

The Complete Grammar Guide for IGCSE English Students

*Unlock Grammar and Conquer  
Your IGCSE English Exams!*

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Victor Tan

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## Foreword

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As many educators and students preparing for IGCSE English Language examinations have found, much of the exam's focus lies in language analysis or understanding the form and function of the English language.

In many cases, grammatical instruction isn't a primary focus of many schools or institutions once a student gets to Years 10 or 11, despite the fact that it's common to see grammatical worksheets in student homework when they are at earlier ages. By the time students get to the point of taking the IGCSE, it is common to observe that they've forgotten many of the things that they've studied, or simply never learned these things in the first place.

Consequently, students often find it challenging to get a comprehensive and systematic understanding of English grammar that could provide a solid foundation for their language mastery. This gap in the current educational resources presents a significant need for a dedicated grammar book tailored to the IGCSE English Language examinations.

To a degree, English as a Second Language does resolve this, although not in a comprehensive way... But discussions of grammar are certainly lacking in First Language English curricula, perhaps because the focus is more on language analysis than it is on the mechanics of grammar.

And that's precisely where the book we're discussing today comes into play.

This unique grammar book, suitable for both IGCSE First Language English and English as a Second Language students, is specifically designed to fill the existing educational gap, providing IGCSE students with the comprehensive, valuable, and most importantly, relevant guidance they need to excel in their English Language examinations. It is designed not merely as a supplementary study tool, but as a fundamental resource necessary for comprehensive language comprehension and utilization.

This book stands out for several key reasons. First, it recognizes that mastering a language is not just about understanding grammar rules, but about contextual application. Therefore, it offers a practical approach by combining theory with a wealth of contextual examples, helping students appreciate how grammar functions in different settings, such as in argumentative essays, or everyday conversation.

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Secondly, it provides an in-depth analysis of the various grammatical aspects that students need to master for their IGCSE English Language examinations, moving from basic elements like parts of speech and sentence structure, to more advanced topics such as multi-sentence pronoun-antecedent agreement and subject verb agreement that students commonly face trouble with at a key time when they should be learning these matters.

Thirdly, it integrates exercises that are digestible and both comprehensively and coherently explained.

Lastly, it contextualizes and compiles everything related to English grammar in the context of the IGCSE and makes it valuable for the student in ways that are current, relevant, and important for success on the basis of a detailed analysis of the IGCSE's schemes of work.

In conclusion, this grammar book for the IGCSE English Language examinations is a much-needed resource for students who seek to build a firm foundation in English grammar and excel in their exams. It provides a comprehensive, valuable, and unique learning experience, equipping students with the necessary skills to analyse, understand, and apply grammar proficiently, something that most other resources fail to achieve. Its practical, in-depth, and engaging approach makes it an essential tool in every IGCSE English Language student's arsenal.

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# Section 1: Parts of Speech

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## Introduction:

Every word in English has a role. These roles are what we call **parts of speech**.

You may have heard some of these categorizations before, which include terms familiar to most students such as **nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections**.

In the pages that follow, we will dive into each part of speech, exploring their characteristics and functions. Through a series of examples, exercises, and detailed explanations, you will become adept at identifying different parts of speech in a variety of different contexts.

Moreover, we will touch upon subcategories and unique uses to ensure a well-rounded understanding as you move forward on your journey towards English language mastery.

Let's begin!

## Part A: Identifying Parts of Speech

Here are the main parts of speech in English:

### 1. Nouns

---

Nouns are words that represent people, places, things, or ideas.

They are fundamental building blocks of sentences and can function in different roles, such as the subject of a sentence or the object of a verb (discussed in Section 2.1.1); you've probably seen them everywhere or heard them such as "name-words".

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## Here are the different types of nouns that you'll encounter:

- **Proper Nouns:** These represent specific names of people, places, organizations, or sometimes things. Proper nouns are always capitalized, and each individual word within the proper noun needs to be capitalized.

**Example:** "Victor", "Paris", "United Nations", "Christmas".

- **Common Nouns:** These represent general categories or concepts and are not capitalized unless they start a sentence. These include both concrete and abstract nouns.

**Example:** "book", "city", "happiness"

- **Concrete Nouns:** These represent physical entities that can be perceived by the senses.

**Example:** "apple", "river", "cat".

- **Abstract Nouns:** These represent concepts, qualities, or ideas that cannot be perceived by the senses.

**Example:** "freedom", "beauty", "knowledge".

- **Countable Nouns:** These can be counted and can have both singular and plural forms.

**Example:** "book" (singular), "books" (plural).

- **Example in usage:** "I have a few Japanese books, but many English books".

'few' and 'many' are appropriate quantifiers for plural countable nouns, while 'much', 'little', and 'a lot of' are not. The latter three are appropriate for uncountable nouns.

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- **Uncountable Nouns:** These cannot be counted and usually do not have a plural form.

**Example:** "water", "music", "information".

- **Wrong:** "I have two waters", "I listen to many musics"
- **Corrected:** "I have two **cups** of water.", "I listen to a **lot** of music."
- **Collective Nouns:** These represent a group or collection of people, animals, or things.
  - **Some examples include the following:** "team", "flock", "bunch".
  - The interesting part about collective nouns is their ability to take either singular or plural verbs and pronouns, depending on the context. When we consider the collective noun as a single unit or entity, we use a singular verb.
    - **For example:** "The team is playing well today." Here, we're considering "team" as a single entity, so we use the singular verb "is."
  - However, when we think of the individuals within the group rather than the group as a whole, we use a plural verb.
    - **For instance:** "The team are wearing their new jerseys today." In this case, we're thinking of "team" as multiple individuals, so we use the plural verb "are."
  - The same principle applies to pronouns. If you're referring to the collective group, you'll use "it." If you're referring to individual members, you'll use "they."

- **For example:** "The jury has made its decision." (Collective)  
"The jury are arguing among themselves." (Individuals)

**Compounds:** These are formed by combining two or more words. They can be written as one word, separate words, or hyphenated.

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**Example:** "toothbrush", "school bus", "mother-in-law".

- **Possessive Nouns:** These indicate ownership or a close relationship. They are usually formed by adding an apostrophe and an "s" to the end of a noun.

**Example:** "Jane's book", "dogs' tails".

- **Gerunds:** These are nouns formed from verbs by adding "-ing". They represent the process of performing the verb.

**Example:** "Running is fun."

- **Another Example:** "The feeling of succeeding in my exams was incredible."

## 2. Pronouns

These are words that stand in for nouns and replace them in a sentence or across sentences, typically after the noun has already been mentioned.

The noun that is replaced by a pronoun is known as its **antecedent**.

- **Examples:** "he", "they", "it".
- **Possessive Pronouns:** These demonstrate ownership, e.g., "my", "your", "its".
- **Relative Pronouns:** These introduce "relative clauses", e.g., "who", "which", "that".
- **Reflexive Pronouns:** These are used when the subject and object are the same entity, e.g., "myself", "yourself", "herself".

**s:** Personal pronouns are used to represent specific in sentences. They are typically used to avoid a sense of personal involvement, or maintain a view in conversation or writing.

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## Exercise: Identifying Parts of Speech

**Instructions:** Identify the part of speech for every single word in the following sentences. Yes, every single word. You don't need to go into specifics, but you should be able to identify which of the words corresponds to what part of speech.

### Here is an Example:

**Example Sentence:** The children must carefully observe the tiny insects on the leaves.

**Example Response:** The (article), children (noun), must (modal verb), carefully (adverb), observe (verb), the (article), tiny (adjective), insects (noun), on (preposition), the (article), leaves (noun).

### Here are the questions:

1. The cat chased its tail around the room.
2. She quickly ran to the store to buy some milk.
3. Despite the rain, they continued their picnic.
4. The book on the shelf is very old.
5. He quickly finished his homework before dinner.
6. The dog barked loudly at the mailman.
7. She carefully placed the vase on the table.
8. Despite his fear, he climbed the tall tree.
9. The sun shines brightly in the summer.
10. She happily accepted the award on stage.

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## Answer Key

1. The (article), cat (noun), chased (verb), its (possessive pronoun), tail (noun), around (preposition), the (article), room (noun).
  2. She (pronoun), quickly (adverb), ran (verb), to (preposition), the (article), store (noun), to (infinitive marker), buy (verb), some (determiner), milk (noun).
  3. Despite (preposition), the (article), rain (noun), they (pronoun), continued (verb), their (possessive pronoun), picnic (noun).
  4. The (article), book (noun), on (preposition), the (article), shelf (noun), is (verb), very (adverb), old (adjective).
  5. He (pronoun), quickly (adverb), finished (verb), his (possessive pronoun), homework (noun), before (conjunction), dinner (noun).
  6. The (article), dog (noun), barked (verb), loudly (adverb), at (preposition), the (article), mailman (noun).
  7. She (pronoun), carefully (adverb), placed (verb), the (article), vase (noun), on (preposition), the (article), table (noun).
  8. Despite (preposition), his (possessive pronoun), fear (noun), he (pronoun), climbed (verb), the (article), tall (adjective), tree (noun).
  9. The (article), sun (noun), shines (verb), brightly (adverb), in (preposition), the (article), summer (noun).
  10. She (pronoun), happily (adverb), accepted (verb), the (article), award (noun), on (preposition), stage (noun).
- 

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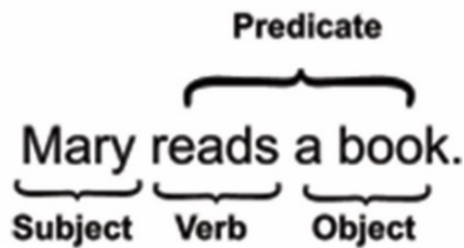


## Part A: The Framework of Sentence Structure

In the same way that each building is made up of a framework that holds it together, sentence structure is a crucial aspect of language that holds words together and allows for meaningful expressions and thoughts to be communicated.

In English, there are several framework components that contribute to sentence structure in English, including the subject and predicate (inclusive of verb, object, and various other elements).

Let's delve into these organizational components and related concepts as we begin with a breakdown of the following, relatively simple sentence:



1. **Subject:** The subject of a sentence is the person, place, thing, or idea that is performing the action or being described.

**For example,** in the sentence "Mary reads a book", 'Mary' is the subject.

2. **Verb:** The verb is the action or state of being in the sentence. It indicates what the subject is doing or the state the subject is in. In "Mary reads a book", 'reads' is the verb.
3. **Object:** The object is the receiver of the action in a sentence.

It is what the verb acts upon. In "Mary reads a book", 'a book' is the object.

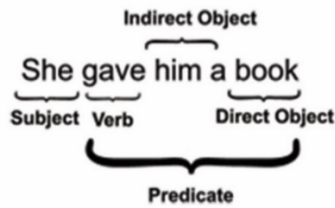
The sentence may further be subdivided into **direct object** and

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## Consider the following sentence:



As before, the subject and the predicate are present. However, now we have the...

- **Direct Object:** A direct object is a noun or pronoun that receives the action of a transitive verb. It answers the questions "what?" or "whom?" in relation to the verb.

**Example:** "She gave him a **book** ('book' is the direct object)"

- **Indirect Object:** An indirect object is a noun or pronoun that indicates to whom or for whom the action of the verb is performed, as well as who is receiving the direct object. It generally comes before the direct object.

**Example:** "She gave **him** a book." ('him' is the indirect object)"

4. **Phrases and Clauses:** Sentences can contain various phrases and clauses:
  - A phrase is a group of words that work together but do not contain both a subject and a verb, such as "on the table".
  - A clause contains both a subject and a verb. Independent clauses can stand alone as a sentence, while dependent clauses cannot.
5. **Modifiers:** Modifiers are words, phrases, or clauses that provide additional information about other elements in a sentence. Adjectives and adverbs are

nouns, e.g., "The *quick* fox."

verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs, e.g., "He runs

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6. **Complements:** The term "complement" in grammar refers to a word, phrase, or clause that is necessary to complete the meaning of a given expression. Complements are used to provide additional information about, or complete the sense of, the subject, verb, or object in a sentence. There are several types of complements:

**Subject Complement:** A subject complement follows a linking verb and provides additional information about the subject of the sentence. It can be a noun, pronoun, or an adjective.

**Example:** "She is a teacher." (noun as subject complement)

**Example:** "He looks tired." (adjective as subject complement)

**Object Complement:** An object complement follows and modifies or provides more information about a direct object. It can also be a noun, pronoun, or an adjective.

**Example:** "They elected her president." (noun as object complement)

**Example:** "We found the film boring." (adjective as object complement)

**Prepositional Complement:** A prepositional complement is a noun, pronoun, or clause that follows a preposition and completes its meaning.

**Example:** "She is interested in *learning languages*." ('learning languages' is the prepositional complement)

**Infinitive and Gerund Complements:** Infinitive complements use the base form of a verb (with or without 'to') and gerund complements use the '-ing' form of a verb. They can act like nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

**Example:** "I want to read." ('to read' is an infinitive complement)

**Example:** "Reading is fun." ('Reading' is a gerund complement subject)

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7. **Conjunctions:** Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses. Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) join elements of equal importance. Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., because, although, while) join a dependent clause to an independent clause.
8. **Tenses:** The tense of a verb indicates the time at which an action takes place. English has three basic tenses: past, present, and future. Each basic tense can be further categorized into simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive tenses.
9. **Voice:** Sentences can be in the active or passive voice. In active voice, the subject performs the action (e.g., "The chef cooked the meal."). In passive voice, the subject receives the action (e.g., "The meal was cooked by the chef.").
10. **Sentence Types:** There are different types of sentences based on structure and purpose:
  - **Based on structure:** simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.
  - **Based on purpose:** declarative (make a statement), interrogative (ask a question), imperative (give a command), and exclamatory (express strong emotion).

We will talk more about these sentence types in the ensuing sections!

Meanwhile, let's move on to the building blocks of sentences.

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