



Good writing and good reading are two important ingredients for success in your school work. All of your other subjects hinge on these in one way or another. English, history, biology, mathematics and all the others are influenced by your ability to read written instructions and to express yourself, both orally and in writing.

Success in your future career depends upon these abilities. Your Air Force recruiter wants you to go as far as you can and do as well as possible. This study guide has been prepared with you in mind. Hopefully, it will help you—whether you choose the Air Force or some other profession for a career.

PARTS OF SPEECH

The words that make up a sentence (a group of words containing a subject and verb that express a complete thought by making a statement or asking a question) have various functions to perform; these are classified as "parts of speech" on the basis of these functions. There are eight of these: nouns and pronouns (which name); adjectives and adverbs (which qualify); verbs (which assert); prepositions and conjunctions (which connect); and interjections (which express sudden or strong feelings). A change in the function or use will change the part of speech. A given word does not belong to any part of speech category until it is used in a sentence.

John's hit (noun) won the baseball game.

John hit (verb) the ball.

John's song became a hit (adjective) tune.

A. NAMERS

1. **NOUNS.** A noun is the name of anything—a person, a thing, a place, a concept. There are common nouns that name every member of a class (city, college, state, man); proper nouns naming the particular members of a class and beginning with a capital letter (San Antonio, President Lincoln, Harvard); abstract nouns that name a quality, state, or activity (mercy, love, strength); concrete nouns naming a physical or material thing (book, cloth, sun, water); and collective nouns that name a group as a unit (committee, class, crowd, army). NOTE: When a collective noun is used to designate the members of a group taken separately, accompanying verbs and reference words are in the plural. (The class are to bring their notebooks tomorrow.)

2. **PRONOUNS.** Pronouns are substitutes for nouns that have been named, will be named, or whose identities are unknown or unimportant.

a. A personal pronoun makes it evident by its form whether reference is made to the speaker (first person: I, we); the person or thing spoken to (second person: you, thou); or the person or thing spoken of (third person: he, she, it, they).

b. The relative pronoun relates an adjective clause to its antecedent (who, which, that, what). The recruiter (antecedent) who (relative pronoun) gave us the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery is an Air Force sergeant.

c. Interrogative pronouns (who, which, what) are used to ask a question.

d. Demonstrative pronouns (this and that with their plurals these and those) point out persons or things with special definiteness.

e. Indefinite pronouns refer to indefinite persons or things (any, another, anyone, anybody, some, someone, somebody, none, nobody, many, few, everyone, etc.).

f. Reflexive and intensive pronouns combine some form of the personal pronoun with self or selves (himself, yourselves, etc.) and either "reflect" the action described by the verb (John hit himself.) or emphasize (She herself will do it.).

B. MODIFIERS

3. **ADJECTIVES.** An adjective is a word that describes or modifies a noun. Any expression—a single word, a phrase, or a whole clause—that modifies may be said to have an adjectival function.

big fish . . . good food . . . dire circumstances (word)
the recruiter in the blue uniform (phrase)
The recruiter who is wearing the blue uniform (clause)

4. **ADVERBS.** An adverb modifies or describes a verb (He replied promptly.), an adjective (the very prompt reply), or another adverb (He replied very promptly.).

a. The adverb answers the question "When?" (time) and usually modifies the verb. (He shall soon find the answer.)

b. The adverb answers the question "Where?" (place) and usually modifies a verb. (They looked outside.)

c. The adverb answers the question "How?" (manner) and usually modifies a verb. (Tom played the piano beautifully.)

d. The adverb answers the question "To what extent?" (degree) (I am extremely weary.)

NOTE: Do not jump to the conclusion that the characteristic -ly ending always identifies an adverb: it is the function of the word and not its form that determines whether it is an adverb or not. Some words ending in -ly are both adjectives and adverbs. (This is my only shirt. Jim is a kindly man.) (Adjectives) (He is only joking. Jim kindly offered his help.) (Adverbs).

C. ASSERTERS

5. **VERBS.** The verb is usually the most dynamic part of a sentence; it represents an action, a state, or an occurrence.

a. A transitive verb needs a direct object to complete its meaning. (The dog bit the man.)

b. An intransitive verb does not need a direct object to complete its meaning. (The dog ran out the door.) Watch your use of lay and lie, raise and rise, set and sit. Lay, raise, and set are usually transitive; the others usually intransitive—and frequently confused.

(WRONG: The dog lays on the rug. RIGHT: The dog lies on the rug.)

c. Linking (or copulative) verbs complete the predication that the verb begins; they "link" the subject complement to the subject. Principal linking verbs are be, seem, become, appear, taste, smell, sound, look. (My name is Mel. The answer seems clear.)

d. Notional verbs have a full meaning of their own. (They advised me. I have a nickel left.) The verb can be made more specific by auxiliary verbs.

e. Auxiliary verbs (chiefly, be, shall, will, must, can, have, do) help the notional verb make a particular kind of predication; it serves as part of a verb phrase. (He should have been consulted.)

Properties of Verbs

A verb may vary in form to show five so-called "properties." These are (1) voice, (2) person, (3) number, (4) mood, and (5) tense.

a. Voice is the modification in verb form to show whether the subject of the verb performs the action (active voice) or receives the action described by the verb (passive voice). A little boy opened the door. (Active voice.) The door was opened by a little boy. (Passive voice.) Note that the passive forms are combinations of a form of to be and the past participle.

b. Person is that property of a verb which makes evident whether the subject names who or what speaks (first person); or whom or what is spoken to (second person); or whom or what is spoken about (third person).

c. Number is that property of a verb which makes evident whether the subject denotes one (singular) or more than one (plural).

Usages in Agreement

1. A verb agrees with its subject in person and number. (The boys are coming to the party.) 2. A verb agrees with its subject, not with a subjective complement. RIGHT: (The flying feats of pioneer airmen are my major interest. WRONG: The flying feats of pioneer airmen is my major interest.) 3. A verb agrees with its subject even when the subject follows the verb. RIGHT: (Most impressive were his uniform, his posture, and his voice. WRONG: Most impressive was his dress, his posture, and his voice.) 4. Singular nouns joined by and usually take a plural verb. (Sam and Mike are friends.) 5. When nouns joined by and are thought of as a unit, the verb is normally singular. (The ebb and flow of the tide is one thing you can always be sure of.) 6. When two nouns joined by or or nor are of different number or of different person, the verb may be made to agree with the nearer noun. (Neither the men nor the boy was responsible. Neither the boy nor the men were responsible.) 7. When one of two subjects is introduced by such expressions as and not, not only, the verb agrees with the other subject. (Action, and not words, is demanded this time. Words, not actions, are all we ever get.) 8. When a compound subject is introduced by many a, such a, no, every, each, the verb is singular. (Many a man and wife is celebrating tonight. Every man, woman, and child is to be counted.) 9. No one, nobody, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody take singular verbs. (Someone is talking out loud. Nobody has the answer to this one.) 10. The pronouns either and neither and nouns modified by either and neither take singular verbs. (Either course of action is correct. Neither is wrong.) 11. The pronoun each and nouns modified by each and every take singular verbs. (Each man is to be questioned. Each and every man is to be questioned.) 12. None may take either a singular or a plural verb. When a plural idea is implicit, none regularly takes a plural verb. (None of this fruit is ripe. None of these apples are ripe.) 13. A singular subject followed by such an expression as with, together with, including, as well as, in addition to, takes a singular verb. (Texas, together with Arkansas and Oklahoma, is opposing the proposed waterways bill.) 14. Number preceded by a takes a plural verb; number preceded by the takes a singular verb. (A

number of men have asked that question. The number of airmen reenlisting is increasing.) 15. With such expressions as all, half, quarter, more, most, some, such, percentage, all of, half of the number of the verb depends on the sense. (All were present today. All is in order. Half of the men have left.) 16. Some nouns like measles, mumps, molasses, news, smallpox, Stars and Stripes, summons, although plural in form, are singular in meaning and take singular verbs. (Measles is a children's disease. The news is encouraging for a change.)

d. Mood is that property of a verb which indicates the manner in which the verbal idea is regarded—a statement of fact, a supposition, a doubt or impossibility, a command. The three moods generally recognized are the indicative, the imperative, and the subjunctive.

1. The indicative mood primarily states a fact or asks a question. (He is a man of high honor.)

2. The imperative mood expresses a request or a command. (Come here. Somebody come and help me.)

3. The subjunctive mood expresses an idea that is a supposition, a wish, or an idea that is doubtful or uncertain. (If I were you, I should not consider it. I wish I were home. I ask that this be considered.)

e. There are six tenses in English. Three are simple (present, past, and future) and three of them perfect (present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect). A change in the verb form indicates the time of action or state of being.

1. The present tense represents a present or habitual action. (The boy is working.)

2. The past tense represents, in general, actual past time. (The man worked.)

3. The future tense represents an action or condition that will occur or exist in the future. (The man will work tomorrow.)

4. The present perfect tense is made by the use of the present tense forms of have plus the past participle of the verb. (I have been working six hours.)

5. The past perfect tense uses had followed by the past participle of the verb. (I had worked.)

6. The future perfect tense is made by the use of the auxiliaries shall and will. (I shall have been coming.)

D. JOINERS

6. **PREPOSITIONS.** A preposition shows the relationship between its object and the word described by the phrase. The preposition and its object plus any modifiers constitute a prepositional phrase.

a. A preposition may be a single word, in which case it is called a simple preposition. (about, above, across, after, at, before, behind, below, beneath, by, down, for, from, in, into, of, off, out, outside, over, past, since, through, till, to, under, up, until, upon, with)

b. A preposition may consist of more than one word, in which case it is called a phrasal preposition. (as for, because of, by means of, for the sake of, in keeping with, out of, etc.)

c. The object of a preposition is in the objective case. (Whom were you with at the game?)

7. **CONJUNCTIONS.** Conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence. There are two general classes of conjunctions—coordinating conjunctions that join words, phrases, or clauses of the same grammatical rank; and subordinating conjunctions that join a subordinate clause to a main clause. Conjunctions used in pairs are called correlative conjunctions or correlatives.

a. Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, nor, or, for—and sometimes so and yet) connect words, phrases, or clauses of equal rank. (apples and pears; over the bunker and onto the green; He's a good man, but few people like him.)

b. Subordinating conjunctions (after, as, because, before, if, since, than, that, when, though, until, etc.) connect subordinate clauses with independent clauses. (The rain will stop when the sun comes out. His excuse is that he was ill.)

E. INTERJECTIONS

8. **INTERJECTIONS.** An interjection is a sound used to express strong or sudden emotion. It is not actually a part of speech, although words and even complete statements may function as interjections.

a. Typical interjections are oh, ah, ouch.

b. But many words recognized as parts of speech may be used as interjections: Goodness! Heavens! (nouns), Impossible! Splendid! (adjectives), Look! Listen! (verbs), Indeed! Certainly! (adverbs), My! Dear me! (pronouns).

The information provided here has been gathered from several sources. Much of it is verbatim; some has been rearranged. It would be difficult to find general agreement on everything. Where this information does not agree with your text or what your teacher says—they are the final authority.

Hopefully, all will agree that this information will help you.