

## Grammar: Essential Definitions

1. **Common Noun:** a person, place or thing that is doing/being something. E.g. *The aim of the project was to develop software that could analyse the data faster.*
2. **Proper Noun:** a named person, place, or thing that takes an initial capital letter. E.g. *Alice, Dublin, Starbucks, Pfizer, etc.*
3. **Pronoun:** a word that refers to someone or something, which operates in place of a common noun or pronoun. E.g. *I, you, he, she, it, this, that, etc.*
4. **Adjective:** the word in the sentence that describes a noun or a pronoun.
  - a) E.g. *There is a significant disparity between Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale" and "The Miller's Tale", despite the fact that they share similar plotlines in The Canterbury Tales.*
  - b) E.g. *The multidisciplinary database EBSCO provided useful material for the group's assignment.*
5. **Conjunction:** a word that connects two separate parts of a sentence (two clauses) together. Generally, we do not begin a sentence with a conjunction because to do so implies that something should come before this part (this clause) of the sentence. E.g. *and, but, if, for, nor, or, yet, so, as, etc.*
6. **Verb:** the word that describes the action, state or occurrence of the sentence.
  - a) E.g. *World War II was a military conflict from 1939 to 1945 that enveloped much of the globe.*
  - b) E.g. *Statistics give a sample of data to make inferences about probability and variability.*
7. **Verb infinitives:** the infinitive of a verb is its basic form, without a particular subject or tense. E.g. *to be, to analyse, to make, to assess, to monitor, etc.*  
The split infinitive is a common problem in writing. This is when a word (usually an adverb) is inserted between the *to* and the verb. E.g. *to boldly go, to casually walk, to kindly ask, to really want, etc.* It is grammatically incorrect to do this and should be avoided.

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- 8. Preposition:** A word that governs a noun or pronoun, which describes its relation to another word in the sentence. E.g. *to, from, after, in, up, on, at, across, with, despite, since*, etc.
- Prepositions usually precede the noun/pronoun (i.e. 'pre-position'). For this reason, sentences should not end with a preposition.
  - Instead of *The student did not tell his supervisor which university he was going to*, one should write: *The student did not tell his supervisor to which university he was going.*
- 9. Adverb:** A word that alters the meaning of another word (usually a verb) by expressing manner, place, time, or degree.
- E.g. (manner): *quickly, truthfully*, etc.
  - E.g. (place): *here, outside*, etc.
  - E.g. (time): *now, first, regularly*, etc.
  - E.g. (degree): *very, too, almost*, etc.
  - Think of adverbs as 'intensifiers' in a sentence. E.g. *I really don't understand what the assignment requires.* or *The laboratory results simply do not support the original hypothesis.*
- 10. Subordinating conjunction:** A word that connects a subordinate (or dependent) clause/part of a sentence to the main (or independent) clause/part of a sentence. We often use them as "transition words" between sentences, and they are often/also called **conjunctive adverbs**.
- E.g. (comparison): *whereas, whether, than*, etc.
  - E.g. (concession): *though, although, even though, however*, etc.
  - E.g. (condition): *unless, if, in case*, etc.
  - E.g. (time): *after, before, until*, etc.
  - E.g. (place): *where, wherever*, etc.
  - E.g. (manner): *how, as if, as though*, etc.
  - E.g. (reason): *because, so that, since*, etc.