## PARTS OF SPEECH

There are many thousands of words in the English Language but they can all be classified into one or another of the "Parts of Speech". Now, what are these "Parts of Speech"? They are quite simply "different classes of words", and there are only eight of them.

Each one will be dealt with as we proceed through the course but, before we go any further, we will list them briefly so that you are in no doubt about their meaning when reference is made to them.

The eight parts of speech are:

- a. **Nouns** which are words used for any thing or person that has a name, eg John, tree, book, Claremont, sorrow, man and hunger.
- b. **Pronouns** which are words used instead of a noun, eg I, me, you, he, she, them and they.
- c. **Adjectives** which are words used to describe a noun, eg. the beautiful baby, cold water, etc.
- d. **Verbs** which are words that "do" something, eg. run, play, ask and think.
- e. **Adverbs** which are words that describe or qualify a verb. They tell you when, where, why and how. For example, he runs *fast*, he plays *quietly* and he thinks *deeply*. They also tell us more about adjectives and other adverbs.
- f. **Prepositions** which are usually placed before words they govern, eg. an town, by the side the road.
- g. **Conjunctions** which are words that "join" things together, eg. and, but, if, although, because, etc.
- h. **Interjections** which are words "thrown in" to express some emotion, eg. Oh!

*(Some words can be used in more than one part of speech. Take for example the word "play". We have just seen that this is a verb because it "does" something. But it can also be a noun when it is used in a different sense, eg. "The play was a great success at the*

*theatre".)*

Before we go on to discuss the noun, let us establish a small point that has come up in your lectures so far - Have you understood the meanings of the abbreviations "ie." and "eg."? In case you have not, here they are: "ie." means "that is to say" and "eg." means "for example". Of course, if you had taken the trouble to look in your dictionary, you could have found out the meanings for yourself! Remember that your dictionary is a very helpful friend.

## **THE NOUN**

We have already learnt that a noun is a name. When we remember that thousands of things exist, and each one of those things has a name, we can understand that there are a great many nouns. Unlike Latin, which is a "dead" language, the English Language is constantly growing. New things are being discovered and are being made all the time and each one of them has to have a name by which it can be known. And these new names are added to the long list of nouns in the English Language. Many of the nouns we use today are of recent origin. The telephone, telegraph, radio, radar, aeroplane, submarine, dynamo and many others are examples of new words which did not exist until recent times.

On the other hand, the names of things which were in existence long before man appeared on earth, have been in use ever since man developed language and first realised the convenience of being able to refer to common objects by a name. Hence trees, birds, animals, light and dark, sun, moon and stars are the kind of nouns, or names, given, by man, in many different languages, to objects which he has always had about him.

However, although every noun is a name of something, *all* nouns are not of the same kind, so we divide them into different classes.

### **Common Nouns**

These are the names of *all* the objects around us which we can see or touch or hear, such as man, girl, tree, flower, star, river and mountain. They are the kind of names which are shared by many individual things or beings, and because these nouns are "shared" they are

said to be "common". The dictionary defines the word "common" as "belonging equally to more than one". Thus, the name "tree" does not only apply to one "tree" but to all trees.

When we write a common noun we write it with a small letter, unless, of course, it happens to be the first word of a sentence.

### **Proper Nouns**

Just as there are names which are shared by many individual or beings, there are other names which belong only to one individual. Your own name is an example. It is your name which you do not share with anyone else. If you are a boy, you share the name, boy, with every other boy in the world, but you do not share your Proper Name which marks you as an individual. Of course, if your name is John, that does not necessarily mean that you are the only John in the world. John may be the name of thousands of boys but each one of them is known individually by that name. So, because the name "John" marks a boy out as an individual, it is called a Proper Noun.

Similarly every river in the world shares the common noun, "river", but each river has its own Proper Name, such as Zambesi, or Limpopo, or Ganges, or Thames. When we write a Proper Noun we always start the name with a capital letter, whether the word comes at the beginning of a sentence or anywhere else.

This, then, is another use for capital letters: we have already seen in Lesson 1 that capitals are used to begin a quotation which is marked by inverted commas; they are also used at the beginning of any sentence unless the sentence follows a semi-colon, and now we must remember that they are used at the beginning of every proper noun.

### **Abstract Nouns**

There are "things" which require names besides those things which we can see, touch, smell, hear or taste. We only know about them in our minds. They are very real things but we cannot make contact with them through our senses. Some of them are such things as happiness, anger, patience, pleasure, sorrow and an almost endless list of others. These words are the names of feelings or qualities. Others abstract nouns be included, such as hardness, softness, brilliance, poverty, chef, re, cleverness, which are all things that cannot be touched or seer. or measured.

This kind of name or noun is called an **Abstract Noun**.

Abstract nouns, unless they open a sentence, start with small letters when they are written. This is because they are common nouns; happiness is the name applied to every state of happiness. It only differs from other common nouns such as horse, because it names an **abstract quality** instead of a **concrete** object.

### SELF-HELP EXERCISE 1

1. Draw three columns, heading the columns Proper Nouns, Common Nouns and Abstract Nouns respectively. Then, place all the words in the following list under their correct columns. Make sure that each word is written correctly.

cough	field	sky	cloud	office
sparrow	Sahara	nile	mountain	youth
laughter	depth	age	lion	dust
pleasure	revenge	nest	potato	wind
humility	kalahari	truth	speed	childhood
kindness	suez	ceylon		

2. In each of the following phrases, a common noun is described by a suitable adjective. From the description, see if you can : the abstract noun which applies to each phrase.

*Example:* A wise man has wisdom.

Now deal with the following phrases in the same manner.

- a. A deep river
- b. A broad street
- c. A young man
- d. A true saying
- e. An honest trader
- f. An angry bull
- g. A bitter substance

- h. A humble person
- i. A hot fire
- j. A high mountain
- k. A wide pavement
- l. A noble act
- m. A probable cause
- n. A certain failure
- o. A brave girl
- p. A faithful dog
- q. A poor family
- r. A proud owner
- s. A punctual person
- t. A grateful man
- u. A confident person
- v. A final settlement
- w. A responsible position

(As you can see from these examples, an adjective often describes a noun to show that the person or thing described possesses some quality, name of that quality is an abstract noun).

## THE SENTENCE AND ITS VERB

In studying a language you have to know more than just the meaning of a whole list of words: you must know how to put words together in such a way that you can convey your meaning to others. The sentence serves this purpose.

A sentence is made up of words which together form an understandable statement about some subject. To be understandable, (a better word for understandable is intelligible) a sentence must have a **Subject** and a **Predicate**.

The Subject names the person or thing about which the sentence is to state some fact and all the other words in the sentence are called the Predicate. The essential word in the Predicate is called the **Verb**. Without a Verb, there can be no sentence; that is, there can be no intelligible statement.

The subject of a sentence is always a noun or something which can take the place of a noun. It is the person or thing which the rest of the sentence is going to speak about. The Verb is the word which tells us about the subject. Now let us make this easier by looking at a simple example.

The rain falls.

The noun "rain" is the subject of the sentence and the verb "falls" tells us what the rain does. As you have already learnt in this lesson, Verbs are often called "doing words" because they usually tell us what the subject does.

Now let us make this sentence a bit longer, eg. "The rain falls in December". This sentence is perfectly intelligible. We know **what** the rain does and **when** it falls. But would this same sentence it's intelligible if we left the verb out and wrote: "The rain in December."? No, it would not, We should be tempted to say, "What about the **rain**. in December? What does *it* do?

You can see how necessary it is to have a verb to make the meaning of a sentence quite clear.

Here are a few more examples of complete sentences. Although they are only two-word sentences, they are intelligible because they have a subject and a verb.

Birds fly.	Subject: birds.	Verb: fly.
Lions hunt.	Subject: lions.	Verb: hunt.
Fire burns.	Subject: fire.	Verb: burns.
Grass grows.	Subject: grass.	Verb: grows.
Wasps sting.	Subject: wasps.	Verb: sting.
Ships sail.	Subject: ships.	Verb: sail.

Of course, you realise that we rarely use sentences as short as these. Most sentences contain, besides the subject and the verb, other words which expand the meaning of the sentences and give more information. Consider the following sentence:

New grass grows in the fields in the spring.

It contains the subject, **grass** and the verb, grows, but the other words tell us:

- a. more about the grass: we now know that it is *new* grass, and
- b. more about the verb: we now know where the grass grows, ie. "in the field", and when it grows, ie. "in the spring".

As you know, any word which describes a noun is called an **Adjective**. In the above sentence the word "new" is a part of the subject because it describes the subject, but all the other words in the sentence, "grows in the field in the spring", form the Predicate.

## SELF-HELP EXERCISE 2

1. Reading the following sentence carefully. Decide which word in each sentence is the subject and which word is the Verb. Then write the words you have chosen in the way shown in this example.

*Example:* Our neighbours left their house to go to their new home this morning.

Subject: : neighbours. Verb: left.

Now deal with the following sentences in the same way.

- a. Our trains run very punctually as a rule.
  - b. In the morning, the sun rises in the East.
  - c. Many people enjoy the warm days of summer.
  - d. After the storm, comes the calm.
  - e. Hour after hour, along the dusty roads, the motorists drove.
  - f. The slow train made frequent stops during the journey.
  - g. In this area, the rainfall exceeds thirty inches annually.
  - h. Louder and louder grew the sound of the rushing flood water.
  - i. The travellers, weary and footsore, at last came in sight of their destination.
  - j. The chairman of the committee presented the prizes.
2. Use each of the following words as the subject of a simple sentence. You will have noticed from the exercise above that the subject of a sentence does not always occur at the beginning of the sentence. Try to vary the position of the subject in the sentences you are now going to write.

Orchard ,correspondence, postage,  
expedition, clouds, eagle,  
fortune, success, persistence, problems.

## THE VERB AGREES WITH ITS SUBJECT

So far we have talked about **simple** sentences, ie. sentences which have only one "Finite" verb. Now, what is a finite verb?

A finite verb is a verb which is limited by person, number tense and mood. When we wish to name a verb we use its "Infinitive" form. The infinitive form expresses an idea **without** person or number. It is, therefore, the opposite of a "finite" verb. For example, the infinitive of the verb "walk" is "to walk" and, in that form, ie. without person or number, it cannot be used as the verb of a sentence. To be used in a sentence, the verb has to be changed or inflected, ie. put into its finite form. It has to agree with the subject of the sentence in a number of ways.

### Singular and Plural number

If the subject of a sentence is in the singular, that is, it is a noun standing for **one** person or thing, then the verb must agree with the subject and be written in its singular form too. Similarly, if the subject of a sentence is in the plural, that is, the noun stands for a **number** of persons or things, then the verb agrees by being put into its plural form.

Let us suppose that the subject of the sentence is the word "man". Man is singular because it is the name of a single person, so the verb in the sentence must be put into the singular also. If the verb "To walk" is used the sentence would be:

The man walks. (Both noun and verb are singular).

If the subject of the sentence is the word "men", then the subject is in the plural because "men" is the name of a number of persons. Again, if the verb "To walk" is used the form' of the verb must also be in the plural to agree with the number of the subject. The sentence would therefore be:

The men walk. (Both noun and verb are plural).

We cannot say, "They was" because the subject is plural and the verb is singular. Also, we cannot say, "One person are here", because the subject, "person" is singular and the verb, "are" is plural.

### Person

Not only must the subject and the verb of a sentence agree in **Number**, they must also agree in **Person**. There are three "persons" used in grammar: the First Person (singular and plural); the Second Person (singular and plural) and the Third Person (singular and plural). Before we enlarge on this, study the following chart and you will realise that this idea of "person" is not as difficult as it may at first seem to be.

SINGULAR (one)		PLURAL (many)		
1st person	I	1st	Person	we
2nd person	you	2nd	Person	you
3rd person	he, she, it	3rd	Person	they

If the subject of a sentence *is* in the First Person, the sentence might begin like this: I, William Brown, . . . . . etc. As William Brown continued to speak, he would not repeat his name but would use the pronoun, "I", which a speaker uses when he is talking about himself. If the subject of a sentence had the verb "To walk" in its Predicate, the sentence might run like this:

"I am walking." Here the subject, "I" is in the First Person and it is singular; the verb, "am" must be used as part of the verb, "walk", because it also is in the First Person, Singular.

If the subject is in the First Person, but stands for a number of persons instead of one, the subject will then be in the First Person, Plural, and the pronoun that will then be used will be "We". In that case, the sentence will run like this:

"We are walking." Notice that the verb has be inflected (or changed; to "are walking" to be both First Person and Plural to agree **with** the subject which is both First Person and Plural.

Now let us look at the second person. This is used when the subject of sentence represents someone who is being addressed. When we speak to someone, we do not always use his

name; we refer to him as "You".

Nowadays, we say "You" when we speak either to a person or to several people. For example, you might say to a friend, "You have a smart looking bicycle". In that sentence "You" is the subject of the sentence and because it is in the second person and represents one person, it is singular. Using the verb "To walk", in a sentence we might say: "You walk", making the verb agree in both number and person with the subject, "You", which is the Second Person Singular. But, because "You" is also used to represent several persons being addressed, it is also used in the second person plural and the verb used with it must be in the second person plural. However, because the subject is the same for either singular or plural, the verb remains the same too. Thus, if you address one person you might say: "You walk very quickly". And if you address several people you would use exactly the same words because the singular and plural forms in the Second Person are the same.

You may be wondering why this is so? The answer is that the English Language is growing and changing all the time. Many years ago the Second Person singular and the Second Person plural were different. It was then correct to address one person as "thou" and not "you". The verb form agreed with "thou" and was different from the verb form for the Second Person plural. In those days they would have said: "Thou wast" for our present-day "you were"!

Now, what happens to the verb in sentences which have the Third Person as the subject? The verb quite simply follows the same rule as it does for the First and Second Person, ie. it agrees in number and person with the subject.

Thus:	The man (or he) walks	Singular Number
	The woman (or she) walks	Singular Number
	The animal (or it) walks	Singular Number
	or	
	The girl and boy walk	Plural Number
	They walk	Plural Number

### **Summary**

Before you try the next exercise here is a summary of what you have just learnt.

- a. The **Infinitive** form of a verb is the general name used to refer to the verb. In its infinitive form it cannot be used as a verb in a sentence.

*Examples:* To walk; To read; To see; To think.

- b. The **Finite** forms of verbs are those which have been changed to take their correct form for the particular function they have in a sentence.
- c. The verb in a sentence must agree with the subject of the sentence in **Number** and **Person**, that is, it must have the same Number and Person as the subject of the sentence.
- d. The Number of a noun is either **Singular** or **Plural**. The Singular noun represents ONE of the kind named: the Plural noun represents MORE THAN ONE of the kind named.
- e. The Person of a noun may be **First Person**, **Second Person** or **Third Person**.
- i. When the subject of the sentence is the speaker, he speaks in the First Person, (I or We).
  - ii. When the subject of the sentence is the one spoken to, the subject is in the Second Person, (You)
  - iii. When the subject of the sentence is spoken about, the subject is in the Third Person, (he, she, it or they)
- f. Nouns and pronouns which indicate a male, are said to be **Masculine**; if they indicate a female, they are **Feminine** and if they indicate things, they are **Neuter**.

Now see if you can do the following exercise.

### SELF-HELP EXERCISE 3

1. In the following columns of nouns, each noun is shown as either in the singular number or the

plural number. Fill in the noun in its other number in the space provided



	<b><u>Singular</u></b>	<b><u>Plural</u></b>
a.	city	_____
b.	_____	roses
c.	church	_____
d.	base	_____
e.	omnibus	_____
f.	_____	houses
g.	_____	passers-by
h.	calf	_____
i.	peacock	_____
j.	_____	knives
k.	knave	_____
l.	cliff	_____
m.	scarf	_____
n.	axis	_____
o.	_____	plateaus

In one of the columns below is a number of nouns that refer to male persons or animals. In the other column is a number of nouns that refer to female persons or animals. In the blank spaces, write the word which has a similar meaning to the word next to it, but make it refer to a person or animal of the opposite sex.

The first two have been done for you as examples.

	<b><u>Masculine</u></b>	<b><u>Feminine</u></b>
	father	mother
	horse	mare
a.	_____	actress
b.	_____	grandmother
c.	nephew	_____
d.	_____	aunt
e.	bridegroom	_____

- f. \_\_\_\_\_ sister  
g. son \_\_\_\_\_  
h. \_\_\_\_\_ mistress  
i. duke \_\_\_\_\_  
j. \_\_\_\_\_ Tigress

3. Correct any errors you can find in the following sentences, by writing out the sentences in their corrected form.

- a. One of the children are sick.  
b. My brother and I am going for a holiday.  
c. The man or his wife are at home.  
d. There is six or seven people waiting to see the doctor.  
e. The animals does not wander far.  
f. The older boys in the family makes the younger one do the work.  
g. The boys in this class has no money.  
h. The playing of musical instruments give him much pleasure.  
i. All at once, up the street comes the men.  
j. The cattle has all gone out to graze.

4. Underline the word which is the subject of each of the following sentences and, in each case, say what the number and person of the subject is.

- a. You, John, bring out your book for marking.  
b. The sheep are all in the kraal.  
c. My friends and I are very grateful for your help.  
d. I know the way through the forest.  
e. The fox fled for his life.  
f. Go to sleep!

## VOCABULARY AND SPELLING

In the first lesson we learnt that knowing a large variety of words helps us to write well. We also

learnt that it is essential to be able to spell correctly. Have you been using your dictionary to look up any words that you have not understood in the lessons so far? If you have not taken the trouble to do so, you cannot expect to become good at English. Remember that poor writing and bad spelling will, count against you in your career.

If you have taken the trouble to use your dictionary, but you find that you do not always remember what you have learnt, try and help yourself in this way: when you come across a word which you do not understand, or which you always spell incorrectly, write it down in a special book which you can call your "Vocabulary Book". Then once a week read through all the words you have written down. If you do this you will soon find that the words which trouble you will become more and more familiar to you.

There are many words in the English Language which do not obey any rules and each one of these must be patiently learnt. Your own Vocabulary Book will make this task a lot easier. However, there are words which do follow the rules of spelling.

Here is a useful rule:

The word "full" is written with one "l" when it is combined with another word,

eg. full of wonder becomes wonderful  
full of pain becomes painful  
full of power becomes powerful  
a spoon which is full becomes a spoonful

Now learn these words:

wonderful	painful	powerful
skilful	spoonful	handful
cheerful	handful	fulfil

## SELF-HELP EXERCISE 4

Using some of the words which you have just learnt, fill in the following sentences with an

appropriate (suitable) word.

- His mother gave him a \_\_\_\_\_ of sugar.
- Try to look a little more \_\_\_\_\_
- I was very pleased to hear the \_\_\_\_\_ news.
- His broken leg was very \_\_\_\_\_.
- The crocodile has a \_\_\_\_\_ tail and large jaws.



## ANSWERS TO SELF-HELP EXERCISES

1.     **Proper Nouns**                      **Common Nouns**                      **Abstract Nouns**

Jahannesburg  
Sahara  
Nile  
Kalahari  
Suez  
Ceylon

cough  
field  
sky  
cloud  
office  
mile  
sparrow  
mountain  
valley  
laughter  
lion  
nest  
potato  
dust  
mosquito  
wind

sweetness  
pleasure  
revenge  
humility  
truth  
prudence  
kindness  
childhood  
youth  
depth  
speed  
age

2. The abstract nouns which apply to the following phrases are enclosed in brackets.

- a. A deep river (depth)
- b. A broad street (breadth)
- c. A young man (youth)
- d. A true saying (truth)
- e. An honest trader (honesty)
- f. An angry bull (anger)
- g. A bitter substance (bitterness)
- h. A humble person (humility)
- i. A hot fire (heat).
- j. A high mountain (height)
- k. A wide pavement (width)
- l. A noble act (nobility)

- m. A probable cause (probability)
- n. A certain failure (certainty)
- o. A brave girl (bravery)
- p. A faithful dog (faithfulness)
- q. A poor family (poverty)
- r. A proud owner (pride)
- s. A punctual person (punctuality)
- t. A grateful man (gratitude)
- u. A confident person (confidence)
- v. A final settlement (finality)
- w. A responsible position (responsibility)

## **Exercise 2**

The subjects and verbs of the sentences are:

a. <i>Subject:</i>	trains	<i>Verb :</i>	run
b. "	sun	"	rises
c. "	people	"	enjoy
d. "	calm	"	comes
e. "	motorists	"	drove
f. "	train	"	made
g. "	rainfall	"	exceeds
h. "	sound	"	grew
i. "	travellers	"	came
j. "	chairman	"	presented

2. Compare your sentences to the following and see if you have used the subject words in a similar way.
- a. The orchard contains a great variety of fruit trees.
  - b. The office correspondence occupies most of the secretary's time.
  - c. The postage becomes more and more costly each year.
  - d. The expedition set out on its task of exploration.
  - e. Late in the afternoon, the clouds gathered.
  - f. High into the air soared the great eagle with its prey.

### **Exercise 3**

1. The Plurals and Singulars required are those underlined:

	<b><u>Singular</u></b>	<b><u>Plural</u></b>
a.	city	<u>cities</u>
b.	<u>rose</u>	roses
c.	church	<u>churches</u>
d.	base	<u>bases</u>
e.	omnibus	<u>omnibuses</u>
f.	<u>house</u>	houses
g.	<u>passer-by</u>	passers-by
h.	calf	<u>calves</u>
i.	peacock	<u>peacocks</u>
j.	hook	<u>hooks</u>
k.	<u>knife</u>	knives
l.	knave	<u>knaves</u>
m.	cliff	<u>cliffs</u>
n.	scarf	<u>scarves</u>
o.	axis	<u>axes</u>
p.	<u>plateau</u>	plateaux

2. The masculine and feminine nouns required are those underlined.

a.	<u>actor</u>	- actress	f.	<u>brother</u>	-sister
b.	<u>grandfather</u>	- grandmother	g.	son	- <u>daughter</u>
c.	nephew	- <u>niece</u>	h.	<u>master</u>	-mistress
d.	<u>uncle</u>	- aunt	i.	duke	- <u>duchess</u>
e.	bridegroom	- <u>bride</u>	j.	<u>tiger</u>	-tigrress

3. The corrected sentences should be:

- a. One of the children is sick. (Subject, one is *Singular*).
- b. My brother and I are going for a holiday. (Subject, my brother and I = two people therefore subject is *Plural*).
- c. The man or his wife is at home. (Subject is either man or wife. Both are singular, so verb must be *singular*).
- d. There are six or seven people waiting to see the doctor. (Six or seven people are plural, so verb must be *plural*).
- e. The animals did not wander far. (Subject, animals is plural, so verb do must be *plural*).
- f. The older boys in the family make the younger one do the work. (Subject, boys is plural, so verb 'make' must be *plural*).
- g. The boys in this class have no money. (Subject, boys is plural, so the verb, make must be *plural*).
- h. The playing of musical instruments gives him much pleasure. (Subject, playing is singular so the verb, gives must be *singular*).
- i. All at once, up the street come the men. (Subject, men is plural, so verb, 'come' must be *plural*).
- j. The cattle have all gone out to graze. (Subject, cattle is plural, so the verb, have must be *plural*).

4. The subjects in the following sentences are underlined:

- a. You, John, bring out your book for marking. (Second person singular)
- b. The sheep are all in the kraal. (Third person plural)
- c. My friends and I are very grateful for your help. (First person plural)
- d. I know the way through the forest. (First person singular)
- e. The fox fled for his life. (Third person singular)
- f. You go to sleep! (Second person singular or plural)

(The subject "you" in this example is not shown, but is understood).

### **Exercise 4**

1. His mother gave him a spoonful of sugar.
2. Try to look a little more cheerful.
3. I was very pleased to hear the wonderful news.
4. His broken leg was very painful.
5. The crocodile has a powerful tail and large jaws.

