

Vocabulary: Tools for Effective Writing

English-to-English dictionary	Explains words using other English words, provides nuanced meanings and promotes deeper understanding.
Thesaurus	“Dictionary for synonyms” Can help with word variety (e.g., examine investigate explore study), can help to find the exact right word when it’s just not coming to you. Instructor fave: https://www.powerthesaurus.org/
De-Jargonizer	www.scienceandpublic.com “The program determines the level of vocabulary and terms in a text, and divides the words into 3 levels: high- frequency/common; mid-frequency/normal; and jargon – rare and technical words.”
ChatGPT	AI tool. How do you use it? For your own writing, for understanding others’ writing/difficult-to-understand concepts.
Translation Tools	If your native language isn’t English – how do translation tools come into play? For your own writing, for reading/understanding literature, etc.

Parts of Speech

Importance of Parts of Speech

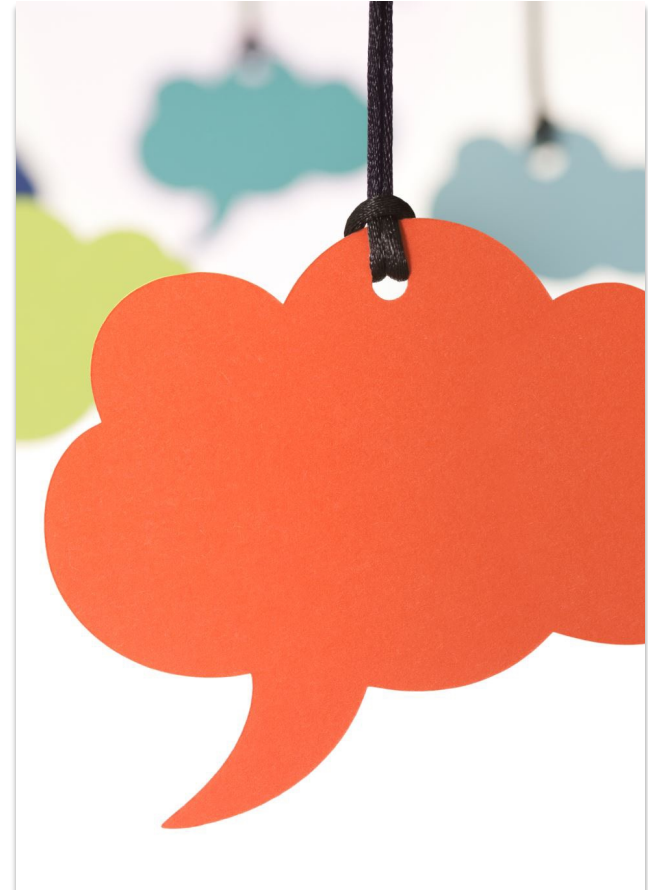
- Foundation for understanding grammar and sentence structure.
- Crucial for conveying precise meaning and intention in communication.

Same Word, Different Parts of Speech

- Illustrates how the same word can function as different parts of speech.
- Example: "check" (noun) vs. "check" (verb)

Nouns

- Basic building blocks of language, representing people, places, things, or ideas.
- Some nouns can be "tricky" in terms of their abstract nature.
 - Example: "happiness" (abstract concept)



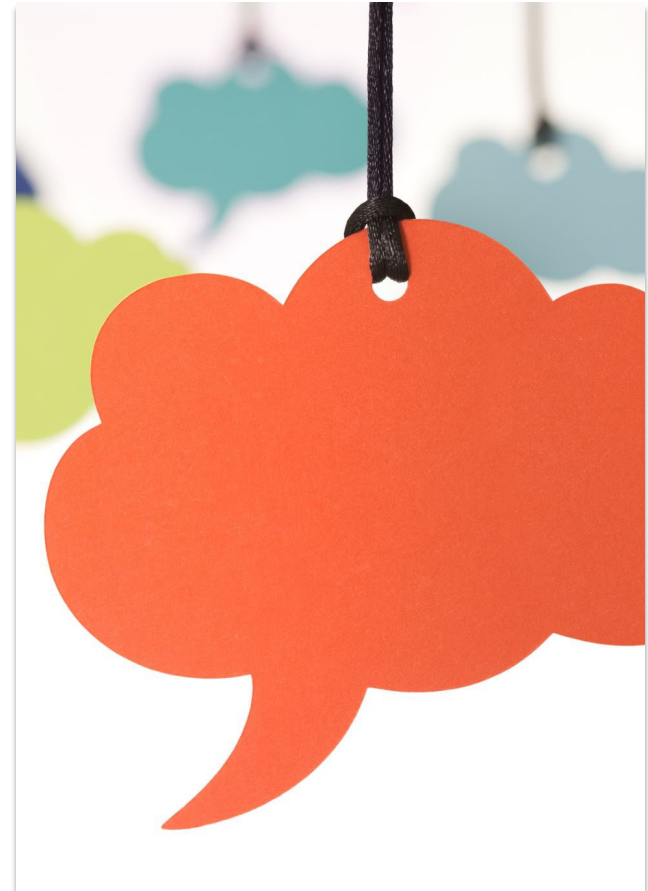
Parts of Speech

Pronouns

- Substitute for nouns to avoid repetition.
- Emphasis on gender-inclusive language for inclusivity and sensitivity.
 - APA (importance of checking journal guidelines, HW): “their” instead of “he/she”; Latinx instead of Latino/a
 - Issue I see with Hebrew-speakers – “she” instead of “it” – direct translation

Verbs

- Dynamic elements indicating action, occurrence, or state of being.
- Distinguished by tense, voice, and aspect.
- Example: "talk" (present tense), "have eaten" (past perfect tense), “was demonstrated” (past passive tense)



Parts of Speech

Adjectives and Adverbs

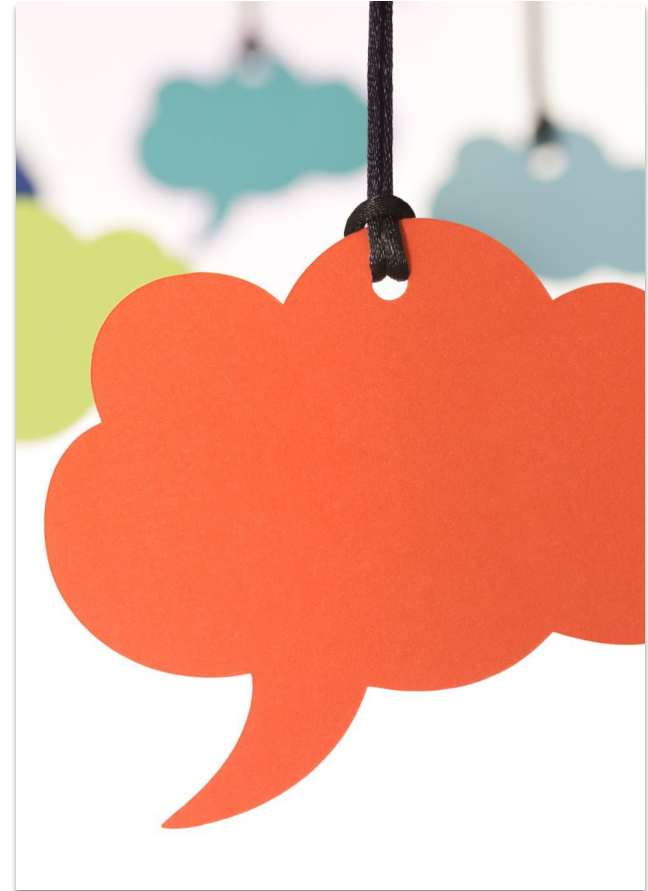
- Modify nouns and verbs respectively to provide additional information.
- Adjectives describe nouns, while adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.
- Example: "happy" (adjective), "happily" (adverb).

Prepositions

- Indicate relationships between words in a sentence.
- Essential for expressing location, time, and direction.
- Example: "in," "on," "under," "at."

Conjunctions

- Connect words, phrases, or clauses within a sentence.
- Facilitate coherence and flow in writing.
- Example: "and," "but," "or," "so"



Sentence Structure:

Putting Parts of Speech Together

Why Do We Need Sentence Structure?

- Facilitates clear communication and comprehension.
- Provides organization and coherence to written expression.
 - Keywords: Flow, clarity, coherence

A sentence may be **one of four kinds**, depending upon the number and type(s) of clauses it contains.

- An independent clause contains a subject, a verb, and a complete thought:
 - “We ran a study exploring communication between couples.”
- A dependent clause contains a subject and a verb, but no complete thought:
 - “Involving participants from diverse backgrounds.”
- **4 kinds: Simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex sentence**



1. **Simple Sentence:** Oxytocin is a neuro-hormone. (one independent clause)

2. **Compound Sentence:**

Transformation: Oxytocin is a neuro-hormone, and it fosters social bonds.

Explanation: A coordinating conjunction ("and") joins **two independent clauses**.

3. **Complex Sentence:**

Transformation: When oxytocin is released, it fosters social bonds.

Explanation: **Introduced a dependent clause** ("When oxytocin is released") to provide context to the main clause.

4. **Compound-Complex Sentence:**

Transformation: When oxytocin is released, it fosters social bonds, and it enhances empathy.

Explanation: **Added another independent clause** ("it enhances empathy") **while maintaining the dependent clause** ("When oxytocin is released") for a compound-complex structure.

Writing Elements

Key Elements:

- *Clarity*: Ensuring ideas are easily understood.
- *Cohesion*: Creating logical connections between sentences and paragraphs.
- *Transitions*: Smoothly guiding the reader from one idea to the next.
- *Correct Grammar and Mechanics*: Ensuring proper punctuation, verb tense, etc.
- *Sentence Variety*: Avoiding repetition in words and sentence structures.

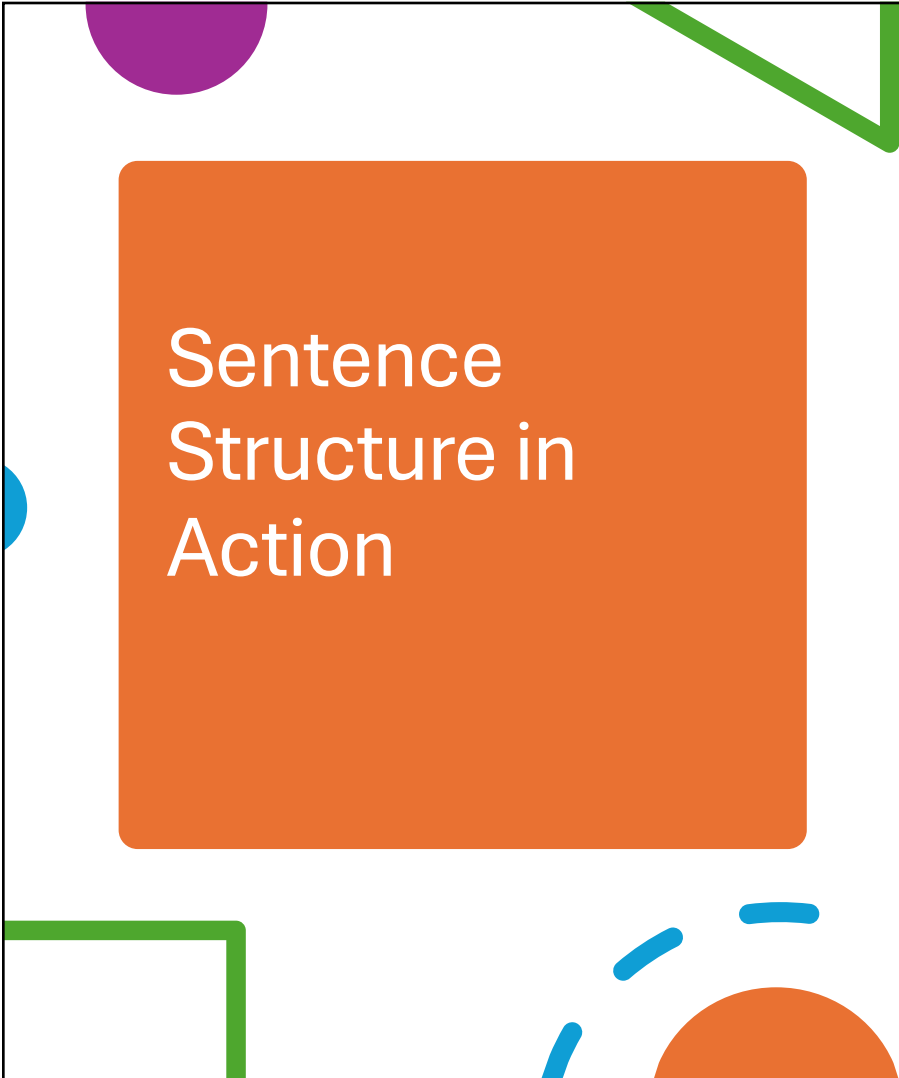
Common Errors to Avoid:

- *Lack of Transitions*: Weak transitions hinder the flow of ideas.
- *Overuse of Certain Words or Structures*: Can lead to monotony and decreased engagement.
- *Run-on Sentences*: Make it difficult to follow ideas; it's important to use correct punctuation and separate sentences when they get too long.

Why Does This Matter?

- Ensures readers understand the intended message without confusion.
- Conveys information accurately and effectively.
- Helps engage the reader.





Sentence Structure in Action

TED Talk, “How to Make Stress Your Friend” – Kelly McGonigal

https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend/transcript?referrer=playlist-the_most_popular_ted_talks_of_all_time&autoplay=true

Pay attention to how she’s speaking: the variety of sentences and the clarity of conveying her research.

- What sounds good, bad, or interesting?
- Consider the differences between speaking & writing (e.g., tone, structure, audience engagement).



Sentence Variety

Why is Sentence Variety Important?

- Enhances readability and engagement by avoiding monotony.
- Demonstrates a command of language and writing skills.

Methods for Achieving Sentence Variety

1. Vary Sentence Length

Use both short and long sentences to create rhythm and flow.

"Oxytocin makes you crave physical contact with your friends and family. It enhances your empathy. It even makes you more willing to help and support the people you care about."

2. Experiment with Sentence Structures

Include different types of sentences, such as simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

"Some people have even suggested we should snort oxytocin... to become more compassionate and caring. But here's what most people don't understand about oxytocin. It's a stress hormone. And when oxytocin is released in the stress response, it is motivating you to seek support. It even has its own cute nickname, the cuddle hormone, because it's released when you hug someone."



Sentence Variety

3. Employ Different Sentence Openers

Start sentences with different words or phrases to add variety.

“People who experienced a lot of stress but did not view stress as harmful were no more likely to die. In fact, they had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study, including people who had relatively little stress.”

4. Utilize Different Sentence Purposes

Use questions for engagement, make assertions, provide explanations, etc.

“This study got me wondering: Can changing how you think about stress make you healthier? Here, the science says yes. When you change your mind about stress, you can change your body's response to stress.”

5. Incorporate Transitional Phrases

Use transitional phrases to connect ideas and guide readers through the text smoothly.

“Furthermore, the study revealed unexpected findings. On the other hand, critics argue that...”