

1

English Grammar 101

1.1

Parts of Speech: Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb, and so on

When putting your words together to form sentences, would you agree that it is important to know “the parts of speech” used in the sentence or paragraph you are writing? This means knowing if the word in the sentence is a noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, gerund, conjunction, preposition, or interjection.

QUIZ YOURSELF

What parts of speech are the following words (noun, verb, adjective, etc.)?

1. analyzing _____
2. beaker _____
3. to measure _____
4. red _____

Answers to the above:

1. Gerund, *analyzing* is an action word, where a verb is transformed into a noun.
2. Noun, a *beaker* is an object.
3. Verb, *measure* is used in its infinitive form.
4. Red describes the color of an object, and therefore is an *adjective*.

Parts of Speech – Sector Keywords	
Adjective	Adjektiv
Adverb	Adverb
Conjunction	Konjunktion
Gerund	Gerundium
Interjection	Interjektion
Noun	Substantiv
Paragraph	Absatz
Preposition	Präposition
Pronoun	Pronomen
Punctuation marks (part of grammar, yet related to this topic)	Interpunktionszeichen
Sentence	Satz
Verb	Verb

1.1.1

Noun = Subject (Person, Place, Thing)

- The **cat** sat on the mat.
- **George Washington** was America's first President.

1.1.2

Pronoun = Expresses a Distinction of a Person

Pronoun as subject	Pronoun as object	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive pronoun
I	Me	Mine	Myself
You	You	Yours	Yourself
He	Him	His	Himself
She	Her	Hers	Herself
It	It	Its	Itself
We	Us	Ours	Ourselves
You	You	Yours	Yourselves
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves

1.1.3

Adjective = Words That Describe or Modify a Noun

- The *good*, the *bad*, and the *ugly*.
- The idea is *cool*, yet *crazy*!
- She has *five* shirts, and two are *red* and the rest are *green*.

1.1.4

Verb = Action Word

- She *washed* her automobile.
- *Did* you *bring* your language dictionaries to this workshop?
- To be or to have, shall/should, will/would, can/may, and so on.

Verb infinitives (the verb in its basic form: To be, to love, to have, to perceive, to say, to speak, to ski, to run, and so on.

1.1.4.1 The Use of the Two Verbs; Can vs. May

Can (können)	May (dürfen)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can</i> you work in my lab today? (ability) • <i>Can</i> you do me a favor? (could) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You too <i>may</i> borrow my HPLC. (permission) • Due to the late scheduling of the symposium, I <i>may</i> arrive late. (possibility) • Reminder. ... May, the month is a noun! (months are capitalized!)

QUIZ YOURSELF: Can or May

When using the rules from above, the choice between *can* or *may*, is not so obvious in the sentences below.

Which word would you choose?

1. *Can* or *May* I have food served in the conference room?
2. Yes, you *can* or *may* make arrangements with the onsite cafe.
3. Restaurant guests *can* or *may* have their parking tickets validated.

For the sentences above, does the meaning involve ability, possibility, or permission?

Some people would say each one involves *ability*. For example:

1. Am I *able* to have food served in the conference room?
2. Yes, you are *able* to make arrangements with the onsite cafe.
3. Restaurant guests are *able* to have their parking tickets validated.

Yet, some people would say each one involves *permission*. For example:

1. Am I *permitted* to have food served in the conference room?
2. Yes, you are *permitted* to make arrangements with the onsite cafe.
3. Restaurant guests are *permitted* to have their parking tickets validated.

Can vs. May – Mr. H’s Grammar Tip

- can – ability, could
- may – permission, possibility or to be courteous (höflich) in your answer or reply.

1.1.5

Adverb = *Words That Modify a Verb*



- *Quickly*, the oil flowed through the drilling pipe.
- The meeting went *well*.
- The concert was *beautifully* performed.
- Sam asked Jean, “How are you doing after surgery?” Jean replied, “I’m doing *incredibly well!*”

Mr. H's Special Tips

- 1) Many adverbs in English language end with the suffix, -ly, i.e., similarly, honestly, currently, justifiably, brilliantly
- 2) Consider the fact that in German language many adverbs end with the Nachsilbe, -lich, i.e., ehrlich
- 3) Some adverbs of frequency; always, often, sometimes, daily, weekly, monthly, again.

1.1.5.1 Good (adj.) vs. Well (adv.)

Two special words, which are easily confused

Incorrect usage

I did *good* on the test.
She played the game *good*.

Correct usage

I did *well* on the test.
She played the game *well*.

Mr. H's Grammar Tip

- Use *good* when describing something or someone.
- Use *well* when describing how something is done or how someone does something.

Usage of Good versus Well – exceptions

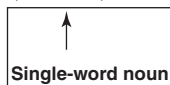
- 1) “Well” may be used when describing if something is proper, healthy, or suitable. As in, “I am well (healthy) today.” However, an exception to this is the following: How are you feeling? I feel good. (think of James Brown’s soul song, “I Feel Good”)
- 2) Another way *well* may be used is when starting a sentence such as, “Well, that explains everything.” In this case, well means “Of course” or “Yes.”

1.1.6

Gerund = Using -ing, an Action Word, a Verb Becomes a Noun

Swimming and *reading* are both fun!

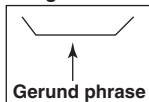
My favorite sport, **baseball**, takes a great deal of effort.



My favorite sport, **running**, takes a great deal of effort.



My favorite sport, **running three miles**, takes a great deal of effort.



1.1.7

Prepositions Indicate a Relation Between Things

Common prepositions used: of, in, with, on, about, beneath, against, beside, over, during, through^{BrE} versus thru^{AmE}.

- The weather *in* May in Chicago is generally quite pleasant.
- *On* Tuesday, she was declared the winner of the election.
- The biochemistry book was taken away *from* the student.

Mr. H's Grammar Tip

Two prepositions which have homonyms (words which sound the same, but are spelled differently and have other meanings) are the following:

- *to* vs. too (also) vs. two (2)
- *for* vs. four (4).

1.1.7.1 Between (zwischen) vs. Among (unter); **two confusing prepositions**

- 1) **between** (used with either two people or things)
 - a. *Between* you and me, I think we can solve the problem easily!
 - b. The Pyrenees mountain chain lies *between* Spain and France.
- 2) **Among, amongst** (used with three or more people or things).
 - a. *Among* the three of us, I am sure we can resolve the issue between them.
 - b. Living in the rain forest *amongst* other wild animals, gorillas continue to endure.

1.1.8

Conjunctions Connect Two Words, Phrases, or Clauses

- **And:** presents non-contrasting item(s) or idea(s); “They gamble, *and* they smoke.”
- **But:** presents a contrast or exception; “They gamble, *but* they don’t smoke.”
- **Nor (neither):** presents a non-contrasting negative idea; “They don’t gamble, *nor* do they smoke.”
- **Or:** presents an alternative item or idea; “Every day they gamble, *or* they smoke.”
- **Yet:** presents a contrast or exception; “They gamble, *yet* they don’t smoke.”
- **So:** presents a consequence; “He gambled well last night, *so* he smoked a cigar to celebrate.”
- **For:** presents a reason; “He is gambling with his health, *for* he has been smoking far too long in his life.” (though “for” is more commonly used as a preposition).

1.1.9

Interjections: Words of Exclamation, Interjections or Expressions of an Emotion or Sentiment**Some examples of *interjections*:**

- Cheers! Congratulations! Hooray!
- Oh my! Oh dear! Oh my God!
- Uh? Ha! Hey, that's mine!
- Excuse me! Sorry! No thank you!

1.2

Practical Usage of Adjectives and Their Comparative and Superlative Forms

1.2.1

***Citius, Altius, Fortius!* (Faster, Higher, Stronger!)**

Such is the motto of the modern day Olympics, and a good way to look at this chapter's topic, Comparative and superlative adjectives. In German language, one is familiar with these examples of comparatives and superlatives:

- 1) *gut, besser, am besten.*
- 2) *hoch, höher, am höchsten.*
- 3) *kalt, kälter, am kältesten.*

In English grammar, the comparative and superlative of an adjective or adverb is the greatest form it can have, which indicates that something has some feature to a greater degree than anything it is being compared to in a given context.

Example of using a superlative: Adam is 45, Bess is 35, and Chris is 25; thus, Adam is the *oldest* of the three.

Naturally, the goal of this book is to help apply one's technical English with practical situations that may arise in the laboratory and beyond. Thus, some examples of comparatives and superlatives expressed in a fictional laboratory situation or setting might be:

- The substance in the graduated cylinder is *colder* than the liquid in the beaker.
- Of all the other potential ingredients used in the formula, this sugar is the *sweetest* in taste, and *whitest* in color.
- A six-carbon chain (hexane) is *longer* than the five-carbon chain (pentane).
- The precipitate from the reaction is the *least* amount produced from the three pilot runs performed today!

1.2.1.1 **One-Syllable Adjectives**

Form the comparative and superlative forms of a one-syllable adjective by adding -er for the comparative form and -est for the superlative.

One-syllable adjective	Comparative form	Superlative form
Cool/warm	Cooler/warmer	Coolest/warmest
Cold/hot	Colder/hotter	Coldest/hottest
Long/short	Longer/shorter	Longest/shortest
Old/young	Older/younger	Oldest/youngest
Rich/poor	Richer/poorer	Richest/poorest
Sweet	Sweeter	Sweetest
Tall/short	Taller/shorter	Tallest/shortest

- Mary is **richer** than Max.
- Of all the students, Joan is **the tallest and the coolest**.
- That history lesson is **the longest** one I've ever heard.
- Of the three workers, Mary is **the oldest**.

If the one-syllable adjective ends with an e, just add -r for the comparative form and -st for the superlative form.

One-syllable adjective with final -e	Comparative form	Superlative form
Large	Larger	Largest
Wise	Wiser	Wisest

- Mary's car is **larger** than Max's car.
- Mary's house is **the tallest** of all the houses on the block.
- Max is **wiser** than his brother.
- Max is **the wisest** person I know.

If the one-syllable adjective ends with a single consonant with a vowel before it, double the consonant and add -er for the comparative form; and double the consonant and add -est for the superlative form.

One-syllable adjective ending with a single consonant with a single vowel before it	Comparative form	Superlative form
Big	Bigger	Biggest
Fat	Fatter	Fattest
Sad	Sadder	Saddest
Thin	Thinner	Thinnest

- My dog is **the biggest** of all the dogs in the neighborhood.
- Max is **thinner** than John.
- Of all the students in the class, Max is **the thinnest**.
- My mother is **fatter** than your mother.
- Mary is **the fattest** person I've ever seen.

1.2.1.2 Two-Syllable Adjectives

With most two-syllable adjectives, you form the comparative with more and the superlative with most.

Two-syllable adjective	Comparative form	Superlative form
Beautiful	More beautiful	Most beautiful
Careful	More careful	Most careful
Peaceful	More peaceful	Most peaceful
Pleasant	More pleasant	Most pleasant
Thoughtful	More thoughtful	Most thoughtful

- This morning is **more peaceful** than yesterday morning.
- Max's house in the mountains is **the most peaceful** in the world.
- Max is **more careful** than Mike.
- Of all the taxi drivers, Jack is **the most careful**.
- Jill is **more thoughtful** than your sister.
- Mary is **the most thoughtful** person I've ever met.

If the two-syllable adjectives ends with -y, change the y to i and add -er for the comparative form. For the superlative form change the y to i and add -est.

Two-syllable adjective ending with -y	Comparative form	Superlative form
Angry	Angrier	Angriest
Busy	Busier	Busiest
Funny	Funnier	Funniest
Happy	Happier	Happiest
Pretty	Prettier	Prettiest

- John is **happier** today than he was yesterday.
- John is **the happiest** boy in the world.
- Max is **angrier** than Mary.
- Of all of John's victims, Max is **the angriest**.
- Mary is **busier** than Max.
- Mary is **the busiest** person I've ever met.

Two-syllable adjectives ending in -er, -le, or -ow take -er and -est to form the comparative and superlative forms.

Two-syllable adjective ending with -er, -le, or -ow	Comparative form	Superlative form
Narrow	Narrower	Narrowest
Gentle	Gentler	Gentlest

- The roads in this town are **narrower** than the roads in the city.
- This road is the **narrowest** of all the roads in California.
- Big dogs are **gentler** than small dogs.
- Of all the dogs in the world, English Mastiffs are **the gentlest**.

1.2.1.3 Adjectives with Three or More Syllables

For adjectives with three syllables or more, you form the comparative with more and the superlative with most.

Adjective with three or more syllables	Comparative form	Superlative form
Dangerous	More dangerous	Most dangerous
Generous	More generous	Most generous
Important	More important	Most important
Intelligent	More intelligent	Most intelligent

- John is **more generous** than Jack.
- John is **the most generous** of all the people I know.
- Health is **more important** than money.
- Of all the people I know, Max is the **most important**.
- Women are **more intelligent** than men.
- Mary is **the most intelligent** person I've ever met.

1.2.1.4 Exceptions – Irregular Adjectives

Irregular adjective	Comparative form	Superlative form
Bad	Worse	Worst
Far	Farther	Farthest
Good	Better	Best
Little	Less	Least
Many	More	Most

- Italian food is **better** than American food.
- My dog is **the best** dog in the world.
- My mother's cooking is **worse** than your mother's cooking.
- Of all the students in the class, Max is **the worst**.

Some two-syllable adjectives follow two rules. These adjectives can be used with -er and -est as well as with more and most.

Two-syllable adjective	Comparative form	Superlative form
Clever	Cleverer	Cleverest
Clever	More clever	Most clever
Gentle	Gentler	Gentlest
Gentle	More gentle	Most gentle
Friendly	Friendlier	Friendliest
Friendly	More friendly	Most friendly
Quiet	Quieter	Quietest
Quiet	More quiet	Most quiet
Simple	Simpler	Simplest
Simple	More simple	Most simple

- Big dogs are **gentler** than small dogs.
- Of all the dogs in the world, English Mastiffs are **the gentlest**.
- Big dogs are **more gentle** than small dogs.
- Of all the dogs in the world, English Mastiffs are **the most gentle**.

1.2.2

QUIZ YOURSELF: Practical Usage of Adjectives and Their Comparative and Superlative Forms

1.2.2.1 Part I: Answer the Following Questions in the Space Provided

- Write the comparative:** for example, old, older, oldest
 - good, _____ best
 - strong, _____ strongest
 - happy, _____ happiest
 - important, _____ most important
 - large, _____ largest
 - bad, _____ worst.
- Complete the sentences with a superlative:** for example, This building is very old. It's *the oldest* building in the town.
 - It was a very happy day. It was _____ of my life.
 - "Casablanca" with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman is a very good film. It's _____ I've seen.
 - That was a very bad mistake. It was _____ in my life.
 - Yesterday was a very cold day. It was _____ of the year.
 - She's a popular singer. She's _____ in the country.

3. **Complete the sentences with the correct form of the adjective in [brackets]:** for example, We like wearing the [late] clothing fashion. We like wearing the *latest* clothing fashion.
- These trousers are _____ [comfortable] than those jeans.
 - She is _____ [happy] now than he was last year.
 - You are the _____ [pretty] girl in class.
 - The red dress is the _____ [attractive] in the shop.
 - Your hair is _____ [curly] than my hair.
 - My hair is _____ [short] than yours.

1.2.2.2 **Part II: Quiz Based on Text Below – First Read the Paragraph Below and Then Write the Adjective in [Brackets] into its Correct Comparative or Superlative Form in the Spaces Below**

The fortune 500 firm's quarterly report shows that sales figures were **1 ... [high]** than the previous quarter. Due to the growing economy of our nation, this is no surprise, but what is **2 ... [interesting]** is the addition of clients coming from other industry sectors. Although **3 ... [cheap]** products exist on the market from other **4 ... [big]** suppliers, service is the **5 ... [important]** factor for the consumer.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

1.3

Use of Questioning Words for the Inquisitive Lab Worker

Would you agree that in your line of work, asking pertinent questions are important? I'm sure you answered, Yes! Since questions are required for research and the results they provide, let's explain in detail how *questioning words* are used to ask about specific qualities, times, places, people, and so on, especially as improving daily usage of these words as parts of speech will make your interaction with your English speaking colleagues much easier. Firstly, questioning words are different from **Yes/No** questions such as:

- Do you live in Austria?
- Can you go to the movies?
- Are you a laboratory manager?

Is it your birthday? Thus, would you like an HPLC wrapped as a gift for your birthday? Joking here, but hope you get the point that these are considered **Yes/No** questions.

1.3.1

What are the Questioning Words Used in Speech?

Questioning Words – Sector Keywords	
How	Wie
How much, how many	Wieviel
What	Was
When	Wann
Where	Wo
Which	Welches
Who vs. Whom	Wer bzw. Wen, Wem
Whose	Wessen
Why	Warum

What are Typical Questioning Words?

- **Who versus Whom:** Ask yourself if the answer to the question would be, *he/she* or *him/her*. If you can answer the question with *he/she*, then use *who*; *him/her*, then use *whom*. Two examples are the following:
 - “To [who or whom] did the prize go too? It went to him.” It is improper to say “It went to he.” The correct pronoun for the question is, **whom**.
 - “[Who or Whom] went to the store? He went to the store.” It is improper to say “Him went to the store.” The correct pronoun for the question is **who**.
- **What** happened or what’s the story about?
- **Where** did it take place?
- **When** did it take place?
- **Why** did it happen?
- **How** did it happen?
- **Which** one was it?
- **Whose** pants (slacks; *Hose*) are those?
- **How much** money did your new computer cost?
- **How many** computers did you buy?

Mr. H’s Tip**Deciding to use Who, Where, or When**

- **Who (Wer) ... ?**
- **Where (Wo) ... ?**
- **When (Wann) ... ?**

These three questions words can cause problems for anyone. After all, **who** (English) is close in spelling to **wo** (German), but their pronunciation as well as

meaning are totally different! Similarly, **where** (English) can be confused with **wer** (German), and potentially also for **when (English) vs. wann (German)**.

1.3.2

Questioning Words; Further Applications in Sentence Form – Practical Use of Questioning Words

- 1a) **Who?** Use *who* when referring to the subject of a sentence or phrase.
 - Who brought the paper inside?
 - Who talked to you today?
- 1b) **Whom?** Use *whom* when referring to the object of a verb.
 - For a business letter: To whom it may concern: (Wen es betreffen mag)
 - To whom did you talk today? (Mit wem ...?)
 - Whom does Sarah love? (Wen ...?)
- 2) **What?** Use *what* when asking about things or activities.
 - What does he do on the weekends? (Was ...?)
 - What is that? (Was ...?)
 - What planet do we live on? (Auf welchem ...?)
- **What kind? What type?** To be used when asking about specific things or characteristics.
 - What type of car do you drive? (Welches? Was für ein ...?)
 - What kind of person is he? (Was für eine.. Welche Persönlichkeit hat er?)
- **What time?** To be used when asking for a specific time.
 - What time is it? (Wie spät ist es? Wieviel Uhr ist es?)
 - What time does the show begin? (Zu welcher Zeit beginnt die Show? Um wieviel Uhr ...?)
- **What ... like?** To be used when asking about characteristics.
 - What was the weather like? (Wie?)
 - What is Mary like? What is Mary's personality? (Was für eine Person ist..? oder Welche Persönlichkeit hat ...?)
- 3) **Where?** To be used when asking about places.
 - Where do you live?
- 4) **When?** To be used when asking about general or specific times.
 - When would you like going out to dinner?
- 5) **Why?** To be used when wondering about something.
 - On a clear day, why is the Earth's atmosphere bluish in color?
- 6) **How?** To be used when combined with many words to ask questions about specific characteristics, qualities, quantities, and so on. For example,
 - How much does it cost? (Wieviel?)
 - How often do you go to the movies? (Wie oft?)
 - How long was the film? (Wie lang?)
- 7) **Which?** To be used when asking to specify a thing or person from a number of things or people.
 - Which book did you buy? (Welches?)

