

Glossary

- adverbial** a word or phrase used as an adverb to answer questions such as *How?*, *When?* and *Where?* or to link two sentences, e.g. *After that, However*
- agent** the person/thing that does the action of a passive verb, e.g. *The cars are produced by machines.*
- attributive position** when an adjective comes before the noun it describes, e.g. *an expensive meal*
→ predicative position
- backshift** changing the tense in reported speech to go one step back, i.e. present to past, past to past perfect, e.g. *'He's really nice.'*
→ *I told you he was really nice.*
- classifying adjective** an adjective which describes what type something is, e.g. *a medical emergency, an industrial estate.*
- cleft sentence** one simple sentence that has been 'split' into two clauses to focus on one part of it, e.g. *The book was written in 2008.*
→ *It was in 2008 that the book was written.*
- collocation** words that often go together, e.g. *to take a photo, a strong swimmer*
- complement** a word or phrase that follows a linking verb and describes the subject or object of the verb, e.g. *Jane seems nervous.*
- compound adjective** an adjective formed from two words, e.g. *slow-growing, air-conditioned.*
- compound noun** a noun formed from two words which are related to each other, e.g. *dishwasher, sports car, mobile phone.*
- coordinating conjunction** a linking word (*and, but, or*), which joins two clauses of equal value, i.e. two main clauses or two subordinate clauses, e.g. *He laughed but she cried.*
→ subordinating conjunction
- determiner** a word which comes before a noun and specifies the noun in some way, e.g. *the food*, (article) *our food* (possessive), *some food* (quantifier), *that food* (demonstrative).
- direct object** a noun (phrase) or pronoun that usually follows a verb and shows who or what is affected by the action, e.g. *They sold their old car last week.* → indirect object
- ellipsis** leaving out a word or phrase completely; in this example, *coming* is ellipted in the answer:
'Who's coming this evening? I am.'
- end-weight principle** the principle in writing and formal speech that means we prefer to put long phrases after the verb and will manipulate the grammar to do so.
- fronting** moving an element of a sentence to the beginning for emphasis, particularly an element that does not usually appear at the beginning, e.g. *On the right of the doorway is the most magnificent bay tree.*
- gradable adjective** an adjective which can be made stronger or weaker, e.g. *very expensive, slightly small* and has a comparative form, e.g. *more expensive, smaller*
→ ungradable adjective
- indirect object** a noun (phrase) or pronoun that follows a verb and is usually linked to it with a preposition. It shows who or what receives the action, e.g. *They sold their old car to my brother.*
→ direct object
- infinitive clause** a subordinate clause that contains an infinitive form of a verb. It can act as the subject or complement of the verb *be* or identify a noun, e.g. *To win the competition was his aim. The first person to answer correctly gets the point.*
- information principle** the principle in writing and formal speech that means we prefer to start a clause with known or familiar information, often from the previous clause.
- inversion** reversing the position of two elements of the clause for emphasis, e.g. *Never had he heard such rubbish.*
- nominalisation** using a noun rather than a verb either to make the clause more formal, or to enable two clauses to be expressed as one, e.g. *The committee decided to reject the plans, and everyone was delighted.*
→ *The committee's decision to reject the plans delighted everyone.*
- noun clause** a clause that replaces or acts like a noun, e.g. *I was near where you live yesterday.* (= I was near your house.)
- participle clause** a subordinate clause which begins with a present or past participle, e.g. *Lying in the sun, I fell asleep. Treated gently, the fabric should last for years.*
- particle** a preposition or adverb which combines with a verb to form a prepositional or phrasal verb, often with a new meaning, e.g. *up* → *give up*, *off* → *take off*
- performative verb** a verb that actually performs the action it describes when used in the first person present, e.g. *I apologise* means *I'm sorry*, so saying it performs the action of apologising.
- predicative position** when an adjective comes after the noun it describes (usually after a linking verb), e.g. *that meal was expensive; I find that news surprising.*
→ attributive position
- question tag** a short tag at the end of a statement which turns it into a question.
- relative clause** a clause that gives information about a noun or pronoun in a main clause. In a **reduced relative clause** we use a participle to replace the relative pronoun and verb in a defining relative clause, e.g. *She doesn't like the man who lives next door.* → *She doesn't like the man living next door.*
- sense verb** a verb that describes a sense or perception, e.g. *see, hear, smell.*
- sentence adverb** an adverb that refers to a whole sentence rather than one word, e.g. *Generally, the children were well behaved.* Includes **comment adverbs**, which express our attitude to the information in a statement, e.g. *Understandably, he was disappointed with the results.*
- state verb** a verb that describes a state such as being, thinking, possessing or feeling, rather than an action, e.g. *be, believe, have, feel.*
- stranded preposition** a preposition at the end of a clause, not followed by a noun or pronoun, e.g. *What are you going to do that for?* These often appear in questions and relative clauses.
- subjunctive** a form of a verb which is the same as the infinitive without *to*, used after certain verbs/adjectives and in some *that* clauses to convey necessity/importance, e.g. *The judge insisted that each client pay his own costs.*
- subordinating conjunction** a linking word such as *while, although, if*, which links a subordinate clause and a main clause, e.g. *She cried because she was happy.*
→ coordinating conjunction
- substitution** replacing one word or phrase with another to avoid repetition, for example replacing a noun with a pronoun, e.g. *I've already met James. He's very pleasant.*
- ungradable adjective** an adjective which represents the limit of a scale and cannot be made stronger with *very*, e.g. *priceless, boiling.*