

## Tutorial

### A Brief Introduction to Grammatical Terminology

#### Grammar

**Grammar** is the study of how sentences are constructed. Constructing a sentence means ‘putting it together’ or ‘building it up’ out of smaller components. The basic components (or ‘building blocks’) out of which sentences are constructed are words. Not surprisingly, then, words have a fundamental role to play within grammar, and we shall consider them more closely in a moment.

Of course, not every possible sequence of words constitutes a sentence. For instance, example (1a) below is a sentence of English, whereas (1b) is not:

- (1) (a) She is reading the newspaper.
- (b) She is reading newspaper the.

In order to construct a grammatically correct sentence, we need to follow certain **rules** (or conventions). The purpose of a grammar is to specify what those rules are.

#### Words

When describing the grammar of a language, it is useful to classify words into different categories, such as ‘noun’, ‘adjective’ or ‘verb’. These categories are generally called **word classes** nowadays (though traditionally they have been known as the ‘parts of speech’). Let us begin by considering the following word classes:

##### *Nouns*

A **noun** usually denotes an entity of some kind: a person, an animal, a thing, a place, or an abstract idea, as illustrated in the following examples:

- (2) (a) Girl (denoting a person).
- (b) Kangaroo (denoting an animal).
- (c) Brick (denoting an object).
- (d) Cardiff (denoting a place).
- (e) Goodness (denoting an abstract idea).

Many nouns have a **singular** form (denoting a single individual) and a **plural** form, (denoting more

than one individual), for example:

- (3) (a) Girl (denoting just one individual).  
 (b) Girls (denoting two or more individuals).

The contrast between ‘singular’ and ‘plural’ is said to be a distinction in terms of the grammatical category of **number**.

In addition, many nouns have **possessive** forms (indicating a relationship of ‘belonging’), for instance:

- (4) (a) Girl’s.  
 (b) Girls’.

An example of the use of the form in (4a) can be seen in the expression in (5a):

- (5) (a) The girl’s shoes (meaning ‘the shoes belonging to the girl’).  
 (b) The girls’ shoes (meaning ‘the shoes belonging to the girls’).

The phrase in (5a) indicates that the shoes belong to the girl in question. The difference between (5a) and (5b) is that in (5a) only one girl is involved, and consequently the possessive singular form (spelt with apostrophe + ‘s’) is used, whereas in (5b), more than one girl owner is indicated, and hence the possessive plural form (spelt with ‘s’ + apostrophe) is employed.

### *Adjectives*

Nouns are often accompanied by other words that affect their interpretation, as in the following example:

- (6) New bricks.

Here, the noun ‘bricks’ is accompanied by the word ‘new’, which belongs to the class of ‘adjectives’. An **adjective** is a type of word that generally denotes an attribute, and in example (6), the attribute in question is that of age (i.e. ‘new’ rather than ‘old’).

The phrase ‘new bricks’ has a more precise meaning than the word ‘bricks’ on its own. In technical terms, we say that the adjective **modifies** the interpretation of the noun, in giving it a more restricted meaning than it would otherwise have had. The word ‘bricks’ on its own can refer to any kind of bricks, but ‘new bricks’ narrows the meaning down, and excludes bricks that cannot be described as ‘new’.

Many adjectives have not only a basic form, but also two additional forms. The adjective

‘new’ is an example:

- (7) (a) New.  
 (b) Newer.  
 (c) Newest.

The form ‘newer’ is often accompanied by the word ‘than’, as in the following example:

- (8) The bricks are newer than the slates

In this sentence, the age of the bricks is being compared with that of the slates. Accordingly the form of the adjective (‘newer’) that is used for this purpose is termed the **comparative** form. As for the form ‘newest’, this is known as the **superlative** form. To summarise, then, the three forms of the adjective ‘new’ are:

- (9) (a) New (representing the basic form of the adjective).  
 (b) Newer (representing the comparative form of the adjective).  
 (c) Newest (representing the superlative form of the adjective).

Certain other adjectives form the comparative and superlative in a different way, with the help of the words ‘more’ (for the comparative’) and ‘most’ (for the superlative). An example is the following:

- (10) (a) Expensive (representing the basic form of the adjective).  
 (b) More expensive (representing the comparative form of the adjective).  
 (c) Most expensive (representing the superlative form of the adjective).

This alternative method of forming the comparative and superlative is found mainly with longer adjectives, whereas the method exemplified in (9) by the adjective ‘new’ tends to apply to short adjectives.

### *Determinatives*

Nouns are often also accompanied by words belonging to another class, whose members are called ‘determinatives’. A **determinative**, like an adjective, modifies the interpretation of the noun that it accompanies, but unlike a typical adjective, does NOT have a comparative or superlative form. Examples of determinatives are the following words:

- (11) (a) The (known as the ‘definite article’).  
 (b) A or An (known as the ‘indefinite article’).  
 (c) This, these, that, those (known as the ‘demonstrative’ determinatives).

Examples of these determinatives as modifiers of nouns are as follows:

- (12) (a) The girl.  
 (This phrase denotes a specific girl that the speaker or writer has in mind and expects the listener or reader to be able to identify.)  
 (b) A girl.  
 (This phrase denotes a girl that the speaker or writer does NOT expect the listener or reader to be, as yet, in a position to identify.)  
 (c) That girl.  
 (This phrase denotes a specific girl that the speaker or writer points out to the listener or reader. Its meaning may be very roughly paraphrased as ‘the girl there’.)

In all these example, the interpretation of the noun ‘girl’ is rendered more specific than it would have been of the determinative had not been present. This is why we may describe the determinatives as ‘modifiers’ of the noun concerned. However, it is clear that these determinatives do not have comparative or superlative forms. We cannot construct phrases such as ‘more a’ or ‘most this’!

In addition, we often encounter phrases in which a noun is modified by an expression denoting a number or quantity, as in the following examples:

- (13) (a) Two girls.  
 (b) The second girl.

These examples both contain words denoting numbers, though of different types:

- (14) (a) The ordinary numbers that we use to count people or things are called **cardinal numerals**. These are expressions like ‘one’, ‘two’, ‘three’, and so on.  
 (b) The numbers that we use to place people or things in sequence are called **ordinal numerals**. These are expressions like ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, and so forth.

Numerals that modify nouns, as found in (13), are categorised as ‘determinatives’.

We have now seen that nouns can be modified either by adjectives or by determinatives. We may also note that sometimes a noun is modified by another noun, as in the following example:

- (15) Girls’ successes.

Here the noun ‘successes’ is accompanied by the possessive plural form of the word ‘girl’, which acts as a modifier, inasmuch as it restricts the interpretation of ‘successes’ to those of girls rather than those of boys or anyone else. And as we have already seen, ‘girl’ is a noun, NOT an adjective or a determinative.

When either a noun, or a phrase consisting of a noun together with accompanying modifier(s), occurs within a sentence, it is sometimes described as a ‘nominal’ expression. This is simply because **nominal** is the adjective corresponding to the noun ‘noun’.

### *Pronouns*

Sometimes, the overuse of nouns (together with their accompanying determinatives and adjectives) can lead to a repetitious effect, as in the example in (16a):

- (16) (a) Yesterday I found a large black wallet lying on the pavement, and so I took the large black wallet to the police station.  
 (b) Yesterday I found a large black wallet lying on the pavement, and so I took it to the police station.

Example (16a) contains two almost identical phrases consisting of the noun ‘wallet’ accompanied by three modifiers, namely the determinative ‘a’ or ‘the’ and the adjectives ‘large’ and ‘black’. However, the repetition is avoided in (16b), in which the second mention of the ‘large black wallet’ is replaced by the word ‘it’, which belongs to the category of words known as the class of ‘pronouns’. A **pronoun** is a word which can take the place of a noun — or indeed, as in example (16b), not just a noun but also its accompanying modifiers as well.

There are various types of pronoun. One very common type is that of the **personal pronoun**, of which there are seven in English. The basic forms of these are as follows:

- (17) (a) I, we.  
 (b) You.  
 (c) He, she, it, they.

The two personal pronouns in (17a) are known as the ‘first person’ pronouns. ‘I’ refers to the speaker or writer individually, and is therefore singular, while ‘we’ refers to the speaker or writer as a member of a group of two or more individuals, and is therefore plural. However, both of these **first person** pronouns have in common that they include the speaker or writer.

The personal pronoun in (17b) is called the ‘second person’ pronoun. In English, the same word (‘you’) is used for the singular and the plural, though this not the case in all languages. The **second person** pronoun refers to the listener or reader, but not to the speaker or writer.

The four personal pronouns in (17c) are known as the ‘third person’ pronouns. ‘He’, ‘she’ and ‘it’ are all singular, whereas ‘they’ is plural. Among the singular forms we find a distinction in terms of the grammatical category of **gender**, with ‘he’ being **masculine**, ‘she’ being **feminine**, and ‘it’ being **neuter** (i.e. neither masculine nor feminine). However, what the **third person** pronouns all have in common is that they refer neither to the speaker or writer nor to the listener or reader.

The personal pronouns given in (17) are all listed in their basic forms. However, some of them can also occur in other forms. Firstly, the first person singular pronoun may appear either as ‘I’ or as ‘me’; the first person plural pronoun as ‘we’ or ‘us’; the third person singular masculine pronoun as ‘he’ or ‘him’; the third person singular feminine pronoun as ‘she’ or ‘her’; and the third person plural pronoun as ‘they’ or ‘them’. (We shall come back to this later.) Secondly, each of the personal pronouns has a possessive form:

- (18) (a) My, our (first person singular and first person plural, respectively).  
 (b) Your (second person).  
 (c) His, her, its, their (third person singular (masculine, feminine and neuter) and third person plural, respectively).

Besides personal pronouns, other types of pronoun exist, too. For example, there are the **reflexive pronouns**, namely ‘myself’, ‘ourselves’, ‘yourself’, ‘yourselves’, and so on; the **possessive pronouns**, namely ‘mine’, ‘ours’, ‘yours’, and so forth; and the **reciprocal pronoun** ‘each other’.

Note the distinction between the possessive PRONOUNS (e.g. ‘mine’, ‘ours’) and the possessive FORMS of the PERSONAL pronouns (e.g. ‘my’, ‘your’). In fact, if we prefer, an alternative name is available for the forms ‘my’, ‘your’, and so on — they can also be called **possessive determinatives**, a term that is sometimes used in order to reduce the risk of confusion with ‘possessive pronouns’ (‘mine’, ‘yours’ and so forth).

Note finally that the adjective corresponding to the word ‘pronoun’ is **pronominal**.

### *Verbs*

A **verb** denotes a process, as in the following five examples:

- (19) (a) Walk.  
 (b) Run.  
 (c) Start.  
 (20) (a) Stay.  
 (b) Stand.

The examples in (19) represent **dynamic** processes. These involve some kind of change of state.

For instance, if people walk, then, they move and change their position. On the other hand, the examples in (20) represent **static** processes. For instance, if people are said to ‘stand’, then they are not depicted as moving or changing their state in any other way. (As will be apparent, the term ‘process’ is here being used in a rather broad sense, to cover both dynamic and static situations.)

Verbs may appear in various forms. A key factor in this lies in the grammatical category of **tense**, which can be divided into ‘past’, ‘present’ and ‘future’. However, when enumerating the forms that verbs may take in English (and certain other languages), it is sufficient to distinguish between ‘past tense’ and ‘present tense’. Two examples of a verb in the present tense form are given in (21a) and (21b). The same verb appears in the past tense form in (22).

- (21) (a) I walk.  
 (b) She walks.
- (22) (a) I walked.  
 (b) She walked.

As is apparent, when a verb appears in the present tense, it either occurs in its basic form (as in ‘walk’) or it adds an ending, namely ‘s’ (as in ‘walks’). In the past tense, however, a verb regularly adds a different ending, namely ‘ed’ (as in ‘walked’).

The past tense forms are, as one would expect, normally used to refer to events that have already happened. However, the (so-called) present tense can be used to refer either to the present, as in (23a), or to the future, as in (23b):

- (23) (a) At present she walks two miles every day.  
 (b) The show starts tomorrow.

Note that some English verbs are irregular, especially in the past tense. For instance, the past tense form of ‘stand’ is not ‘standed’ but ‘stood’.

### *Auxiliaries*

Another important point is that there are two different types of verb: **main verbs** and **auxiliaries**. The purpose of auxiliaries is to combine with main verbs to produce more complex verb forms. The examples given above (‘walk’, ‘run’, ‘stay’ and ‘stand’) are all main verbs, as indeed are most of the verbs in the language. However, in the following examples, the main verb is shown as being accompanied by auxiliaries:

- (24) (a) He is walking.  
 (b) He was walking.  
 (c) He has walked.  
 (d) He had walked.

In (24a), the main verb ‘walking’ is accompanied by the auxiliary ‘is’, which belongs to the present tense of the verb ‘be’. The verb ‘be’ is highly irregular — its present tense forms are enumerated in (25) and its past tense forms in (26). In both (25) and (26), the verb form (e.g. ‘am’ or ‘are’ or ‘was’) is placed alongside the personal pronoun (e.g. ‘I’ or ‘we’) with which it is associated.

- (25) (a) I am, we are (first person singular and first person plural, respectively).  
 (b) You are (second person).  
 (c) He/she/it is, they are (third person singular and third person plural, respectively).  
 (26) (a) I was, we were (first person singular and first person plural, respectively).  
 (b) You were (second person).  
 (c) He/she/it was, they were (third person singular and third person plural, respectively).

When we list the different verb forms associated with the various combinations of person (first, second and third) and number (singular and plural), as in (25) and (26), then we are said to be **conjugating** the verb.

Returning to (24a) (‘he is walking’), we find the appropriate form of the present tense of auxiliary ‘be’ (namely ‘is’), followed by a form of the main verb ‘walk’ to which the ending ‘ing’ has been added. This combination of the present tense of the auxiliary ‘be’ + the appropriate form of the following verb produces the **present progressive** form (in the present example, that of the verb ‘walk’).

The present progressive (‘is walking’) is to be distinguished from the unaccompanied main verb, which we see in the following example:

- (27) He walks.

Here we have the present tense form of the main verb (‘walks’), but no auxiliaries — an arrangement that is known as the **simple present** form of the verb concerned.

In the past tense, there are various forms that the verb can take. If the main verb occurs in the past tense with no accompanying auxiliaries, as in (28), then we have the **simple past** form (in this instance, that of the verb ‘walk’):

- (28) He walked.

However, in (24b) (‘he was walking’), we find the past tense of the auxiliary ‘be’ (i.e. ‘was’) + the



main verb (i.e. ‘walking’). The resulting phrase (‘was walking’) constitutes the **past progressive** form of the verb ‘walk’).

Example (24c) (‘He has walked’) contains the auxiliary ‘has’ — which is the third person singular, present tense form of the verb ‘have’ — followed by the main verb ‘walked’, which is a form of the verb ‘walk’. This combination gives the **perfect** form of the verb concerned.

In example (24d) (‘he had walked’), we find a similar construction, except that here we find the PAST tense of the auxiliary ‘have’ (namely ‘had’) + the main verb ‘walked’. The resulting phrase (‘had walked’) constitutes the **pluperfect** form of the verb concerned (in this case, that of the verb ‘walk’).

When we study other languages, we may encounter other forms of the verb, in addition to those mentioned so far. One of these additional forms is called the ‘imperfect’ and another is termed the ‘future perfect’. The **imperfect tense** carries a meaning which is somewhat similar to (or, at least, overlaps with) that of the English past progressive, mentioned above. On the other hand, the **future perfect tense** represents a process viewed from some time in the future — by which point the process will lie in the past. An example is found in the following:

(29) The parcel will have arrived by next Tuesday.

Here the arrival of the parcel is presented from the vantage-point of next Tuesday, which currently lies in the future. However, by the time next Tuesday comes along, the arrival of the parcel will have taken place and will therefore, from that future vantage-point, lie in the past (even though it may not yet have been accomplished). In our example, which is typical, the future perfect is expressed by means of the auxiliaries ‘will’ and ‘have’, combined with the main verb.

It should also be noted that whenever auxiliaries combine with a main verb in English, the auxiliaries have to be placed before the main verb that they accompany. Consequently, the main verb occupies the final position within any given verb sequence. All the above examples that contain auxiliaries conform to this principle.

### *Adverbs*

Earlier, we considered two classes of word that acted as modifiers of other words, namely adjectives and determinatives. **Adverbs**, too, serve to modify other words, but whereas adjectives and determinatives generally modify only nouns, adverbs can modify other classes of word as well, notably adjectives and verbs. Examples of adverbs are the words ‘extremely’ and ‘quickly’, found in the following examples:

- (30) (a) It was extremely expensive.  
 (b) She quickly walked across the yard.

In (30a) the adjective ‘expensive’ is modified by the adverb ‘extremely’, resulting in a more precise meaning than the adjective would have had if the adverb had been absent. In (30b) the verb ‘walked’ is modified by the adverb ‘quickly’, again resulting in a more fully articulated meaning than the verb would have had on its own.

### *Prepositions*

A **preposition** usually indicates some kind of relationship, for instance of place or time. Examples are the words ‘on’ and ‘at’ in the following expressions:

- (31) (a) The carpet on the floor.  
 (b) The programme at midnight.

In (31a) the place of the carpet in relation to the floor is indicated by the preposition ‘on’, which means (in this case) that it is in contact with, but marginally higher than, the floor. In (31b) the starting time of the television programme in relation to midnight is indicated by the preposition ‘at’, which means (in this example) that the two times coincide.

### *Conjunctions*

A **conjunction** serves to join two (or more) parts of a sentence. There are two types of conjunction: ‘coordinating conjunctions’ and ‘subordinating conjunctions’. For now, we shall deal just with coordinating conjunctions, whereas subordinating conjunctions will be considered later on.

A **coordinating conjunction** serves to join two (or more) elements that are performing a similar role within a sentence. An example is the word ‘and’, seen in the following:

- (32) She walked quickly and determinedly.

In this sentence, the adverbs ‘quickly’ and ‘determinedly’ are both acting as modifiers of the verb ‘walked’. The conjunction ‘and’ joins them together in this shared role.

### *Interjections*

An **interjection** is usually a word that serves as an exclamation, and stands somewhat apart from the rest of the sentence. ‘Oh!’ and ‘Hey!’ are (polite) examples.

### *Overlap among Word Classes*

We have now listed all the main word classes found in English. However, we now need to deal

with an important complication, namely that there is a certain amount of overlap between the categories. That is to say, some words belong to more than one class. Here are some examples.

Firstly, there is a good deal of overlap in English between nouns and verbs. For instance, in (33a), the word ‘book’ is a noun (denoting an object), whereas in (33b) ‘book’ is a main verb (denoting a process):

- (33) (a) The black book is on the shelf.  
 (b) He must book a ticket.

Deciding the class to which a word such as ‘book’ belongs within a given sentence involves considering the function that it is performing within the particular sentence concerned.

Secondly, the verbs ‘be’, ‘have’ and ‘do’ can be either main verbs or auxiliaries. In (34) they are all main verbs, and there are no accompanying auxiliaries:

- (34) (a) The book is old.  
 (b) The books have leather covers.  
 (c) The men do their job.

However, in (35), the same words all appear as auxiliaries:

- (35) (a) The girl is running.  
 (b) The girls have run.  
 (c) The girls really do run.

In (35a), the word ‘is’ (which is, of course, a form of the verb ‘be’) is an auxiliary that accompanies the main verb ‘running’, which is, clearly, a form of the verb ‘run’. (Remember that the main verb occupies the final position within any given verb sequence.) In (35b) the same main verb (‘run’) is accompanied by the auxiliary ‘have’ and in (35c) by the auxiliary ‘do’.

Thirdly, consider words to which the ending ‘ing’ has been added. Examples are found in the following expressions:

- (36) (a) The cook is testing a new recipe.  
 (b) The students sat a testing examination.  
 (c) Further testing is required.

We have already seen instances of main verbs ending in ‘ing’, and (36a) provides us with another example (namely the word ‘testing’, which is a form of the verb ‘test’). However, in (36b), the main verb is not ‘test’ but ‘sat’, while ‘testing’ is an adjective modifying the noun ‘examination’. As for (36c), here the word ‘testing’ is a noun, accompanied by the adjective ‘further’, which serves

to modify it.

Fourthly, many determinatives lead a double life as pronouns, as may be seen with the help of the following examples:

- (37) (a) That girl is running.  
 (b) Look at that!
- (38) (a) She wears three rings.  
 (b) He does not wear any rings, but she wears three.

In (37a), the word ‘that’ is a determinative, acting as a modifier of the noun ‘girl’. However, with regard to (37b), suppose that this sentence is spoken by someone who has just noticed an interesting old building and wants to draw it to the attention of someone else. In that case, the word ‘that’ in (37b) is a pronoun, standing in for the phrase ‘the interesting old building’, which is composed of a noun (‘building’) together with three modifiers. Again, in (38a), the cardinal numeral ‘three’ is a determinative, and acts as a modifier of the noun ‘rings’. On the other hand, in (38b), the word ‘three’ is a pronoun, standing in for the longer phrase ‘three rings’.

### *Alternative Methods of Grammatical Expression*

As we have seen, some classes of word can appear in different forms. For example, nouns may be singular or plural, and may (or may not) also be possessive; many adjectives may occur in comparative or superlative versions; and verbs may appear in several different forms. In such cases, we identify one form as ‘basic’ and regard the other forms as derived from this.

When a word changes from its basic form, we say that it is **inflected**. Some examples are as follows:

- (39) (a) Girl (basic form of the noun ‘girl’).  
 (b) Girls, girl’s, girls’ (inflected forms of the noun ‘girl’).
- (40) (a) New (basic form of the adjective ‘new’).  
 (b) Newer, newest (inflected forms of the adjective ‘new’).
- (41) (a) Walk (basic form of the verb ‘walk’).  
 (b) Walks, walked, walking (inflected forms of the verb ‘walk’).

In all of these examples, the inflected forms have had an ending (or **suffix**) added to them. In such cases, we can analyse the inflected word into two parts: the suffix and the remainder of the word (i.e. the part that has had the ending added to it), which is known as the **stem**. For instance, if we analyse the word ‘girls’, we have:

- (42) (a) Stem = ‘girl’.  
 (b) Suffix = ‘s’. (The suffix may alternatively be called the **inflection**.)

In irregular cases in English, words are sometimes inflected not by adding an ending but by some other kind of change. For instance, the noun ‘man’ forms its plural not by adding the ending ‘s’ but by changing into the form ‘men’.

Sometimes the grammar of a language employs more than one means of expressing a particular kind of meaning. A good example is the formation of the comparative and superlative forms of the adjective in English. As we have seen, certain adjectives (e.g. ‘new’) achieve the comparative and superlative forms (‘newer’ and ‘newest’, respectively) by means of inflection. However, other adjectives (e.g. ‘expensive’) do not employ inflection for this purpose, but instead COMBINE with other words (‘more’ and ‘most’, respectively), in order to show the comparative and superlative.

We say that adjectives like ‘new’ employ the **inflectional** method of indicating the comparative and superlative. On the other hand, adjectives like ‘expensive’ use the **periphrastic** method.

The terms ‘inflectional’ and ‘periphrastic’ are also relevant to various forms that the verb may take. In English, the simple past (e.g. ‘walked’) is formed by adding an ending, thus employing the inflectional method. However, in the progressive and perfect forms, we find a periphrastic construction, insofar as the progressive form requires the combination of ‘be’ with the main verb, while the perfect form demands the combination of ‘have’ with the main verb.

### *Particles*

There are some words that do not fit comfortably into any of the word classes that we have considered above. Such words may be termed **particles**. An example may be seen in (43):

- (43) To leave.

Here, the verb ‘leave’ appears in a form known as the **infinitive**, which is characterised in English by the occurrence of the word ‘to’ immediately before the verb itself. Accordingly, we can say that in the kind of context exemplified by (43), the word ‘to’ constitutes the **infinitive marker**.

Now, the word ‘to’ will, in most contexts, be classed as a preposition, as in the following instances:

- (44) (a) To me.  
 (b) To Aberystwyth.  
 (c) To distant lands.

These examples illustrate the fact that ‘to’, like other prepositions, is typically followed by either a pronominal expression, as exemplified by the pronoun ‘me’ in (44a), or a nominal expression, as illustrated in (44b-c) — the nominal expressions in question being the noun ‘Aberystwyth’ in (44b) and the phrase ‘distant lands’ in (44c), which contains the noun ‘lands’, accompanied by the modifier ‘distant’.

However, as we have noted, in (43) the word ‘to’ is followed not by a nominal or pronominal expression but by a verb. Such an arrangement is uncharacteristic of prepositions, and therefore it is preferable not to classify ‘to’ as a preposition in this kind of instance. On the other hand, the word ‘to’ in (44a-c) does not belong to any of the other word classes either. Consequently we may regard it as a particle.

A rather different kind of particle is the word ‘anyway’ in (45):

(45)        Anyway, let’s move on to the next question.

Here, the word ‘anyway’ serves to prepare the way for an onward shift (or progression) of topic within a talk or conversation. Again, it does not fit comfortably into any of the standard word classes, and so we may treat it as a particle.

## Sentences

So far our attention has been focused mainly on the individual words of which sentences consist. However, let us now move on to consider some broader characteristics of the sentence.

### *Types of Sentence*

Most sentences belong to one of three types, which we call ‘statements,’ ‘questions’ and ‘commands.’ Here is an example of each:

- (46) (a) He built a new wall.  
       (b) Who built a new wall?  
       (c) Build a new wall!

A **statement** is, generally, an assertion of some fact or belief, as in example (46a). (A statement may also be called a **declarative** sentence.) A **question** (or **interrogative** sentence) is a request for information, as in example (46b). A **command** (or **imperative** sentence) is an instruction or request to someone to perform some service or other, as in example (46c).

Each of these three sentence-types can occur in either a positive or a negative form. A negative example of each type is found in the following:

- (47) (a) He did not built a new wall.  
 (b) Who did not build a new wall?  
 (c) Do not build a new wall!

These examples are all **negative** because each of them contains an element of denial. In (47a) and (47b) it is denied that a supposed action (of ‘building’) took place, while in (47c) there is a denial of permission. On the other hand, the examples in (46) are not negative but **affirmative**.

### *Elements*

Generally, sentences can be divided into parts, known as ‘elements’. An **element** is a word or group of words that plays an identifiable role within the sentence of which it forms part. Let us begin with the following example:

- (48) People eat.

This sentence can be divided into two parts: ‘people’ and ‘eat’. The second of these elements comprises the verb ‘eat’, which denotes a dynamic process, while the other element tells us who performs that process, namely ‘people’. The following example is similar, but this time both elements consist of a group of words:

- (49) Hungry people will eat.

Here the process is described by the two-word phrase ‘will eat’ and the performer of the action is indicated by the two-word expression ‘hungry people’.

### *Verbal Element and Subject*

The part of the sentence containing the verb is, for obvious reasons, called the **verbal element**. Hence, the verbal element in (48) is ‘eat’ and the verbal element in (49) is ‘will eat’. Furthermore in most English sentences, the verbal element is preceded by an element which we call the ‘subject’. Often (though not always, as we shall see below), the **subject** represents the entity that performs the process denoted by the verbal element. Thus, in (48), ‘people’ is the subject and tells us who does the eating. The same is true of the phrase ‘hungry people’ in (49).

As we saw earlier (when we were talking about how a verb may ‘conjugate’), the form of the verb will sometimes vary in terms of the grammatical categories of ‘person’ and ‘number’, depending on what accompanies it. We can now be a little more precise about this, and point out that is the ‘subject’ that determines the form that the verb takes.

- (50) (a) I am eating.  
 (b) He is eating.  
 (c) They are eating.

In (50a), the subject is ‘I’ and the verbal element is ‘am eating’. The subject is first person singular, and the appropriate form of (the present tense of) the verb ‘be’ in this circumstance is ‘am’. In (50b), the subject is ‘he’ and the verbal element is ‘is eating’. This time the subject is third person singular, and the appropriate form of the verb ‘be’ turns out to be ‘is’. In (50c), the subject is ‘they’, and the verbal element is ‘are eating’. This time the subject is third person plural, and the appropriate form of the verb ‘be’ is ‘are’. When the correct form of a verb is determined by the person and number of the subject, as has just been illustrated, we say that the verb concerned **agrees** with the subject in terms of person and number.

An important point to note is that if the verbal element contains more than one verb, as happens in (50), then in English it is only the **FIRST** verb in the sequence that can vary in relation to the person and number of the subject. This verb is known as the **finite** verb. The remaining verb(s) — described as **non-finite** — do not vary in that manner. By way of illustration, in (50a) the finite verb is ‘am’, while the non-finite verb is ‘eating’; and in (51) below the finite verb is the auxiliary ‘have’, while the non-finite verbs are the auxiliary ‘been’ (a form of the verb ‘be’) and the main verb ‘eating’ (a form of the verb ‘eat’):

- (51) I have been eating.

The notion of ‘finite’ verb will also be important when we consider the construction of questions, below.

Another issue that may arise when dealing with verbal elements is that of whether the state-of-affairs described by a particular sentence is actually the case or merely hypothetical. The grammatical category that relates to this issue is known as **mood**. Various types of mood may be distinguished, notably the following.

One type is called the **conditional mood**. This is used when a state-of-affairs is presented as being true if something else is also true. An example is the following:

- (52) The cats would eat if they were hungry.

In this sentence, the verbal element ‘would eat’ can be described as ‘conditional’, since whether the cats eat or not depends on a particular condition being fulfilled — namely, that they are hungry.

In English the conditional mood is usually expressed in the verb phrase by means of the auxiliary ‘would’, combined with the main verb (in the present case ‘eat’). There is also the option of inserting the auxiliary ‘have’, as well, to produce the **conditional perfect**, as in the following:



(53) The cats would have eaten if they had been hungry.

Here, the verbal element ‘would have eaten’ represents the conditional perfect, and it conveys a hypothetical meaning. The implication is clearly that actually the cats have not eaten, and that therefore their eating is merely a hypothetical possibility in this instance.

In some languages (though only to a very limited extent in English) we find that states-of-affairs that are merely hypothetical, at least for the moment, may be represented by means of the **subjunctive mood**. An example is found in the following:

(54) The dog would eat if its food were ready.

Here we find the form ‘were’ representing the subjunctive. Normally, ‘were’ is found with a plural subject, whereas with a singular subject, such as ‘its food’ (as opposed to ‘its foods’), we would normally find ‘was’ representing the past tense of the verb ‘be’. The fact that the form ‘were’ occurs, instead, signals the fact that the subjunctive mood is being used. Of course, the subjunctive is not compulsory here, and one could just as well have said:

(55) The dog would eat if its food was ready.

Note that unlike the conditional mood, the subjunctive does not involve the use of the auxiliary ‘would’.

In sentences that function as commands, the verb often appears in the **imperative mood**. In English this is identical to the basic form of the verb concerned, for instance ‘sit’ in the following command:

(56) Sit down!

Usually the subject of imperative verbs is not expressed, but is understood to be ‘you’. Nevertheless, it is possible to include the subject for the sake of emphasis:

(57) You sit down!

However, the majority of sentences do not include any of the three moods (conditional, subjunctive or imperative) just described, but rather, they exhibit the **indicative mood**. Examples can be found in the statement (58a) and the question 58b):

(58) (a) She was happy  
 (b) Was she happy?

In both these examples, we can rule out the imperative mood (since the sentences do not constitute commands), the conditional mood (since the auxiliary ‘would’ is not employed) and the subjunctive mood (since the past tense of the verb ‘be’, with a singular subject (‘she’) appears as ‘was’ rather than ‘were’). By process of elimination, then, the verbs in our two examples are in the indicative mood.

It has to be admitted that the distinction between the indicative and the subjunctive is not always straightforward. However, for present purposes it suffices that the existence of this distinction has, at least, been pointed out.

### *Object*

In some sentences the verbal element is accompanied not only by a subject but also by an ‘object’ — for instance the word ‘boat’ in (59a) or the expression ‘the boats’ in (59b):

- (59) (a) Local engineers repair boats.  
 (b) Local engineers repair the boats.  
 (c) They repair them.

In both these examples, the verbal element is ‘repair’ and the subject is ‘local engineers’. Accordingly, the sentences convey the fact that the dynamic process of repairing is performed by local engineers. The **object** of a sentence, on the other hand, denotes the entity that undergoes the process concerned. Thus, in (59a) it is ‘boats’ that undergo repair, and likewise ‘the boats’ in (59b). In English, the object normally follows the verbal element (as in the examples just given), whereas the subject normally precedes it.

In (59c) the object is ‘them’, while the subject is ‘they’. As pointed out earlier, ‘they’ and ‘them’ are both forms of the third person plural pronoun. The form ‘they’ is used when the pronoun is acting as the subject, whereas the form ‘them’ is employed when it is acting as the object.

In some sentences there are two objects, for instance the following:

- (60) (a) The judge awarded the policeman fifty pounds.  
 (b) The judge fined the policeman fifty pounds.

In such cases, the element that denotes the entity that undergoes the process described by the verbal element is called the **direct object**. The other object, known as the **indirect object**, represents the entity (often a person) that is advantaged or disadvantaged by the process denoted by the verbal element. For instance, in (60a) the judge (subject) performed the process of awarding (represented by the verbal element ‘awarded’) fifty pounds (direct object, representing the entity that underwent

the awarding process). The person who gained advantage from this was the policeman (indirect object). Example (60b) is similar, except that in this instance the process (denoted by the verbal element) is one of fining rather than awarding, and so the policeman (again, indirect object), is disadvantaged rather than advantaged by the process concerned.

### *Complement*

Some verbs, for instance ‘be’, cannot take an object, but can, instead, be followed by a ‘complement’. Examples can be found in the following sentences:

- (61) (a) Timothy is the president.  
 (b) They are former presidents.

In (61a) the verbal element is represented by ‘is’ (a form of the verb ‘be’), and is preceded by the subject ‘Timothy’. Now, here we have an example (as promised earlier) of a subject that does not represent the performer of a process. After all, ‘being’ something does not, in and of itself, actually involve *doing* anything. Nevertheless, we still regard ‘Timothy’ as the subject here. This is because firstly, ‘Timothy’ stands before the verbal element (which is the normal position for the subject), and secondly, ‘Timothy’ determines the form in which the finite verb appears. In (61a), the subject (‘Timothy’) is third person singular and is therefore followed by the verb-form ‘is’, whereas in (61b), the subject (‘they’), which is third person plural, is accompanied by the verb-form ‘are’.

In (61a), the remaining element is ‘the president’, and this represents the ‘complement’. A **complement** is an element which normally follows the verbal element in English, and which is required to complete the meaning expressed by the subject and verbal element. (Clearly, ‘Timothy is ...’ would be incomplete, if it were not followed by anything.) However, it is not an object — after all, ‘the president’ in (61a) is not undergoing any process, but is simply identified with Timothy. (On a point of terminology, the term **predicative element** is sometimes used to describe the complement of a sentence.) In (61b) the complement is ‘former presidents’.

A complement can take various forms, as is apparent from the following examples:

- (62) (a) Timothy is chairman.  
 (b) Timothy is a good chairman.  
 (c) The new desk is mine.  
 (d) Timothy is tall.  
 (e) Timothy is extremely tall.

In (62a) the complement is an individual noun (‘chairman’), while in (62b) it is a noun (‘chairman’) accompanied by two modifiers (the determinative ‘a’ and the adjective ‘good’); whereas in (62c)

the subject is ‘the new desk’ and the complement is a pronoun (the possessive pronoun ‘mine’). However, in (62d) the complement is an adjective (‘tall’) and in (62e) it is an adjective accompanied by a modifying adverb (‘extremely’). Objects, on the other hand, cannot be represented by adjective-based expressions in the manner of these last two examples.

### *Adverbials*

The other main type of element that we need to consider is called an **adverbial**, whose usual role is to add information relating to the circumstances surrounding the process represented by the verbal element, or sometimes information relating to the sentence as a whole. Some examples are found in (63):

- (63) (a) The girl ran quickly.  
 (b) The girl ran extremely quickly.  
 (c) The girl ran in school.  
 (d) The girl ran on Friday.  
 (e) The girl ran miles.  
 (f) The girl ran four miles.

In all of these examples, the subject is ‘the girl’ and the verbal element is ‘ran’ (denoting the dynamic process performed by the girl concerned). In each case the verbal element is followed not by an object or complement but an adverbial. In (63a) the adverbial consists of a single adverb (‘quickly’), and denotes the manner in which the action portrayed by the verb is carried out. Example (63b) is similar, but now the adverbial is composed of two adverbs (‘extremely’ and ‘quickly’). In (63c) the adverbial is ‘in school’, which is a preposition-based expression, introduced by the preposition ‘in’, followed by the noun ‘school’. This adverbial indicates the place in which the action was performed. In (63d), the adverbial is ‘on Friday’, which is again a preposition-based expression, this time the preposition being ‘on’, followed by the noun ‘Friday’. It indicates the time when the action took place. In (63e), the adverbial is ‘miles’, a noun, and in (63f) the adverbial is ‘four miles’, with the noun being accompanied by the numeral ‘four’ acting as its modifier. In both of these cases the adverbial indicates the distance run. (Note that ‘miles’ in (63e) is NOT the object, as the distance cannot be said to undergo the action of running — rather, it gives a measure of that action.) As will be apparent, adverbials can express a variety of types of meaning, and can be expressed by several different types of grammatical structure.

An illustration of an adverbial providing additional information about the sentence as a whole is found in the following sentences, in which the adverbial concerned is ‘certainly’:

- (64) (a) Certainly, the girl ran quickly.  
 (b) The girl certainly ran quickly.  
 (c) The girl ran quickly, certainly.

In these examples, ‘certainly’ does not tell us of the manner in which the girl ran (in other words, it does NOT mean that she ran sure-footedly or with firm resolve). Rather, it indicates the high degree of confidence that the speaker or writer has when offering the opinion about the entire proposition that the girl ran quickly. In other words, any of the three examples might be paraphrased: ‘it is certainly true that the girl ran quickly’. The examples also illustrate two other characteristics of adverbials, namely that (i) they can often be moved around the sentence more readily than other types of element, and (ii) frequently we find more than one adverbial occurring together within a sentence (in this instance, the adverbials being ‘certainly’ and ‘quickly’).

Note that the terms ‘adverbial’ and ‘adverb’ should not be confused with one another. An ‘adverbial’ is an element of a SENTENCE, whereas an ‘adverb’ is a type of WORD. And as examples (63c-f) clearly illustrate, it is possible to find adverbials that do not contain any adverbs at all.

### *Relationships between Elements*

Sometimes, when we describe the ways in which sentences are constructed, we need to consider more than one element at a time. An example that we have already come across is the way in which the finite verb (part of the verbal element) agrees with the subject.

Furthermore, it is possible to categorise verbal elements according to what accompanies them. If a verbal element is accompanied by an object, as for instance in (59), then it is said to be **transitive**. Alternatively, if a verbal element is accompanied by a complement, as in (61), then it is said to be **intensive**. Finally, if it is accompanied by neither an object nor a complement, as for example in (63) or (64), then it is termed **intransitive**.

### *Clauses*

Another important matter to consider is the possibility that an individual sentence may contain more than one verbal element, as in the following example:

- (65) She ran and he walked.

Here, there are two verbal elements, ‘ran’ and ‘walked’. Each has its own subject: ‘she’ is the subject of ‘ran’, while ‘he’ is the subject of ‘walked’. In cases like this, we say that the sentence contains more than one ‘clause’, and normally there are as many clauses as there are verbal elements. A **clause**, then, is generally a structure that contains a verbal element, which is usually

accompanied by other elements (a subject and perhaps a complement or object(s), and possibly one or more adverbial).

A rather different example appears in example (66a):

- (66) (a) Ann said Timothy was pleasant.  
 (b) Ann said something.

Let us begin, however, by considering (66b), in which ‘Ann’ is the subject, ‘said’ is the verbal element and ‘something’ is the object. Now, in (66a), we again find the verbal element ‘said’ and its subject ‘Ann’, but instead of the word ‘something’ we find the expression ‘Timothy was pleasant’ as the object of ‘said’. Clearly, this expression contains its own verbal element (‘was’), whose subject is ‘Timothy’ and whose complement is ‘pleasant’. Hence, ‘Timothy was pleasant’ constitutes a clause. Consequently, sentence (66a) consists of two clauses. Moreover, one of those clauses (‘Timothy was pleasant’) is playing a role (namely, in this example, the role of ‘object’) within the other clause.

A clause that forms part of another clause, and plays a particular role within it, is known as a **subordinate clause**. If, on the other hand, a clause is not subordinate to any other clause, then it is classed as a **main clause**. Accordingly, in (66a) the clause whose subject is ‘Ann’, whose verbal element is ‘said’ and whose object is ‘Timothy was pleasant’ constitutes a main clause, whereas the structure ‘Timothy was pleasant’, whose subject is ‘Timothy’, whose verbal element is ‘was’ and whose complement is ‘pleasant’, constitutes a subordinate clause. On the other hand, in (65) neither clause forms part of the other, and so the sentence consists of two main clauses.

Sometimes a clause will be introduced by a conjunction, which serves to connect it to the rest of the sentence. For instance, in (65) the second main clause is introduced by the conjunction ‘and’, while in (67), the conjunction ‘that’ has been inserted into the sentence in order to introduce the subordinate clause:

- (67) Ann said that Timothy was pleasant.

A conjunction that introduces a subordinate clause is called a **subordinating conjunction**, an example being ‘that’ in (67). However, the conjunction ‘and’ in (65) does not introduce a subordinate clause, and is therefore NOT a subordinating conjunction. Rather, it is a coordinating conjunction.

Subordinate clauses may play a variety of roles within sentences. In (63a) we have seen an example of a subordinate clause functioning as an object. However, other possibilities may be found, too, as we shall now see.

In (68a) the subordinate clause ‘that Timothy was pleasant’ appears not as the object but as the subject of the main clause. The remainder of the main clause consists of a verbal element (‘helped’) and an adverbial element (‘greatly’).

- (68) (a) That Timothy was pleasant helped greatly.  
 (b) The good thing is that Timothy was pleasant.

However, in (68b) the subordinate clause ‘that Timothy was pleasant’ acts as the complement within the main clause, which also contains a subject (‘the good thing’) and a verbal element (‘is’).

We have just seen examples of subordinate clauses functioning as the subject or as the object of another clause. Such subordinate clauses are sometimes called **nominal clauses**. The reason is that in the case of sentences that do NOT contain a subordinate clause, the roles of subject and object are often fulfilled by nouns (possibly with accompanying modifiers). Accordingly, nominal clauses occur in roles (such as subject or object) that we associate with nouns.

Next, let us see a couple of examples in which the subordinate clause is not the subject, object or complement of the main clause, but functions as an adverbial:

- (69) (a) They groaned when he arrived.  
 (b) They would groan if he were to arrive.

In (69a) the main clause consists of a subject (‘they’), a verbal element (‘groaned’) and an adverbial (‘when he arrived’) which indicates the time when the action of groaning took place. This adverbial is a subordinate clause, introduced by the subordinating conjunction ‘when’, followed by a subject (‘he’) and a verbal element (‘arrived’). In (69b) the main clause again consists of a subject (‘they’), a verbal element (‘would groan’) and an adverbial (‘if he were to arrive’), but the latter specifies the condition under which the action of groaning would take place. This adverbial is a subordinate clause, introduced by the subordinating conjunction ‘if’, followed by a subject (‘he’) and a verbal element (‘were to arrive’). As might be expected, a clause that indicates the condition under which a process will or would occur is known as a **conditional** clause, and in English it usually starts with ‘if’.

Yet another type of subordinate clause is what is known as a **relative clause**, whose purpose is to modify a noun or pronoun. Examples are found in the following sentences:

- (70) (a) The baby likes things which make a noise.  
 (b) You who understand these things can teach the rest of us.

In (70a) the main clause is composed of a subject (‘the baby’), a verbal element (‘likes’) and an object (‘things which make a noise’). The object consists of a noun (‘things’) and a subordinate clause (‘which make a noise’), which serves to modify (or to make more precise the meaning of) the noun ‘things’, which on its own would have had a very broad scope of meaning. The relative clause ‘which make a noise’ consists internally of a subject (‘which’), a verbal element (‘make’) and an object (‘a noise’). In (70b) the main clause opens with a subject (‘you who know about

these things) followed by a verbal element ('can teach') and an object ('the rest of us'). Within the subject we find a pronoun ('you') followed by a subordinate clause ('who understand these things'), which modifies the pronoun and is therefore a relative clause. Internally the relative clause consists of a subject ('who'), a verbal element ('understand') and an object ('these things').

### *Patterns*

When we examine the structure of sentences, we find that it is possible to identify certain characteristic arrangements of words or elements. Such arrangements are known as **patterns**. Let us consider some examples from English.

In statements, the usual arrangement is for the subject to precede the verbal element, and for the latter, in turn, to precede any object(s) or complement, as in the following examples:

- (71) (a) He has written a book.  
 (b) She is patient.

In (71a), the subject ('he') is followed by the verbal element ('has written') and the object ('a book'), while in (71b) the subject ('she') is followed by the verbal element ('is') followed by the complement ('patient').

However, in most questions, a different pattern occurs, as in the following cases:

- (72) (a) Has he written a book?  
 (b) Is she patient?

In (72a) the finite verb ('has') precedes the subject ('he'). This is the opposite order from that which is found in the corresponding statement, and so the pattern may be described as the **inversion** of the subject and the finite verb. However, the non-finite verb ('written') follows the subject and is itself followed by the object. In (72b), the finite verb ('is') again precedes the subject ('she'). This time there is no non-finite verb, and the sentence ends with the complement ('patient').

Another way of constructing a question is to use a statement pattern, followed by a 'tag', as in the following:

- (73) (a) She is patient, isn't she?  
 (b) She isn't patient, is she?

A **tag** is a short structure appended to a statement, and consists of a finite verb and a personal pronoun. In (73a) the tag is 'isn't she' (which is a negative form, as indicated by the presence of *n't*, which is a contraction of 'not'), while in (73b) the tag is 'is she' (which is an affirmative form).

Sometimes an element other than the subject is placed at the beginning of the sentence, thus



causing a departure from the usual pattern. An example is as follows:

(74) This I must see.

Here, 'I' is the subject, 'must see' is the verbal element and 'this' is the object, which has been given additional prominence by being placed first, resulting in an **emphatic pattern**.

### *Passive and Impersonal Constructions*

Two other patterns are worth mentioning here, both of which have in common that they break the usual link between the subject of the sentence or clause and the performer of the process denoted by the verbal element. The first pattern that we shall consider is the 'passive'.

Compare the following sentences:

- (75) (a) Joe composed the music.  
 (b) The music was composed by Joe.

In (75a) the subject is 'Joe', the verbal element is 'composed' and the object is 'the music'. However, in (75b) the subject is 'the music' and the verbal element is 'was composed'. The final element 'by Joe' is introduced by the preposition 'by', which means that 'by Joe' is a preposition-based expression. When a preposition-based expression stands as an element of the sentence, the element involved is normally classified as an adverbial, and accordingly, this is how we shall regard 'by Joe' in our example.

In (75a) the subject ('Joe') DOES represent the performer of the action (of composing). The pattern seen in this sentence, in which the subject is the performer of the process, is called the **active** construction. However, (75b) has been formed by taking the object from the active sentence (75a) and turning it into the subject of (75b), thus producing the corresponding **passive** construction. Conversely, the subject of the active sentence has been made into an adverbial in the passive sentence. The performer of the action (of composing) in the passive sentence (75b) is represented NOT by the subject ('the music') but by the adverbial element ('by Joe').

The form of the verb has changed as well. In the active sentence (75a) the verbal element contains (in this simple instance) just the main verb 'composed' (a form of the verb 'compose'). However, in the passive sentence (75b) the auxiliary 'was' (a form of 'be') has been inserted immediately before the main verb 'composed'.

It may be noted that if an active sentence contains not an object but a complement, as in (76), then it is NOT possible to make it the subject of a corresponding passive sentence.

(76) Joe was a composer.

In this sentence, ‘Joe’ is the subject, ‘was’ is the verbal element and ‘a composer’ is the complement. Clearly, we cannot turn this into ‘a composer was been by Joe’! This difference between complements and objects is one of the reasons why we regard them as different types of element.

In the case of some passive sentences, the speaker or writer may refrain from stating who or what performed the process in the verbal element, as in the following example:

(77) The bank was robbed.

We may use this rather impersonal-sounding pattern if, for example, we do not know who carried out the action, or if we would prefer not to say.

There is another type of **impersonal** construction in which the subject is included, but does not really refer to anything, as in the following examples:

- (78) (a) It is the Eisteddfod next August.  
 (b) There is a holiday next Monday.

In (78a) the subject is ‘it’, which occupies the usual position for a subject, namely before the verbal element (‘is’). However, the word ‘it’ does not contribute anything meaningful to this sentence. In (78b) the subject is ‘there’, again taking its due place before the verbal element. However, in this sentence ‘there’ does not serve to indicate any specific location. Rather, it merely indicates the existence of the state-of-affairs described by the rest of the sentence, but without actually referring to anything itself.

### **Closing Remarks**

In order to make this Introduction to Grammatical Terminology brief, it has been necessary to make simplifications and to leave out many things that could have been added. For further information, the reader is recommended to consult a textbook on English Grammar from a reputable publisher.

The final point to be borne in mind is that every language has a different grammar. Furthermore, we sometimes find that grammatical terms are used slightly differently, depending on the language to which they are being applied. This Introduction to Grammatical Terminology should therefore be regarded as a starting point, but it is prudent to be adaptable when moving from English to other languages.