Grammar Warm-Ups: Parts of Speech

Review the Parts of Speech

- **A noun** is a person, place, thing, or idea (ex: Joe, kitchen, pencil, truth)
- **A verb** shows action or the state of being (ex: walking, talking, dancing/is, are, were, was)
- **A pronoun** takes the place of a noun (ex: he, she, it, they, them, you, us, one)
- **An adjective** describes a noun or a pronoun (ex: cute, pretty, fine, beautiful, cheap, loud, etc.)
- **An adverb** is used to describe verbs, adjectives, and adverbs by telling us how, when, where, and to what extent (ex: quickly, today, outside, always)
- **A conjunction** connects ideas together (ex: and, or, but, nor)
- **An interjection** expresses emotions with an exclamation point (ex: Wow! Cool! Hey!)
- **A preposition** connects nouns to the rest of the sentence (ex: before, after, on, above)

Grammar Diagnostic Tool: What Do You Know?

Directions: Using the choices in the box below, identify the part of speech for each underlined word or phrase. Write your answer in the space at the bottom of the page. Some choices may be used more than once, others not at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>linking verb</th>
<th>possessive pronoun</th>
<th>adverb</th>
<th>common noun</th>
<th>action verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>interjection</td>
<td>proper noun</td>
<td>preposition</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>collective noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositional phrase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An extremely (1) unusual blooper happened at the 100th anniversary celebration of (2) The Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1991. Before the concert, a dinner celebration was held (3) for special donors who had paid $500 or more per person. As a token of (4) its appreciation, the CSO gave the sponsors a gift – a lovely desk clock with an alarm. Little did the staff know that the alarm clocks had not been switched off and were (5) randomly set to go off at different times.

After intermission, the constant beeping (6) began. When the disturbances reached a peak, the conductor scornfully addressed his audience, but (7) neither he nor the audience knew that the noise came from the (8) nicely wrapped gifts instead of personal beepers. A staff (9) member finally figured out the problem, and the audience was asked to take the gifts to the lobby. “(10) Wow, this is one memorable evening,” remarked one of the sponsors.
Nouns #1: Capitalization of Proper Nouns
Directions: Circle the words requiring capital letters.

1. I talked to Susie and Alice about our trip to the beach.
2. Robert made plans with Jacqueline for Saturday night.
3. Dr. Mendoza’s birthday is on October 25.
4. This year my family is going to Vermont for Christmas.
5. I have a problem with my brother; I need to talk it over with Mr. Sanchez.
6. Maria’s mother is Brazilian, but Maria never learned Portuguese.
7. Are you going to the fireworks display for the Fourth of July?
8. We’re learning about Christianity, Judaism, and Islam in my religion class at school.
9. Corey has never been to the Rocky Mountains; he’s never even been outside his state.
10. At Southgate Mall there is a sale on Italian leather goods.

Nouns #2: Common/Proper, Singular/Plural, and Concrete/Abstract Nouns
Directions: Write the nouns in each sentence in the chart below. Then, identify each noun as common or proper, concrete or abstract, and singular or plural. The first sentence has been done for you.

**Concrete nouns** can be touched, tasted, smelled, seen, or heard.

**Abstract nouns** name an idea, quality or state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Common/Proper</th>
<th>Singular/Plural</th>
<th>Concrete/Abstract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rock and Roll Hall of Fame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visitors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pronouns #1: Pronoun-Antecedents Agreement
Directions: Choose the word in the parentheses which best completes the sentence.
1. Mount Everest divides Tibet from Nepal, with Nepal situated on (their, its) south side.
2. Mount Everest was formed about 60 million years ago, but until May 29, 1953, no one had ever climbed to (his, its) highest point.
3. Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first men to do so when (they, he) reached the summit on that date.
4. Hillary, a beekeeper from Auckland, New Zealand, and Tenzing, the son of a farming family from Nepal, first met when (he, they) joined an expedition to climb Everest.
5. When the men began the expedition, (it, they) dreamed of being the first to reach the summit.
6. Other members turned back, but neither Hillary nor Tenzing wanted to give up (his, their) dream.
7. Either Hillary or Norgay put (his, their) foot on the summit first, but neither would say who did so.
8. Hillary and other climbers have written books about (his, their) experiences conquering the world’s highest mountain.
9. Jon Krakauer describes the natural beauty of Mount Everest in (its, his) book Into Thin Air.
10. The mountain was named for Sir George Everest in 1865, but (its, his) name in Nepal is Sagarmatha, which means “ocean mother”; in Tibet it is called Chomolungma, or “mother goddess of the universe.”

Pronouns #2: Indefinite Pronouns as Antecedents
Directions: Choose the word in the parentheses which best completes the sentence.
1. Everyone who values freedom should pay (their, his or her) respects to Harriet Tubman, a onetime slave who became an American hero.
2. In the years before the Civil War, many who escaped slavery owed (his or her, their) freedom to Tubman.
3. Each of the people who traveled on the Underground Railroad was willing to risk (their, his or her) life for the sake of freedom.
4. Several of the people who were abolitionists risked (his or her, their) lives to help slaves reach the north and freedom.
5. After Tubman made her own escape, she joined forces with some of the abolitionists, working with (them, him or her) to liberate others.
6. Each of the 18 trips she made along the Underground Railroad had (its, their) dangers.
7. Most of the journey was fraught with peril up until (their, its) end.
8. Of the more than 300 slaves Tubman guided along the Underground Railroad, no one lost (his or her, their) life or was recaptured.
9. Both of Tubman’s parents, whom Tubman helped escape in 1857, owed (his or her, their) freedom to their daughter.
10. Abolition and women’s rights were critical issues to Tubman, and both took (its, their) share of her time and energy.

Pronouns #3: Common Pronoun Problems
Directions: Choose the word in the parentheses which best completes the sentence.
1. (Us, We) students were interested in finding out the origins of the English names for the days of the week.
2. A trip to the library helped (us, we) researchers find out that four of the seven days are named for characters in Norse Mythology.
3. That Wednesday was named for Odin, ruler of the Norse gods, was a surprise to (we, us) students
4. Tuesday is named for Tyr, a son of Odin, though a less well-known character than (him, he).
5. Thursday was named for Thor, the god of thunder, so two days were named after Odin’s sons, (he, him) and Tyr.
6. Friday was named for Frigg, the wife of Odin; when their son Balder died, no one was sadder than (her, she).
7. It was (she, her), Frigg, who was the goddess of marriage.
8. If you read about gods in Greek Mythology, you may conclude that Norse gods were not as powerful as (they, them).
9. In fact, Balder, (him, he) who was most beloved of all the gods, was killed in one story.
10. Although no one believes in the Norse gods anymore, (we, us) students still like to read stories about them.
Pronouns #4: Nominative and Objective Cases
Directions: Choose the correct form from the pronouns in the parenthesis.
1. Though most people watch television, (they, them) may not know how a television show is put together.
2. When my friend and (I, me) went to see a show being taped, we learned a lot about how a TV show works.
3. Before the show, we saw workers scurrying around and learned that it is (them, they) who put the scenery, props, and lights in place.
4. We talked to one worker who told us that (she, her) and the other technicians were responsible for controlling the lights.
5. (She, Her) explained that just one televised scene may require as many as 20 different lighting instruments.
6. (Us, We) and the others in the audience watched as microphones and cameras were put in place.
7. We saw a man rushing off to the side of the filming area and learned that (he, him) and the others worked behind the scenes, in the control room.
8. The director seemed to be everywhere at once; the one responsible for coordinating everyone and everything on the show is (she, her).
9. Before the taping began, makeup was applied to each performer so that (he or she, him or her) would look natural on camera.
10. After the show is taped, the tape is reviewed by the director, corrected by editors, and stored until the time you and (me, I) will see it on our screens.

Pronouns #5: Using Who and Whom
Directions: Choose the word in the parentheses which best completes the sentence.
1. (Who, Whom) doesn't know at least something about circuses?
2. Few people know much about the remarkable man for (who, whom) the most famous circus is named.
3. P.T. Barnum's life would interest (whoever, whomever) has seen a circus.
4. Barnum, (who, whom) was from Connecticut, moved to New York City when he was in his early 20s.
5. In 1841, his American Museum began drawing many people, (who, whom) came to see such attractions as Jumbo the giant elephant and a mermaid – fake, of course.
6. The museum was successful, but it could be seen only by (whoever, whomever) could travel to New York.
7. (Whom, Who) had Barnum failed to reach?
8. He was sure that if his show could travel, it would attract those (who, whom) were unable to get to New York.
9. In 1871, Barnum took off on a railroad tour, bringing his show within reach of (whoever, whomever) lived in towns along the route.
10. Now the circus comes to many towns, thanks to Barnum, without (who, whom) the show might never have gone on the road.

Verbs #1: Verb Tense
Directions: Circle the correct form of the verb in the parentheses.
1. Night has (fallen, fell) in Florida.
2. The amateur astronomers (prepared, preparing) their gear carefully before coming outside.
3. Everyone (bringed, brought) binoculars, a telescope, and insect repellant.
4. They (wear, worn) the stinky salve to ward off mosquitoes.
5. In the past, they had been (ate, eaten) alive by the bloodthirsty attackers.
6. They are discussing their sightings when suddenly a shot (rings, rang) out.
7. One observer has (seen, saw) Jupiter and its moons.
8. At 11:00pm, he will (swing, swings) his telescope around to Jupiter again.
9. He (spotting, spots) something strange.
10. Later, he will (found, find) out that two of Jupiter’s moons had (make, made) a rare double shadow on the planet.
**Verbs #2: Verb Tense**
Directions: Circle the correct tense of the verb provided in the parentheses.
1. One day John McPhee was flying a helicopter over Alaska, and he (is seeing, saw) an old plane wreck down below.
2. He (was traveling, travels) with officials who were looking for a site for a new state capital.
3. He learned that the plane was a World War II bomber; it (had crashed, will have crashed) during a training flight.
4. The crew of five (will be conducting, was conducting) some tests when some of the plane’s controls broke.
5. Three of the crew members (were, have been) able to parachute out after the plane went into a spin.
6. A search team later found the burned remains of the other two crew members in the crashed plane; they (had failed, were failing) to get out in time.
7. Leon Crane piloted the plane; he (had been, was) the only one of the five who survived.
8. After Crane (had waited, waits) eight days for a rescue team, he set off to search for help.
9. Just as Crane (begins, was beginning) to lose his strength, he reached a cabin that was stocked with food.
10. Crane’s story is just one part of McPhee’s book; *Coming into the Country* (contains, contained) several other accounts of Alaska.

**Verbs #3: Active and Passive Voice**
Directions: Rewrite each sentence to change the verb from passive to the active voice. Change other words as necessary.
1. In 1986, the first section of the space station *Mir* was launched by Russia.

2. Years later, another space station was created by Gene Roddenberry for *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.

3. Undoubtedly, Roddenberry’s station would be preferred by anyone who has ever dreamed of living in space.

4. In 1997 alone, many disasters were suffered by *Mir*’s crew members.

5. A science lab was severely damaged by fire.


7. A hole was punctured in the hull by the strong impact.

8. Also, a solar panel was destroyed by the crash.

9. The space station was also plagued by computer failures.

10. At one point, departure in the escape capsule has been considered by the frightened crew.
Verbs #4: Active and Passive Voice
Directions: Rewrite each sentence, changing the verb from the passive voice to the active voice. Change other words as necessary.

1. The International Space Station (ISS) is considered by scientists to be the starting point for future space travel.

2. Space colonies on our moon and on Mars will someday be established by astronauts.

3. In the meantime, the ISS is being built by people from 16 countries.

4. Work on tools and facilities has been done by engineers and designers.

5. Seventy-five space walks to put the station together have been scheduled by NASA.

6. For these walks, special space suits are being made by scientists.

7. An astronaut will be protected from extreme temperatures by the space suit.

8. Because the space gloves are bulky, special tools have been developed by technicians for use by the astronauts.

9. Eventually, the ISS will be lived in by six astronauts.

10. Everything will be recycled by them in order to cut down on the supplies they will need from our planet.

Verbs #5: Verb Choice
Directions: Circle the correct verb from the pair shown in parentheses.

1. Three boats filled with whale watchers (sit, set) waiting in the still waters of Mexico’s San Ignacio Lagoon.

2. A mother gray whale has been (teaching, learning) her newborn calf important whale lessons.

3. The people don’t notice that another whale is (laying, lying) in the water behind them.

4. The whale submerges and then (raises, rises) directly in front of them.

5. One woman had (raised, risen) her camera just before the whale’s head appeared in the viewfinder.

6. Startled, she (lays, lies) the camera in her lap and strokes the whale affectionately.

7. Sometimes a calf will (rise, raise) from the water on the mother’s back.

8. As the gray whales migrate from the Bering Sea to Mexico, whale watchers (set, sit) their sights westward.

9. In San Ignacio Lagoon and elsewhere, whales will sometimes (lie, lay) quietly while humans touch them.

10. No one knows why; maybe someday a scientist will be able to (learn, teach) us.
Verbs #6: Subject-Verb Agreement
Directions: Circle the incorrect verb in each of the following sentences and write the verb that should be used instead. If a sentence contains no error, write correct.
1. Since the late 1980s, forensic scientists has used a remarkable technique to help solve crimes.
   Correct: has
2. The technique is called DNA fingerprinting.
3. DNA “fingerprints” is not the same as the prints made by a person’s fingertips.
4. Technicians use cells from a drop of blood, a strand of hair, or another part of the body to develop a DNA fingerprint.
5. The initials DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid.
6. The chemical is found in the nucleus of every human cell, and it is the key to each individual's genetic code.
7. Like the fingerprinting long used by police in crime detection, DNA testing have been used to establish a link between a suspect and a crime scene.
8. Some people has been cleared of crimes thanks to DNA fingerprinting.
9. Scientists even uses DNA analysis to help with historical research.
10. For example, one scientist were able to determine that a woman who had for many years claimed to be Anastasia the daughter of the last tsar and tsarina of Russia, was not in fact related to the royal family.

Verb #7: Indefinite-Pronoun
Directions: Circle the incorrect verb in each of the following sentences and write the verb that should be used instead. If a sentence contains no error, write correct.
1. Most of Agatha Christie’s murder mysteries feature a detective who investigates and solves a crime.
2. In this story, someone invite ten people to a rocky, isolated island.
3. Nobody in the group, it turns out, know why this mysterious person has brought the ten strangers together.
4. All seems to have terrible secrets in their past, however.
5. After dinner the first night, each are accused of murder by a voice on a phonograph record.
6. Shortly afterward, several of the characters watch as one guest dies of poisoning.
7. Another are found dead the next day.
8. Everyone are terrified when one more murder takes place; eventually, only two people are left on the island.
9. Both now know who the murderer is.
10. Few guesses the surprising twist before it is revealed at the end of the story.
11. Many of Agatha Christie’s stories features the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.
12. Almost everyone agree that he and Sherlock Holmes have much in common.
13. Both has a keen knowledge of human nature.
14. Neither of the detectives tolerate deceit or criminal behavior.
15. Each owe his success to a talent for noticing small details.
Verb #8: Compound Subjects
Directions: Circle the verb form that agrees with the subject of each sentence.
1. Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys (has, have) been around for years.
2. Frank and Joe Hardy first (appear, appears) in the 1920’s.
3. Neither the two boys nor Nancy (has, have) aged much.
4. Students and even adult fans (continue, continues) to demand more stories.
5. The brothers or Nancy always (show, shows) courage and quick thinking.
6. Unlike the fans, however, critics and parents often (find, finds) fault with the popular detectives.
7. According to the critics, these books and their characters (show, shows) a lack of reality.
8. The average girl or boy (live, lives) in a far different world from the one in the detective books.
9. Neither Nancy nor the brothers (experience, experiences) problems at home or at school.
10. Nevertheless, the detectives’ sharp wits and intelligence (inspire, inspires) their readers.

Verb #9: Other Problem Subjects
Directions: Circle the verb form that agrees with the subject of each sentence.
1. “Art and Authenticity” (is, are) an article you might enjoy if you are interested in the subject of art forgery.
2. The Art of the Faker also (provides, provide) a wealth of information on this topic.
3. News of forgeries occasionally (makes, make) headlines.
4. The majority of art forgers (fakes, fake) works of art.
5. These days, 10 million dollars (is, are) not an unheard-of price for a painting by a famous artist.
6. Of course, the majority of art forgeries (duplicates, duplicate) the most valuable works.
7. To fight forgery and theft, the staff of a modern museum (spends, spend) a great deal of time, energy, and money on security.
8. Sometimes, two-thirds of a budget (goes, go) toward such security-related expenditures as insurance and the salaries of security personnel.
9. “Famous Forgeries and Fabulous Fakes” (is, are) the title of a lecture series that the university art museum is currently sponsoring.
10. The audience (seems, seem) fascinated by stories of notorious forgeries.

Verb #10: Agreement Problems in Sentences
Directions: Underline the subject of each sentence. Then circle the verb form that agrees with the subject.
1. From books and television shows (comes, come) stories of criminals who make incredibly stupid mistakes.
2. There (is, are) many dumb crooks out there, according to these sources.
3. Here, for your amusement, (is, are) two of their stories.
4. Into a pen holding several homing pigeons (sneaks, sneak) one unthinking thief.
5. There (is, are) a dealer in town who is willing to buy the birds.
6. (Does, Do) this man and the thief have any brains?
7. Back to their home (flies, fly) the pigeons the very next day!
8. (Is, Are) a thief who leaves obvious clues behind any smarter?
9. Inside one burglarized office, for example, (was, were) a speeding ticket belonging to the burglar, a recently fired employee.
10. (Do, Does) it surprise you to learn that someone would actually use a speeding ticket to prop the door during a burglary?
Adjectives and Adverbs #1: Identifying Adverbs and Adjectives
Directions: Look at the sentences below and decide whether an adverb or adjective is needed. Circle your choice. Then underline the word it modifies. (Hint: adverbs usually, but not always, end in “ly”).
1. The house looked (empty, emptily).
2. Jason pitched (wild, wildly).
3. The choir sang (good, well).
4. Those hills look (beautiful, beautifully).
5. The teams were matched (even, evenly).
6. The cheese on this cracker tastes (strange, strangely).
7. You print so (neat, neatly).
8. Ron arrived (prompt, promptly) at ten.
9. I go to the gym (regular, regularly).
10. The snow fell (steady, steadily).
11. The solution to the crime seemed (obvious, obviously).
12. The hem of the skirt was (real, really) crooked.

Adjectives and Adverbs #2: Identifying Adjectives and Adverbs
Directions: Determine whether each underlined word below is an adjective or an adverb. Write adj for adjective or adv for adverb in the space after each sentence.
1. The woolly mammoth is believed to be the ancestor of the modern elephant.
2. She jumped up suddenly and left the room.
3. This recipe calls for coarsely ground nuts.
4. The early bird gets the worm.
5. She speaks so softly that I can hardly hear her.
6. She has curly blond hair and blue eyes.
7. “Come here, quickly,” she said, “and help me get this curtain hung.”
8. At the pet shop a cuddly little kitten snuggled up to me, and I almost bought it.
9. A nicely trimmed hedge is an asset to a yard.
10. His kingly bearing makes him a perfect choice for the role of pharaoh in our play.
11. That oil painting is absolutely magnificent!
12. Toothpaste ads on television always feature models with gleaming, pearly teeth.
13. “I’m the greatest,” he said jokingly, as he flexed his almost nonexistent muscles.

Adjectives and Adverbs #3: Writing Adjectives and Adverbs
Directions: In each of the blanks, write down the correct form of the word in parentheses (adjective or adverb).
Example: (slow) Tom is slow. He works slowly.
1. (careful) Sue is a ____________________ girl. She climbed up the ladder ____________________.
2. (angry) The dog is ____________________. It barks ____________________.
3. (excellent) He acted ____________________. He’s an ____________________ actor.
4. (easy) They learn English ____________________. They think English is an ____________________ language.
5. (good) Max is a ____________________ singer. He sings ____________________.
6. (awful) It’s ____________________ cold today. The cold wind is ____________________.
7. (extreme/good) Dogs rely on their noses as they can smell ____________________.
8. (terrible) If that is true, why does dog food smell so ____________________?
9. (sad) The little boy looked ____________________. I went over to comfort him and he looked at me ____________________.
10. (careful – 1st blank; wonderful – 2nd blank) I tasted the soup ____________________ but it tasted ____________________.
Adjectives and Adverbs #4: Words Being Modified
Directions: Circle the word in the sentence that is being described by the underlined adjective.
1. A violent storm uprooted a large tree in the front yard.
2. The hot sun beat down on the thirsty animals.
3. The kangaroo has short forelegs and a large, thick tail.
4. A number of famous writers are buried in Westminster Abbey.
5. The traveler, tired and weak, struggled with a heavy trunk.
6. The official guides at the United Nations can speak a number of different languages.
7. The charming, handsome couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary.
8. My glasses are dirty.
9. The swimmer felt happy after she won the relay race.
10. This ground looks swampy.

Adjectives and Adverbs #5: Modifying Verbs, Adjectives, and Other Adverbs
Directions: Underline the adverb for each of the following sentences and circle the word that adverb is modifying (describing).
1. Speak now or forever hold your peace.
2. Yesterday, Mrs. Blue thoughtfully assigned two brief assignments.
3. Today, the students will arrive early.
4. She did well on the first test, but she failed the second test miserably.
5. The skaters put on a very exciting show.
6. The runner was an unusually fast starter.
7. Kangaroos are extremely fast animals.
8. They look quite awkward when they jump.
9. The great red kangaroo is surprisingly tall.
10. Before 1900, fingerprinting was very rarely used by the police.
11. People used their fingerprints quite often to protect themselves from forgers.
12. Fingerprinting has been used much longer than we ordinarily think.
13. The expert worked quite rapidly.

Adjectives and Adverbs #6: Writing Adverbs
Directions: Rewrite the words in brackets as adverbs.
Example: He [in a quick way] ran across the street to help the kitten stuck in the tree.
Answer: [in a quick way] = quickly
1. [In a rough way of] speaking, Beethoven and the great composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart were contemporaries.
2. The two crossed paths only [one time] or [two times].
3. This was not because they disliked each other; on the contrary, Beethoven, who was the younger of the two had [at all times] admired Mozart [in a way that is tremendous].
4. [In a way that is tragic] for music lovers, Mozart died at the age of thirty-five.
5. Rumors [in not much time] began to spread that Mozart had [in actual terms] been murdered by a music rival.
6. [It is alleged], Antonio Salieri, who was a friend of Mozart’s and a fellow composer, poisoned the young genius.
7. According to legend, Salieri was [to an extreme degree] jealous of Mozart.
8. Mozart was by all indications one of the most [in a remarkable way] gifted musicians who ever lived.
9. Salieri, by comparison, was only [in a moderate way] talented.
10. The relationship between the two composers is [in a thorough way] explored in a movie called Amadeus.