



INFES 6.0- 2024

Sixth International Conference on New Frontiers in Engineering, Science, Law, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences INFES 6.0-2024

Organized By

Eudoxia Research University, New Castle, USA

WORD CLASSES IN ENGLISH - GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES

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It is now known that the basic sentence consists of a Noun Phrase (functioning as subject) followed by a Verb Phrase (functioning as predicate) (Burton-Roberts, 2016, p.65). There are several examples of VPs, though very little has been said about them. This chapter deals with the general structure (the immediate constituents) of the VP half of the basic sentence. As these VPs illustrate, categories may appear in the VP, including Noun Phrases. Within the VP, however, NPs have different functions. It's these different functions of NP and other categories of phrases that are going to be mentioned here. There are two kinds of verb in English: lexical and auxiliary (Burton-Roberts, 2016, p.65). Lexical verbs are the ones that belong to the indefinitely large general vocabulary of the language (e.g. run, eat, seem, explain, recycle, shatter, prepare, depend). Auxiliary verbs, by contrast, are a special and very restricted set of verbs. The clear ones are: be, have, and do (which can also be lexical) and can/could, will/would, shall/should, may/might, must, and need. All mentioned verbs will be precisely defined in these paper.

by Saska Jovanovska



The Basic Sentence Structure

The basic structure of a sentence in English is subject-predicate.

Subject

The subject is the noun phrase that performs the action or is described in the sentence.

Predicate

The predicate is the verb phrase that contains the verb and any objects, complements, or modifiers.



Grammatical Categories

Grammatical categories, also known as word classes, are groups of words that share similar grammatical properties and functions.

1 Nouns

Nouns represent people, places, things, or ideas.

2 Verbs

Verbs express actions, states, or occurrences.

3 Adjectives

Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns, describing their qualities or attributes.

4 Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs, providing information about time, place, manner, or degree.



The Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase

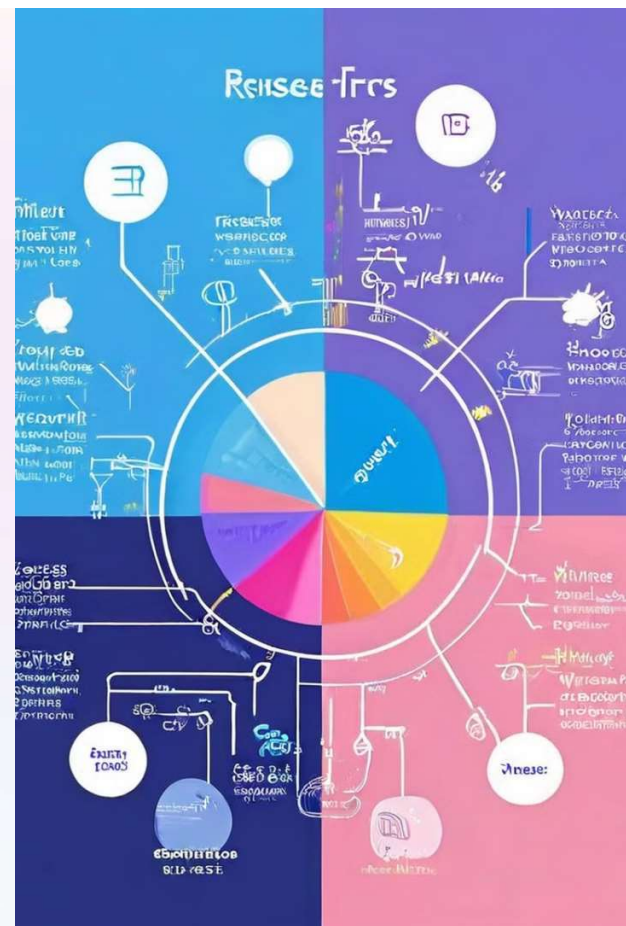
A noun phrase (NP) typically functions as the subject of a sentence, while a verb phrase (VP) functions as the predicate.

Noun Phrase (NP)

The dog

Verb Phrase (VP)

chased the ball





A FIRST LOOK AT VERBS

1

Lexical verbs are the ones that belong to the indefinitely large general vocabulary of the language (*e.g. run, eat, seem, explain, recycle, shatter, prepare, depend*).

2

Auxiliary verbs, by contrast, are a special and very restricted set of verbs. The clear ones are: be, have, and do (which can also be lexical) and can/could, will/would, shall/should, may/might, must, and need.





1

A full VP must contain a lexical verb and it may contain auxiliary verbs.

In the following, the lexical verbs are in bold and the auxiliary verbs are in italics.

[1a] Nina **plays** the piano.

[1b] Nina **played** the piano.

[2] Andej *is* **explaining** his generalisation.

[3] Maria *should have* **recycled** those bottles.

[4] Tim *may have been* **preparing** his lecture.

A general point to note in identifying categories – one that applies particularly to verbs – is that words can belong to more than one category. For example, *interest* is certainly a verb: cf. *interests, interesting, interested*.

It's a verb in example *Millie's hair interested him*.

But both *interest* and *interests* can also be nouns (singular and plural respectively) as in

- Its great architectural interest did not strike him immediately.
- John's interests are rather eccentric.
- A very interesting plan was proposed.
- He wasn't very interested in the bean production.

2





This chapter deals with six sub-categories of lexical verbs

TRANSITIVE VERBS

A **transitive verb** is one which requires a single **Noun Phrase to complement it**. Of the verbs considered above, then, *dread, make, spot, throw, and inspect* are transitive verbs.

The **NP that complements a transitive verb is said to function (more specifically) as its direct object**. So, in *Tim dreads affectionate cats*, the NP within the VP (*affectionate cats*) is complementing the transitive verb *dread* as its direct object.

INTRANSITIVE VERBS

An **intransitive verb** is one that does not **require any further constituent as a sister in the VP**. 'INtransitive' means 'has (and needs) no complement'. *Sleep, die, laugh and sigh* (and play on one interpretation) are intransitive verbs. Since an intransitive verb requires no further element to form a complete predicate, an intransitive verb counts as a complete VP in its own right. So a very simple sentence like *Omar sighed* is represented as in example. Note the [intrans] feature on the *V* node.

DITRANSITIVE VERBS

Ditransitive verbs require TWO NPs as complements. The classic example of a ditransitive verb is *give*. Others are *send and buy*.

Sara gave **Milan** *some bleach*.

The staff sent **the general** *a message*.

Max buys **his butler** *all necessary work-clothes*.

In the examples **the first complement (the NP in bold) functions, more specifically, as the indirect object of the ditransitive verb**. Indirect objects are **usually the recipients or beneficiaries of the action**. The **second complement NP (in italics) functions as the direct object** – it has the same function as the NP that complements a transitive verb. Here's a phrase marker for. Note the [ditrans] feature on *V*.





INTENSIVE VERBS

Intensive verbs require a **single complement**, which can take the form of an **Adjective Phrase**, a **Noun Phrase** or a **Prepositional Phrase** (Burton-Roberts, 2016, p.72). The most obvious and commonly used intensive verb is *be*. As the classic example of the intensive sub-category of verb, *be* is called **'the copula'**.

1

Ed is rather *extravagant*. (AP)

Sigmund was an *auctioneer*. (NP)

Oscar and the First Mate were *in the engine room*. (PP)

COMPLEX TRANSITIVE VERBS

Complex transitive verbs take two complements: a **direct object (NP)** and an **object-predicative**. Again, the predicative can take the form of an AP, an NP or a PP. Here are some examples, with the direct object in italics and the predicative in bold.

2

Jack finds *his own jokes* **extremely funny**. (AP)

They made *Stella* **their spokesperson**. (NP)

Liza put *the liquor* **under her bed**. (PP)

Everything we said about predicatives in the previous section goes for the predicative in a complex VP, but with one big difference. The difference is that **the predicative in a complex transitive VP characterises (attributes a property to) the direct object, not the subject, hence the name 'object-predicative'**. The semantic relation between direct object and object-predicative in a complex transitive VP, then, parallels that between the subject and the subject-predicative in an intensive sentence. It's an intensive relation.

PREPOSITIONAL VERBS

3

Prepositional verbs are called **'prepositional'** because they can only be complemented by a PP. In this, they contrast with [intens] verbs, which can be complemented by NP, AP or PP. The [prep] subcategory of the verb is a bit of a ragbag. The fact is there just are verbs that require a PP as complement and don't fit into any of the other subcategories.

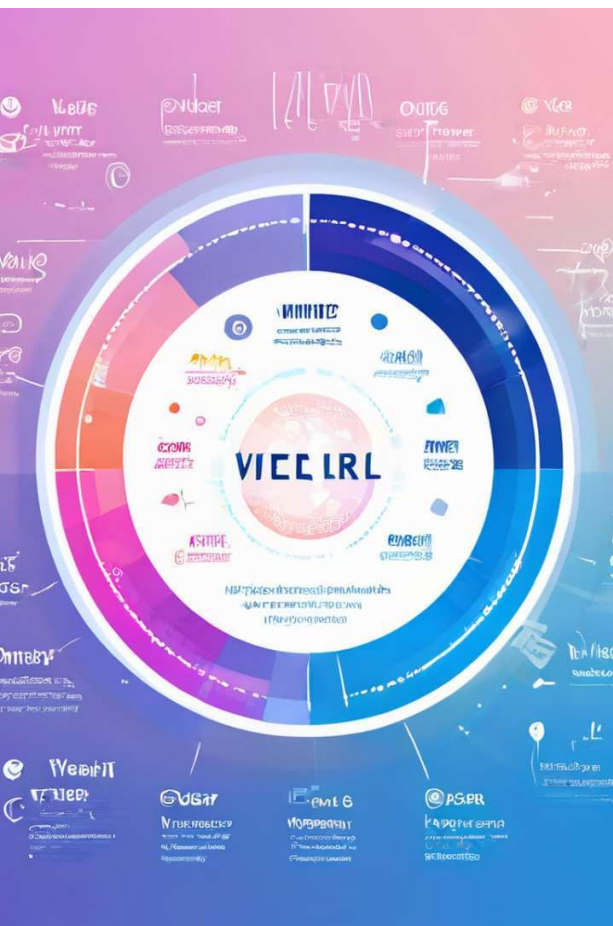


Examples of Verb Phrases

Verb phrases demonstrate various combinations of verbs, objects, complements, and adverbials, creating diverse grammatical structures.

VP 1	played the piano
VP 2	is very happy
VP 3	ran quickly to the store
VP 4	gave her a book





Categories within the Verb Phrase

Within the VP, verbs can be categorized based on their grammatical properties and function.



Transitive Verbs

Take a direct object.



Intransitive Verbs

Do not take a direct object.



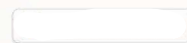
Auxiliary Verbs

Help form verb tenses or moods.



Modal Verbs

Express possibility, obligation, or permission.





TRANSITIVE – '[trans]':	subject – V – direct object (S) (dO)
INTRANSITIVE – '[intrans]':	subject – V (S)
DITRANSITIVE – '[ditrans]':	subject – V – indirect object – direct object (S) (iO) (dO)
or:	subject – V – direct object – indirect object (S) (dO) (iO)
INTENSIVE – '[intens]':	subject – V – subject-predicative (S) (sP)
COMPLEX – '[complex]':	subject – V – direct object – object-predicative (S) (dO) (oP)
PREPOSITIONAL – '[prep]':	subject – V – prepositional complement (S) (PC)





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