Book 2

Mastering English Grammar

VERBS & ADVERBS

David Moeller

VERBS AND ADVERBS

Book 2 of the MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR Series

David Moeller

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION: *MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR*

The nine titles in the *Mastering English Grammar* series can be subdivided into three books on the parts of speech, three on sentence structure, and three on punctuation:

Parts of Speech

- Book 1: *Nouns and Adjectives*
- Book 2: *Verbs and Adverbs*
- Book 3: *Pronouns, Prepositions, and Conjunctions*

Sentence Structure

- Book 4: *Subjects and Verbs*
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What sets this series apart from other grammar books is that instead of trying to include all that can be said on the topic of grammar (the data-dump approach), it focuses on those concepts that promise a higher return on investment (ROI). In other words, as much as possible, the books in this series aim to translate the study of grammar into more competent reading and writing.

The term *generative* refers to a study of grammar or rhetoric that helps us achieve in writing what we wouldn't have been able to achieve otherwise. Generative grammar is grammar at its most practical—it's grammar we can use. Such generative material has been sprinkled throughout the pages of the books in this series.

The nine books in this series constitute a writer's grammar. The *Mastering*

that appears in the series title is not a reference to earning high scores on grammar quizzes; instead, it refers to increasing our ability to understand the texts of others and to formulate words, phrases, and clauses while writing. Ultimately, we will want to use the knowledge we gain to *generate* more complex structures as we write.

All nine books in this series contain exercises (called *Your Turn*), a book-ending *Test Questions* section, and answers to all exercise and test questions.

Ultimately, the aim of each title is to equip you with some knowledge and some practical skills to add to your arsenal of writing strategies.

E-Book Vs. Print

Because the nine titles in the series contain exercises and test questions, a discussion of the difference between an e-book and a print book is really a discussion of writing out answers vs. working out answers in our heads. The e-books in this series are designed to accommodate the limitations of e-readers. For example, to reduce scrolling, answers follow immediately upon the heels of questions. When access to reference material—like word lists, for example—is necessary, that material will reappear in those places where it is needed.

Print versions, on the other hand, leave room for writing out answers or marking up text. And in the print versions, the answers are in the back of the book.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK 2: *VERBS AND ADVERBS*

Welcome to *Book 2: Verbs and Adverbs*, a book that teaches what we should know about two key parts of speech.

We use nouns to name the physical things of the world, but without verbs, those nouns would have nothing to do. Verbs name actions that nouns can perform; adverbs describe the manner in which those verbs are performed.

Crave, *hobble*, and *jostle* are all verbs—they are actions that nouns can perform; *silently*, *boldly*, and *nervously* are adverbs in need of some verbs to pair up with, as we see in these three adverb-verb relationships:

- silently crave
- boldly hobble
- nervously jostle

And because the relationship between verbs and adverbs is such a close one, they appear together here in this e-book.

This e-book is comprised of three chapters—a chapter on verbs, a chapter on adverbs, and a chapter containing test questions based on the material in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapters 1 and 2 are divided into lessons, numbered 1.1, 1.2, etc. Each lesson concludes with a *Your Turn*—a practice exercise with which you can check your learning. For easy reference, a Glossary of Terms appears at the end of Chapter 1 and at the end of Chapter 2.

And with that, let's begin our study of verbs and adverbs.

Chapter 1: Verbs

Of the eight parts of speech, nouns and verbs are preeminent. Nouns are covered in Book 1 of the *Mastering English Grammar* series. But without any action, those people, places, and things named by nouns become stagnant. Let's get our nouns up off the couch and put them to work. Here in Book 2, we'll do just that.

Here in Chapter 1 we'll learn to identify verbs, including main verbs and helping verbs, phrasal verbs, and active and passive verbs. In lessons such as *Vivid Verbs, Bland Verbs Plus Adverbs*, and *Personify the Inanimate*, we'll learn to improve our writing by improving our verb choices.

Then we'll move beyond the verb as a word-level concept and into the verbals. In the world of verbals, words and word groups are wrested from the verb category and used in other ways—as nouns, as adjectives, or as adverbs. Chapter 1 concludes with a glossary of key terms.

Lesson 1.1: Main Verbs Take Tense

Main verbs take tense. (Later, we'll distinguish main verbs from helping verbs.) The two most basic tenses are **present tense** (something done today) and **past tense** (something done earlier, like yesterday, for example).

To help us identify verbs, we'll use this test sentence:

- Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.

Here are four words: *brilliant, dance, onion, pretend*. Let's use our test sentence to determine which of these words are verbs:

- Today I brilliant; yesterday I brillianted. (*doesn't make sense*)
- Today I dance; yesterday I danced. (*makes sense*)
- Today I onion; yesterday I onioned. (*doesn't make sense*)
- Today I pretend; yesterday I pretended. (*makes sense*)

By using our test sentence, we can determine that *dance* and *pretend* are verbs; *brilliant* and *onion* are not verbs.

However, we'll need to be flexible with our test sentence. Some verbs are irregular: irregular past tense verbs do not take the *–ed* ending.

Example:

- Today I forget; yesterday I forgot.

Some verbs can't literally be performed by *I*. In such cases, we can try another pronoun, like *it*, for instance:

- Today it rains; yesterday it rained.

YOUR TURN 1.1

Identify the main verb in each of the following sentences by applying the *today I* BLANK*; yesterday I* BLANKED test sentence to each word in each sentence. The test sentence will make sense for one of the words only. That word will be the main verb in the sentence.

Example:

- The rat is quenching his thirst in Sumida River.

Answer:

- Today I quench; yesterday I quenched.

The main verb in this sentence is *quenching*.

Note that the main verb will need to change form to fit in one of the two blanks. Or, as in the example above, it might need to change form in both blanks.

1. We listen to the night sounds.
2. In his youth he was captured by bandits.
3. The monkeys howled in the mysterious swamp.
4. The waiters share the complexion of a flour tortilla.

ANSWERS 1.1

1. We listen to the night sounds. [*Today I listen; yesterday I listened*.]
2. In his youth he was captured by bandits. [*Today I capture; yesterday I captured*.]
3. The monkeys howled in the mysterious swamp. [*Today I howl; yesterday I howled*.]
4. The waiters share the complexion of a flour tortilla. [*Today I share; yesterday I shared*.]

Lesson 1.2: Phrasal Verbs

Main verbs will usually consist of one single word. **Phrasal verbs** are exceptions to this rule. Phrasal verbs consist of a verb plus a preposition. However, when a preposition becomes the second word of a phrasal verb, it is no longer a preposition; it becomes part of the verb.

Here are a few examples of phrasal verbs:

- *back up, calm down, cross out, hand over, throw away, try on, wash off*

A majority of phrasal verbs are created by adding one of these prepositions to a main verb:

- *in, out, up, down, on, off*

The key to identifying phrasal verbs is to focus on the words following the main verb.

Example:

- *wash off in the restroom*

In this example, *wash* is a main verb. The next two words are *off* and *in. In* is a preposition, the first word of the three-word prepositional phrase *in the restroom.* Because the prepositional phrase already has its own preposition (*in*), we know that *off* is free to join the verb as part of the phrasal verb *wash off.*

Here is a more visual explanation. How can we best group the words in *wash off in the restroom*? Is it:

- [wash off] [in the restroom] OR
- [wash] [off in the restroom]

Answer: the first choice. *Wash off* is a phrasal verb.

Here is another example.

- *peering into the cars*

In this example, *peering* is a main verb. The next two words are *into* and *the. The* is not a preposition; the only way *the cars* can serve as part of a prepositional phrase is by enlisting the help of the preposition *into*, thus

giving us the three-word prepositional phrase *into the cars.* In this example, *peering* is a verb; *into* is part of the phrase to the right, not part of the verb to the left.

How can we best group the words in *peering into the cars*? Is it:

- [peering into] [the cars] OR
- [peering] [into the cars]

Answer: the second choice. *Peering into* is not a phrasal verb.

In summary, a phrasal verb is a word pair: verb + preposition. The key to identifying phrasal verbs is to determine whether the preposition is functioning as a preposition or as part of the verb.

YOUR TURN 1.2

Each of the following sentences contain one phrasal verb. Identify that phrasal verb by examining the words following the verb and using the thought process described above.

The key prepositions to focus on: *in*, *out*, *up*, *down*, *on*, *off*

1. The matchmaker poured out a cup of water and splashed some in Natasha's face.
2. The line of cars backed up for miles on the interstate.
3. The ambulance at top speed floats down past beacons and brakes speed before entering the crowd.
4. Rilke speaks of a man who walks outdoors and keeps on walking, because of a church that stands somewhere in the East.
5. They've taken no notice of the icons, and they sit without praying or taking off their hats.

ANSWERS 1.2

1. The matchmaker poured out a cup of water and splashed some in Natasha's face. [*"out a cup of water" is not a prepositional phrase*]
2. The line of cars backed up [for miles] on the interstate. [*"for miles" is a prepositional phrase*]
3. The ambulance at top speed floats down [past beacons] and brakes speed before entering the crowd. [*"past beacons" is a prepositional phrase*]
4. Rilke speaks of a man who walks outdoors and keeps on walking, because of a church that stands somewhere in the East. [*"on walking" is not a prepositional phrase*]
5. They've taken no notice of the icons, and they sit without praying or taking off their hats. [*"off their hats" is not a prepositional phrase*]

Lesson 1.3: Common Verb Suffixes

Some verbs can be recognized by their suffixes. Here are four **verb suffixes**:

- *–en, –ize, –ate, –ify / –fy*

Study this sentence:

- It may signify a spiritual awakening and inspire you to enter a monastery.

Using our test sentence for main verb, we can identify two main verbs in this sentence: *signify* and *inspire*.

- Today I signify; yesterday I signified.
- Today I inspire; yesterday I inspired.

In addition to being identified by our test sentence, the verb *signify* can also be identified by its suffix: *sign<u>ify</u>*.

YOUR TURN 1.3

The following sentences contain multiple verbs, but only one verb in each sentence ends with a verb-marking suffix. Identify that verb in each sentence.

- **verb suffixes**: *–en, –ize, –ate, –ify / –fy*

1. I soften the shell of my life before that moment of truth appears.
2. I realize that this is a world where present events result from past actions.
3. I walk in a hometown parade so that I can celebrate a salmon derby.
4. Once you've swept the shelves of spoons and plates, you must also simplify the larder.

ANSWERS 1.3

1. I soften the shell of my life before that moment of truth appears. [*soften*]
2. I realize that this is a world where present events result from past actions. [*realize*]
3. I walk in a hometown parade so that I can celebrate a salmon derby. [*celebrate*]
4. Once you've swept the shelves of spoons and plates, you must also simplify the larder. [*simplify*]

Lesson 1.4: Helping Verbs

Earlier we learned to identify main verbs using the test sentence *today I* BLANK*; yesterday I* BLANKED. Now we'll turn our attention away from main verbs and focus on the second category of verbs: **helping verbs**.

There are 23 helping verbs. Our test for identifying helping verbs is "Is it on the list?" Here is the list:

- is, am, are, was, were
- be, being, been
- has, have, had
- do, does, did
- may, might, must
- can, could
- shall, should
- will, would

When we add a helping verb to a main verb, we create a **verb phrase**. Verb phrases can be two, three, or four words long. (If the main verb is a phrasal verb, it can be longer.)

- 2-word verb phrase: *can walk*
- 3-word verb phrase: *will have walked*
- 4-word verb phrase: *may have been walking*

Note: Helping verbs appear to the left of main verbs.

Note: There are twelve verb tenses. Most of these verb tenses are created by stringing together the proper blend of helping verbs to the left of main verbs. In general, native speakers have little difficulty forming the correct tenses as they speak and write.

Let's use the following sentence to tie together what we've learned about identifying verbs.

- Gerald may have been WALKING in the wrong direction. [The complete verb is underlined; the main verb is in small caps.]

We start with the main verb: Today I walk; yesterday I walked.

Once we've identified the main verb, we begin looking for helping verbs. We start at the main verb and begin moving left. As we do so, we ask the *Is it on the list* question.

Gerald may have been WALKING …

- Is *been* on the list? Yes. It's a helping verb.
- Is *have* on the list? Yes. It's a helping verb.
- Is *may* on the list? Yes. It's a helping verb.
- Is *Gerald* on the list? No. It's not a helping verb.

By asking the correct test questions in the sequence above, we determine that the verb in this sentence is *may have been walking*—a four-word verb phrase.

YOUR TURN 1.4

Identify the verb in each of the following sentences. Because each verb is two-or-more words long, you will be identifying verb phrases (the main verb plus one or more helping verbs).

- **helping verbs**: *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been, has, have, had, do, does, did, may, might, must, can, could, shall, should, will, would*

1. Not only the weak will be brought to their knees.
2. The poem must have been written for the benefit of someone else.
3. We shall be saying finally, with tremendous eloquence, “Over here!”
4. This life has been waiting for you all along.
5. The beads and receipts and dolls and vases are cluttering the room.
6. The gray nest had fallen from the ash tree.

ANSWERS 1.4

1. Not only the weak will be BROUGHT to their knees.
2. The poem must have been WRITTEN for the benefit of someone else.
3. We shall be SAYING finally, with tremendous eloquence, “Over here!”
4. This life has been WAITING for you all along.
5. The beads and receipts and dolls and vases are CLUTTERING the room.
6. The gray nest had FALLEN from the ash tree.

Lesson 1.5: Active and Passive Verbs

Study these two sentences:

- **active sentence**: A dawn bird's chirp breaks the silence. (*Breaks* is an **active verb**.)
- **passive sentence**: The silence is broken by a dawn bird's chirp. (*Is broken* is a **passive verb**.)

By studying these two sentences, we note the following:

- Though the word order differs, these two sentences say the same thing.
- The concepts *active* and *passive* have nothing to do with how much action occurs in the sentence.
- The passive sentence contains two extra words: the helping verb *is* and the preposition *by*.

In addition, when we examine the subjects and verbs of the active and passive sentences above, we notice a curious situation. In the active sentence, the subject is performing the action of the verb: the chirp is doing the breaking. But in the passive sentence the performer of the verb (the chirp) has been kicked out of the subject position and demoted to the end of the sentence. This is why active sentences are often preferable to passive sentences.

By studying the sentences above, we can create this rule:

- It is usually preferable to place actors to the left of actions.

Examples:

- example 1: The trembling limbs are rustled by the strong wind. [passive verb]
- example 2: The strong wind rustles the trembling limbs. [active verb]

The action in these two sentences is the action of rustling. The actor (the person or thing performing the action) is *the wind*. In example 1 (the passive sentence), *the trembling limbs* are not the actor. The trembling limbs are not

rustling anything. In example 2 (the active sentence), the wind is the actor. The active sentence correctly places the actor to the left of the action.

In summary, active sentences are generally to be preferred because, unlike passive sentences, active sentences place actors to the left of actions.

YOUR TURN 1.5

Each of the following is a passive sentence. Determine the active version for each of the sentences. In most cases, this requires flip-flopping the order of the sentence elements—arranging our words so that the item(s) at the beginning and the item(s) at the end swap places.

example: The cats <u>were worshipped</u> by the ancient Egyptians. [passive verb]
answer: The ancient Egyptians <u>worshipped</u> the cats. [active verb]

1. Most of these tracks were made by a fox.
2. The human child was stolen by fairies.
3. The prodigious blasphemies were spoken by the bombing-plane.
4. The desolate heart was broken by the wings of the dream.

ANSWERS 1.5

In each sentence below, the action (the verb) is underlined. Note that in these active sentences the performer of these actions sits to the left of the action.

1. A fox made most of these tracks.
2. Fairies stole the human child.
3. The bombing-plane spoke the prodigious blasphemies.
4. The wings of the dream broke the desolate heart.

Lesson 1.6: Vivid Verbs

Some verbs are bland; others are vivid or livelier. Bland verbs are overused verbs; they are also less precise than **vivid verbs**.

Say, *go*, *look*, and *stop* are four examples of bland verbs. The lists below provide numerous alternatives to these bland verbs:

- **say**—*discourse, harangue, chatter, debate, announce, assert, bawl, bellow, cry, holler, sigh, whisper, murmur, nag, repine, wail, squawk*
- **go**—*travel, journey, depart, proceed, retire, withdraw, pass*
- **look at**—*observe, perceive, watch, contemplate, eye, gaze, regard, view, notice*
- **stop**—*arrest, belay, cease, check, halt, stay, desist*

In writing, it is a good idea to replace some (not all) of our bland verbs with **vivid** verbs. Using a thesaurus makes this task easier. And, of course, most word processors come equipped with a thesaurus.

YOUR TURN 1.6

Create more elegant versions of the following sentences by replacing the underlined bland verbs (in number 3, a verb plus a preposition) with more vivid verbs from the lists above. The vivid verbs appear along with each sentence. In this exercise—and whenever we use a thesaurus—we cannot substitute words willy-nilly. Not all words work in all contexts.

1. He <u>said</u>, “I’d love to, Dad, if I could find the time.” (*discoursed, harangued, chattered, debated, announced, asserted, bawled, bellowed, cried, hollered, sighed, whispered, murmured, nagged, repined, wailed, squawked*)
2. I will <u>go</u> down to the lovely Sur Rivers and dip my arms in them up to the shoulders. (*travel, journey, depart, proceed, retire, withdraw, pass*)
3. We are running out of the glass rooms with our mouths full of food to <u>look at</u> the sky and say thank you. (*observe, perceive, watch, contemplate, eye, gaze, regard, view, notice*)
4. Let’s <u>stop</u> for one second, and not move our arms so much. (*arrest, belay, cease, check, halt, stay, desist*)

ANSWERS 1.6

Answers will vary.

Lesson 1.7: Replacing the Verb *To Be*

The verb *to be* takes the common forms *is, am, are, was,* and *were*. It is a dormant verb that fails to provide action. Though it is often necessary to use the verb ***to be***, we can often improve our sentences by avoiding the tedium that its overuse brings.

- Hercules *is* a great hero.

Here, the *to be* verb is *is.* Let's see if we can get Hercules to actually do something:

- Hercules *towers* over the other Greeks.

Much better. Let's try another:

- Igraine *was* outside in the rain.

Once again, let's see if we can infuse this passive scene with a little action:

- The rain *poured down* on Igraine.

There is no formula for weeding out bland verbs and *to be* verbs. Doing so requires, first, an awareness of how their overabundance deadens our writing and, second, some creativity in fashioning more interesting alternatives.

YOUR TURN 1.7

Each of the following sentences comes with its own specific suggestion. You'll need to replace *to be* verbs with something livelier. Feel free to alter whatever words need altering.

example: In Mary Oliver's poetry, the wind *is* everywhere. (Make the wind do something more active.)

possible answer: In Mary Oliver's poetry, the wind *howls* all about us.

1. I <u>am</u> alone in the garden, separated from my class. (Make the "I" do something more active—something that indicates the person's sadness.)
2. Meanwhile the wild geese, which are heading home again, <u>are</u> high above us. (Make the geese do something more active.)
3. We stood by a pond that summer day, and the sun <u>was</u> hot, as though scolded by God. (Make the sun do something more active.)
4. Some might complain that we <u>were</u> cold. (Make the "we" do something more active—something that indicates their coldness.)

POSSIBLE ANSWERS 1.7

1. I *weep* alone in the garden, separated from my class.
2. Meanwhile the wild geese, which are heading home again, *soar* high above us.
3. We stood by a pond that summer day, and the sun *burned* hot, as though scolded by God.
4. Some might complain that we *shivered*.

Lesson 1.8: Bland Verbs Plus Adverbs

The best way to fix a **bland verb** is to replace that bland verb with a better verb. Merely adding an adverb to a bland verb does not really solve the word-choice problem.

Example:

- Dagwood walked through the park.

After writing this sentence, we realize that *walked* doesn't really convey the meaning we want to express. So we add the adverb *happily*.

- Dagwood walked happily through the park.

Walked happily is a **bland verb + adverb combination**. For most bland verb + adverb combinations, a better verb exists.

- Dagwood skipped through the park. (Or *pranced* or *gamboled* or *cavorted* or *boogied*.)

Another example:

- Eleanor walked clumsily down the sidewalk.

Walked clumsily is a bland verb + adverb combination. Let's see if there is a better verb:

- Eleanor stumbled down the sidewalk.

In summary, when we want to improve on a bland verb, we should go straight to the heart of the matter and operate on the verb itself; a band aid might only make the situation worse.

YOUR TURN 1.8

For each of the following sentences, first identify the bland verb + adverb combination. (In numbers 1 and 2, the bland verb and adverb are split apart.) Then replace the bland verb + adverb with a better verb. To assist you with this task, a list of verb choices appears below.

- **verb choices**: *darted, gashed, howled, scampered, screeched, shrieked, slashed, slit, sprinted*

1. Ferdinand cut himself deeply with his razor.
2. Gretta ran across the finish line swiftly.
3. Hiram spoke loudly when he heard the bad news.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS 1.8

1. Ferdinand *slashed* himself with his razor. [*the bland verb + adverb: "cut deeply"*]
2. Gretta *darted* across the finish line. [*the bland verb + adverb: "ran swiftly"*]
3. Hiram *shrieked* when he heard the bad news. [*the bland verb + adverb: "spoke loudly"*]

Lesson 1.9: More Weak Verbs —*Have, Had,* and *Has*

The verbs ***have, had,*** and ***has*** are similar to the *to be* verbs in their failure to show action. At times these verbs are necessary, but at times they can be replaced with more active or more vivid verbs.

The object of lessons such as this one—and the previous three lessons—is to become more conscious of the word-choice decisions we make as we write.

Example:

- The vultures <u>have</u> large wings.

Okay, but let's see if these vultures can actually do something.

- The vultures <u>spread</u> their large wings.

Vivacious vultures are preferable to the inanimate type.

YOUR TURN 1.9

Each of the following sentences comes with its own specific suggestion. Decide how you would improve each sentence by replacing the verbs *have*, *had*, and *has* with livelier, more vivid verbs. Feel free to make other word changes or additions where necessary.

1. Igraine had a headache. (Add some action. What is her head doing?)
2. Jezebel has a much-loved teddy bear. (Add some action. How do we know that she really loves this teddy bear?)
3. The rabbits had the head of romaine lettuce. (Add some action. What are they doing with the lettuce?)

POSSIBLE ANSWERS 1.9

1. Igraine’s head *throbbed*.
2. Jezebel *squeezed* her teddy bear.
3. The rabbits *nibbled* the head of romaine lettuce.

Lesson 1.10: Personify the Inanimate

In real life, **inanimate** things just sit there. But in writing we can give these poor inanimate things a little life. By using vivid verbs, we can create the impression that the inanimate has come to life.

Example:

- **inanimate**: The lawn chairs are on the lawn.

The fact that the lawn chairs are inanimate objects shouldn't stop us from giving them a little work to do.

- **animate**: The lawn chairs invite all passersby to enjoy a relaxing moment.

Another example:

- **inanimate**: The sun is in the sky.

Surely the sun can do better than that.

- **animate**: The sun embraces the earth with its warmth.

Note that the **animate** examples above are actually examples of **personification**—the giving of human or living qualities to the inanimate or non-living.

YOUR TURN 1.10

Use some vivid, lively verbs to bring life to the inanimate objects in the following sentences. This is a literary exercise. Of course, such objects don't *really* have life. When we provide such objects with an "as if" quality, we are using figurative language; in this case, we are using personification.

example: The vault contained all of Scrooge's treasures. (Bring the lifeless vault to life.)

possible answer: The vault <u>swallowed</u> all of Scrooge's treasures.

1. A large boulder was in the center of the field.
2. The river was part of the landscape.
3. Many crazy thoughts were in Kreskin's brain.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS 1.10

1. A large boulder *dominated* the center of the field.
2. The river *meandered* through the landscape.
3. Many crazy thoughts *flourished* in Kreskin's brain.

Lesson 1.11: Consistent Verb Tense

The rule: Once you begin in a certain tense, stay in that **tense**. What this usually means is:

- start in **present tense**, stay in **present tense**, or
- start in **past tense**, stay in **past tense**.

Therefore, if we begin with *Luella looked out her window*, we must continue with *she watched the rain spatter on the pavement.* We would not say *she watches* … Why?

Looked is the first verb in the sequence. It is a past tense verb, and it sets the tense of our narrative in the past tense. Conversely, if we had begun with *Luella looks out the window*, we would have committed ourselves to writing in the present tense.

When writing about literature, use the present tense. Thus, *Winnie-the-Pooh sings his Rain Song*, not *Winnie-the-Pooh sang his Rain Song*. Each time we pick up the book and look inside, Pooh is still singing away.

YOUR TURN 1.11

For each of the following sentences, (A) identify the problem and (B) produce a solution to the problem. Remember that the first verb *sets* the tense. For each, make the tense of the verb in the second sentence match the tense of the verb in the first sentence.

example: Morgan *rode* his scooter down the hill. He *crashes* into a dumpster.
answer: (A) problem: The present tense of the verb *crashes* fails to match the past tense of the verb *rode*. (B) solution: Change *crashes* to *crashed.*

1. Winston opens his diary. He wrote *Down with Big Brother* in letters big enough to be legible across the room. *(A) the problem (B) the solution*
2. Oliver is a little tea pot. His handle was short and stout. *(A) the problem (B) the solution*
3. Yertle climbed the tower of turtles. From the top, he sees for miles around. *(A) the problem (B) the solution*

ANSWERS 1.11

1. Winston **opens** his diary. He ~~**wrote**~~ **writes** *Down with Big Brother* in letters big enough to be legible across the room. *(A) problem: The past tense of the verb* wrote *fails to match the present tense of the verb* opens. *(B) solution: Change* wrote *to* writes.
2. Oliver **is** a little tea pot. His handle ~~**was**~~ **is** short and stout. *(A) problem: The past tense of the verb* was *fails to match the present tense of the verb* is. *(B) solution: Change* was *to* is.
3. Yertle **climbed** the tower of turtles. From the top, he ~~**sees**~~ **saw** for miles around. *(A) problem: The present tense of the verb* sees *fails to match the past tense of the verb* climbed. *(B) solution: Change* sees *to* saw.

Lesson 1.12: Subjunctive Mood

The **subjunctive mood** expresses itself in a few ways. We will look at only one of the forms of the subjunctive mood—the one that is most likely to crop up in our writing (also known as *irrealis*).

Here's the rule:

- In the presence of *if*, use *were* instead of *was*.

Using the subjunctive correctly lends our writing an air of erudition.

- **unlearned sounding**: If I was a barista, I would make the greatest lattes in town.
- **learned sounding**: If I were a barista, I would make the greatest lattes in town.

The subjunctive mood comes into play when we are expressing something that is less than certain. It is a throwback to Latin.

The subjunctive is a bit odd because, with the subjunctive, a normally ungrammatical form is grammatical. Normally we would not say *I were a barista*, but in the presence of *if*, we do.

YOUR TURN 1.12

Determine the proper verb change in each of the following sentences so that each conforms to our subjunctive rule as stated above.

1. I don’t think she would go out with you even if hell was freezing over.
2. If I was by the seashore, I would hear the mermaids singing each to each.
3. It is as if a magic lantern was throwing the nerves in patterns on a screen.

ANSWERS 1.12

1. I don’t think she would go out with you even if hell *were* freezing over.
2. If I *were* by the seashore, I would hear the mermaids singing each to each.
3. It is as if a magic lantern *were* throwing the nerves in patterns on a screen.

Lesson 1.13: Verbals—Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

We will now turn our attention to the **verbals**. Verbals are words (or word groups) that begin in the verb family, but then deny their verbhood by functioning as some other non-verb part of speech. The three verbals are the **infinitives**, the participles, and the gerunds.

The Infinitive: Infinitives are easy to recognize: they consist of *to* + a verb. Some infinitives:

- *to swat*
- *to sway*
- *to swear*

On one hand, infinitives have verb-like properties. For example, *to swat, to sway,* and *to swear* are all actions we can perform. But despite being so decidedly verb-like, infinitives are not used as verbs. Instead, infinitives function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

Infinitive Phrases: By adding some words to an infinitive, we create something known as an infinitive phrase. Here are our three infinitives from above turned into three infinitive phrases:

- **to swat** flies with a flyswatter (*the infinitive phrase is underlined; the infinitive is boldfaced*)
- **to sway** gently with the breeze
- **to swear** like a sailor

Note: Don't confuse the infinitive *to* with the preposition *to*:

- **infinitive phrase**: **to swat** flies with a flyswatter
- **prepositional phrase**: to the world

With an infinitive, the word after *to* is a verb (like *swat,* for example). With a preposition, the word after *to* is not a verb (a word like *the,* for example).

Infinitives look very much like verbs, but infinitives do not function as verbs.

Example:

- It WANTS **to open** itself, like the door of a little temple.

In this sentence, the word *open* looks like a verb: after all, it is an action that the door can perform. However, the verb in the sentence is *wants*. The infinitive phrase *to open itself* is actually a noun in this sentence: *It wants SOMETHING*.

YOUR TURN 1.13

In the following sentences, identify infinitives and infinitive phrases.

example: What I'd really like, Dad, is **<u>to borrow</u>** <u>the car keys</u>.
answer: Infinitive: *to borrow*; infinitive phrase: *to borrow the car keys*

1. To be alive as this song is played is a victory.
2. Any eruption of the real into our familiar life is bound to feel like an earthquake.
3. For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings, that then I scorn to change my state with kings.
4. To walk on despite all the pleas for your return is to know that you are free from the clutches of guilt. [*contains 2 infinitive phrases;* walk on *is a phrasal verb*]

ANSWERS 1.13

1. **To be** alive as this song is played is a victory.
2. Any eruption of the real into our familiar life is bound **to feel** like an earthquake.
3. For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings, that then I scorn **to change** my state with kings.
4. **To walk on** despite all the pleas for your return is **to know** that you are free from the clutches of guilt

Lesson 1.14: Verbals—The Participle

Verbs used as adjectives are called **participles**.

Normally we think of *talk* as a verb. But use it to describe a macaw—*the talking macaw*—and *talk* has been transformed into an adjective, hence, a participle.

Normally we think of *taint* as a verb. But use it to describe Spam—*the tainted Spam*—and *taint* has been transformed into an adjective, hence, a participle.

Normally we think of *tempt* as a verb. But use it to describe grapes—*the tempting grapes*—and *tempt* has been transformed into an adjective, hence, a participle.

The three participles above are *talking*, *tainted*, and *tempting*. Among these three participles, notice that two different forms are used: the *–ing* form and the *–ed* form. These, in fact, are the two main forms of participles:

- All **present participles** end in *–ing.*
- Most **past participles** end in *–ed.*

Note: Remember that participles are verbs used as adjectives. Don't confuse participles with actual verbs.

Example:

- The pitcher pounced upon the bunted ball.

In this sentence both *pounced* and *bunted* are *–ed* words. *Pounced* is the actual verb in the sentence; *bunted* is functioning as an adjective, describing *the ball*. Therefore, *bunted* is a participle; *pounced* is not.

YOUR TURN 1.14

In the following sentences, do the following:

A. Identify the participle.
B. Determine whether the participle is a past or present participle.
C. Identify the noun being described by the participle.

example: Bathsheba rehearsed the beginning notes of “We Shall Overcome.”
answer: (A) The participle? *beginning* (B) Past or present? *present* (C) Noun being described? *notes*

1. The freshly baked pie sat in the windowsill.
2. Everyone in the neighborhood hated the barking dog.
3. Take the fairy’s hand and leave this weeping world.
4. The benched pitcher wished he were better defensively.

ANSWERS 1.14

1. The freshly baked pie sat in the windowsill. *(A) baked (B) past (C) pie*
2. Everyone in the neighborhood hated the barking dog. *(A) barking (B) present (C) dog*
3. Take the fairy's hand and leave this weeping world. *(A) weeping (B) present (C) world*
4. The benched pitcher wished he were better defensively. *(A) benched (B) past (C) pitcher*

Lesson 1.15: Verbals—Participial Phrases

We have studied participles; now we turn to **participial phrases**. (Note that, when referring to phrases, the word *participle* becomes the word *participial*.)

We turn participles to participial phrases simply by adding words to them.

Talking is a present participle; *talking about his brightly colored feathers* is a participial phrase.

Tainted is a past participle; *tainted by the salmonella bacteria* is a participial phrase.

Tempting is a present participle; *tempting to all who passed by* is a participial phrase.

YOUR TURN 1.15

Identify the participles and the participial phrases in each of the following sentences. In each example, the participle is the first word of the participial phrase.

example: Rehearsing the beginning notes of "We Shall Overcome," Bathsheba prepared to lead the Civil Rights march.

answer: Rehearsing the beginning notes of "We Shall Overcome," Bathsheba prepared to lead the Civil Rights march. [*The participle "rehearsing" is the first word of the participial phrase "rehearsing the beginning notes of 'We Shall Overcome.'"*]

1. The pie, baked at 350 degrees, sat in the windowsill.
2. The baby bawled loudly, knowing she needed her mother's milk to grow strong and healthy.
3. The dog, barking continually, got on the nerves of everyone in the neighborhood.
4. Bunted down the third base line, the ball rolled just foul.

ANSWERS 1.15

Participial phrases are italicized; participles are underlined.

1. The pie, *<u>baked</u> at 350 degrees*, sat in the windowsill.
2. The baby bawled loudly, *<u>knowing</u> she needed her mother's milk to grow strong and healthy*.
3. The dog, *<u>barking</u> continually*, got on the nerves of everyone in the neighborhood.
4. *<u>Bunted</u> down the third base line*, the ball rolled just foul.

Lesson 1.16: Verbals—Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

Verbs used as nouns are called **gerunds**. All gerunds end with *–ing*.

Normally we think of *shout* as a verb. But use it in the sentence *Shouting makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse*—and *shout* has been transformed into a noun, hence, a gerund.

Normally we think of *beg* as a verb. But use it in the sentence *When all his money disappeared, Dionysus tried begging*—and *beg* has been transformed into a noun, hence, a gerund.

Normally we think of *juggle* as a verb. But use it in the sentence *Juggling is considered the career of the future*—and *juggle* has been transformed into a noun, hence, a gerund.

Gerund Phrases: We have seen that infinitives can be turned into infinitive phrases simply by adding words to the infinitive. We have also seen that participles can be turned into participial phrases simply by adding words to the participle. And … you guessed it: gerunds can be turned into gerund phrases simply by adding words to the gerund.

Let's look once again at our examples:

- *Shouting all day long* makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.

In this sentence, *shouting* is the gerund and *shouting all day long* is the gerund phrase.

- When all his money disappeared, Dionysus tried *begging for loose change*.

In this sentence, *begging* is the gerund and *begging for loose change* is the gerund phrase.

- *Juggling flaming chain saws* is considered the career of the future.

In this sentence, *juggling* is the gerund and *juggling flaming chain saws* is the gerund phrase.

The SOMETHING test: One easy way to test for a gerund phrase is to try replacing the phrase with the word *SOMETHING*. SOMETHING and a gerund phrase are usually interchangeable.

Here are the three samples from above; in each case, the gerund phrase has been replaced by SOMETHING.

- SOMETHING makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.
- When all his money disappeared, Dionysus tried SOMETHING.
- SOMETHING is considered the career of the future.

YOUR TURN 1.16

Identify the gerunds and the gerund phrases in each of the following sentences. In each example, the gerund is the first word of the gerund phrase.

example: *Magnifying small print with a magnifying glass* is a pleasant activity for those with poor eyesight.

answer: The gerund *magnifying* is the first word of the gerund phrase *magnifying small print with a magnifying glass*.

1. Working for the postal service requires patience.
2. If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving, perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness.
3. Listen—put your ear close and hear chattering of songs that are to come.
4. It is conceivable that soldiers would resist pushing doll buggies.

ANSWERS 1.16

Gerund phrases are italicized; gerunds are underlined.

1. *Working for the postal service* requires patience.
2. If we were not so single-minded about *keeping our lives moving*, perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness.
3. Listen—put your ear close and hear *chattering of songs that are to come*.
4. It is conceivable that soldiers would resist *pushing doll buggies*.

Lesson 1.17: Verbals—Participle Versus Gerund Versus Verb

Problem: Present participles, gerunds, and many verbs end in *–ing*. So how do we tell the difference between the three? Let's start by focusing on the difference between participles and gerunds. We have three ways to test for this difference:

- by part of speech,
- by removability,
- by the SOMETHING test.

First test: What part of speech is it? Participles function as adjectives; gerunds function as nouns.

- participial phrase: Shouting all day long, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands.

Shouting is an adjective describing *Cleopatra*.

- gerund phrase: Shouting all day long makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.

Shouting is a noun—it's the subject of the sentence and it passes the SOMETHING test.

Second test: Is it removable? Participial phrases are removable; gerund phrases are not. If you remove a participial phrase from a sentence, you still have a complete sentence; but if you remove a gerund phrase from a sentence, what you have left will make no sense.

- participial phrase: Shouting all day long, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands.

Remove the phrase; you still have a sentence: *Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands.*

- gerund phrase: Shouting all day long makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.

Remove the phrase and all you have left is a fragment: *makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.*

Third test: The SOMETHING test. Gerund phrases can (usually) be replaced by the word SOMETHING; participial phrases cannot.

- participial phrase: Shouting all day long, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands.

Replace the phrase with the word SOMETHING. It sounds awkward: *SOMETHING, Cleopatra convinced the guards to obey her commands.*

- gerund phrase: Shouting all day long makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.

Replace the phrase with the word SOMETHING. It sounds just fine: *SOMETHING makes Cleopatra's voice hoarse.*

The above information helps us to distinguish between participles and gerunds. As for verbs, all *–ing* verb words will be preceded by one or more helping verbs; *-ing* participles and gerunds are not preceded by helping verbs.

Examples:

- One is making notes under the light.
- We had been traveling for days.

In these two examples, the helping verb *is* and the helping verbs *had been* precede the *–ing* main verbs *making* and *traveling*.

YOUR TURN 1.17

Using the tests described above, determine whether the *-ing* words in the sentences below are participles, gerunds, or verbs. There are three of each.

1. We know we are *wrecking* the world and we are afraid.
2. *Keeping* whiskers and claws behind her door is what the cat lady on Howard Street is known for.
3. Today they are content with *learning* the alphabet.
4. The meadowlarks, *veering* over the ditch, flit up and away from the car.
5. The rainbow appears, *hanging* high on the ends of your wings.
6. The sunrise is *flaring* all over the eastern sky.
7. We have alienated ourselves from the *unfolding* of the cosmos.
8. We loved each other as ever, but our lives were *moving* in different directions.
9. *Whispering* in their ears, we give the trout unquiet dreams.

ANSWERS 1.17

1. We know we are *wrecking* [**verb**] the world and we are afraid.
2. *Keeping* [**gerund**] whiskers and claws behind her door is what the cat lady on Howard Street is known for.
3. Today they are content with *learning* [**gerund**] the alphabet.
4. The meadowlarks, *veering* [**participle**] over the ditch, flit up and away from the car.
5. The rainbow appears, *hanging* [**participle**] high on the ends of your wings.
6. The sunrise is *flaring* [**verb**] all over the eastern sky.
7. We have alienated ourselves from the *unfolding* [**gerund**] of the cosmos.
8. We loved each other as ever, but our lives were *moving* [**verb**] in different directions.
9. *Whispering* [**participle**] in their ears, we give the trout unquiet dreams.

Lesson 1.18: Double Duty Verbs

We've studied main verbs and we've studied helping verbs. Now we'll turn our attention to **double duty verbs**—certain helping verbs that can function as main verbs. The first three bullet points of our helping verbs list contain these words:

- *is, am, are, was, were*
- *be, being, been*
- *has, have, had*

In the absence of true main verbs, these verbs become main verbs by default.

Examples:

- Gregorio *is hyperventilating*.
- Gregorio *is* a man who enjoys hyperventilating.

In the first example, *is hyperventilating* is a two-word verb phrase: *is* is the helping verb; *hyperventilating* is the main verb.

In the second example, *is* is followed, not by a verb, but by a noun—*a man*. Thus *is* is the only verb—and therefore the main verb—of that sentence.

Another example:

- The Riders of Rohan *have slain* the Orcs.
- The Riders of Rohan *have* an advantage over the Orcs.

In the first example, *have slain* is the two-word verb phrase: *have* is a helping verb; *slain* is the main verb.

In the second example, *have* is followed, not by a verb, but by a noun—*an advantage*. Therefore, *have* is the only verb—and thus the main verb—of that sentence.

One more example:

- The Orcs *have been slain* by the Riders of Rohan.
- The Orcs *have been* cruel to Merry and Pippin.

In the first example, *been* is a helping verb. *Have been slain* is a three-word verb phrase.

In the second example, *been* is followed, not by a verb, but by an adjective —*cruel*. Since *have been* is a two-word verb phrase, the word to the left —*have*—is the helping verb; the word to the right—*been*—is the main verb.

YOUR TURN 1.18

Identify the main verbs in the following sentences. Then, for each, determine whether that main verb is a true main verb or a helping verb serving as a main verb.

example 1: My man downfield is waving his arms.

answer: *Waving* is a true main verb.

example 2: My man is downfield.

answer: *Is* is a helping verb serving as a main verb.

1. The grasshopper is eating sugar out of my hand.
2. The grasshopper is in my hand.
3. They were soldiers, like my sons, cradling fearsome guns.
4. The soldiers were cradling fearsome guns.
5. I am loving these mid-September morns in the northern Rockies.
6. I am most alive on a mid-September morn in the northern Rockies.
7. You have slept your way to improved health.
8. You will have nothing better than sleep.

ANSWERS 1.18

1. The grasshopper is eating sugar out of my hand. [*true main verb*]
2. The grasshopper is in my hand. [*helping verb serving as a main verb*]
3. They were soldiers, like my sons, cradling fearsome guns. [*helping verb serving as a main verb*]
4. The soldiers were cradling fearsome guns. [*true main verb*]
5. I am loving these mid-September morns in the northern Rockies. [*true main verb*]
6. I am most alive on a mid-September morn in the northern Rockies. [*helping verb serving as a main verb*]
7. You have slept your way to improved health. [*true main verb*]
8. You will have nothing better than sleep. [*helping verb serving as a main verb*]

Verbs—Glossary of Terms

active sentence: A sentence in which actors appear to the left of the action being performed. Often, active sentences are improvements over passive sentences. *The strong wind rustles the trembling limbs* is an active sentence. In this sentence the wind is the actor, performing the action of rustling and appearing to the left of that action. *Rustles* is the one-word active verb in the sentence.

bland verb + adverb combination: In *Rufus quickly wrote his address on the napkin*, the bland verb is *wrote* and the adverb is *quickly*. When possible, a bland verb + an adverb should be replaced by a single, more vivid verb: *Rufus scrawled his address on the napkin.*

double duty verbs: In the sentence *Maggie should be here tomorrow, be* is the main verb. In the sentence *Maggie should be arriving tomorrow, be* is a helping verb. *Be* is a double-duty verb, able to serve as either a main verb or a helping verb.

gerund: An *–ing* word, rooted in the verb family but used as a noun. In *glaring was not allowed in the cafeteria, glaring* is a gerund.

gerund phrase: We create gerund phrases by adding words to a gerund: *Glaring at the man who took the last slice of apple pie, Charlton decided that tomorrow he would take an earlier lunch.* Here words are added to the gerund *glaring* to create the underlined gerund phrase.

***have, had,* and *has*:** Three bland verbs that, when used as main verbs, might easily be replaced by vivid verbs.

helping verb: One of 23 verbs that can be added to main verbs to create verb phrases: *is, am, are, was, were / be, being, been / has, have, had / do, does, did / may, might, must / can, could / shall, should / will, would.*

infinitive: *To capture, to charge, to climb.* Infinitives are formed with the word *to* plus a verb—yet they are not used as verbs.

infinitive phrase: We create infinitive phrases by adding words to an infinitive: *To capture Leopold's last remaining rook became his obsession.* Here words are added to the infinitive *to capture* to create the underlined

infinitive phrase.

main verbs: Main verbs take tense. We can test for main verbs with the test sentence *today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.*

participial phrase: We create participial phrases by adding words to a participle: *Stumbling into the banquet room, the waiter dropped the tray full of tater tots.* Here words are added to the participle *stumbling* to create the underlined participial phrase.

participle: An *–ing* word, rooted in the verb family but used as an adjective. In *the stumbling waiter entered the banquet room, stumbling* is a participle describing the waiter.

passive sentence: A sentence in which actors appear either to the right of the action being performed or not at all. Often, passive sentences are better converted to active sentences. *The trembling limbs are rustled by the strong wind* is a passive sentence. In this sentence the wind is the actor, performing the action of rustling and appearing to the right of that action. *Are rustled* is the two-word passive verb in the sentence.

past participles: Verbs used as adjectives. Past participles usually end in *–ed*: *strained muscle, parked car.* In *bent branch* and *stolen key*, we have two examples of irregular past participles that do not end in *–ed*.

past tense: Verbs that indicate an action was performed at an earlier time: *I clutched my keys and sprinted toward the exit.*

personify: To animate the inanimate. By steering away from bland verbs, even the lifeless can be given life. In *the moon is in the sky*, the inanimate *moon* does nothing; but by replacing the bland verb *is* with the more vivid verb *weeps*, we personify the moon: *the moon weeps with its watery eyes.*

phrasal verbs: Usually created by a verb plus a preposition. Once added to the verb, the preposition is no longer a preposition: *back up, call out, keep on.*

present participles: Verbs used as adjectives. Present participles end in *–ing*: *surging wave, starving artist.*

present tense: Verbs that indicate an action is performed now, in the present: *I clutch my keys and sprint toward the exit.*

subjunctive mood: In the presence of *if*, change *was* to *were*: change *if I was*

a rich man to *if I <u>were</u> a rich man.*

to be: The five forms of *to be* are *is, am, are, was,* and *were.* At times, consider converting *to be* verbs to vivid verbs.

verb suffixes: Verbs take verb suffixes such as *–en, –ize, –ate,* and *–ify/–fy*: *energ<u>ize</u>, quant<u>ify</u>.*

verbals: There are three members of this group: infinitives, participles, and gerunds. These are words that originate in the verb family but then convert into non-verb uses.

verbs: words that express an action or a state of being.

vivid verbs: A term we use to describe verbs that are livelier than bland verbs like *is, am, are, was, were, had, have,* and *had.* Stale, overused verbs such as *get* and *say* are also considered bland verbs.

Chapter 2: Adverbs

Adjectives describe nouns; adverbs describe verbs. The paired relationship seems symmetrical:

- adjectives → nouns
- adverbs → verbs

However, in addition to describing verbs, adverbs also describe adjectives and other adverbs. This is where our symmetrical relationship breaks down. Here is a revision of the diagram above:

- adjectives → nouns
- adverbs → verbs, adjectives, adverbs

Here in Chapter 2, we'll learn about the creating of adverbs (*-ly* is the key suffix), the positioning of adverbs in sentences (they are quite flexible), comparative adverbs, and superlative adverbs. To sharpen our writing, we'll learn to avoid misplaced adverbs and intensifiers (a type of adverb). We'll then move beyond the word level to study adverbial clauses. And we'll conclude Chapter 2 with our Glossary of Terms.

Lesson 2.1: Adverbs Created from Adjectives

Most **adverbs** end in *–ly*. Knowing this greatly simplifies our study of adverbs.

In many cases, a simple *–ly* addition to an adjective will create an adverb.

Each word pair that follows consists of an adjective on the left and an adverb on the right. As you read these word pairs, note how the left-hand adjective converts to a right-hand adverb via the addition of an *-ly* suffix.

Adjective/Adverb

- silent/silently
- sure/surely
- apparent/apparently

YOUR TURN 2.1

Identify the *-ly* adverb in each of the following sentences.

1. I dimly sense a great change coming.
2. The groves are receiving night, rather than sitting passively as night falls upon them.
3. For most of us, pain and loss usually prepare the way.
4. We saw their scorn, but scarcely noticed as they turned back our clocks.
5. The boxer fiercely strikes the punching bag, screaming about his dumb mistakes.

ANSWERS 2.1

1. I dimly sense a great change coming.
2. The groves are receiving night, rather than sitting passively as night falls upon them.
3. For most of us, pain and loss usually prepare the way.
4. We saw their scorn, but scarcely noticed as they turned back our clocks.
5. The boxer fiercely strikes the punching bag, screaming about his dumb mistakes.

Lesson 2.2: Adverbs Act as Modifiers

Like adjectives, adverbs are **modifiers**—they describe. Whereas adjectives describe nouns, adverbs describe verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

Also, adverbs are far more flexible than adjectives, meaning that they can often be moved around within a sentence without breaking any grammatical rules.

Examples:

- Soothing blue skies fill the sky till the sun **shines** <u>brightly</u>. (Adverbs are underlined; verbs being described are boldfaced, here and throughout.)

Here, the adverb *brightly* describes the verb *shines*.

- I **shave** her thumbnail down <u>carefully</u> so that she feels no pain.

Here, the adverb *carefully* describes the verb *shave*. Note that in the earlier example the adverb *brightly* appears directly next to the verb, but in this second example the adverb *carefully* has moved away from the verb.

YOUR TURN 2.2

These are the same sentences from the previous Your Turn. In each of these sentences, identify the adverb and the verb being described.

example: I dimly **sense** a great change coming.

answer: The adverb *dimly* describes the verb *sense*.

1. The groves are receiving night, rather than **sitting** passively as night falls upon them.
2. For most of us, pain and loss usually **prepare** the way.
3. We saw their scorn, but scarcely **noticed** as they turned back our clocks.
4. The boxer fiercely **strikes** the punching bag, screaming about his dumb mistakes.

ANSWERS 2.2

1. The groves are receiving night, rather than **sitting** passively as night falls upon them. [*The adverb "passively" describes the verb "sitting."*]
2. For most of us, pain and loss usually **prepare** the way. [*The adverb "usually" describes the verb "prepare."*]
3. We saw their scorn, but scarcely **noticed** as they turned back our clocks. [*The adverb "scarcely" describes the verb "noticed."*]
4. The boxer fiercely **strikes** the punching bag, screaming about his dumb mistakes. [*The adverb "fiercely" describes the verb "strikes."*]

Lesson 2.3: Distinguishing Adverbs from Adjectives

Though the *–ly* suffix is the trademark of adverbs, it also appears affixed to some adjectives as well. To distinguish between *–ly* adverbs and *–ly* adjectives, we must look to the word being described (or modified).

Keep in mind that adverbs describe verbs and adjectives describe nouns:

- adverbs → verbs
- adjectives → nouns

Example:

- Although the wind **blows** terribly here, the moonlight also leaks between the roof planks of this ruined house.

We note the *–ly* word *terribly*. *Terribly* describes the verb *blows*; therefore, we know that terribly is an adverb.

- So take the lively **air** and learn by going where to go.

We note the *–ly* word *lively*. *Lively* describes the noun *air*; therefore, we know that *lively* is an adjective.

- Death **arrives** slowly, leaving without a trace.

We note the *–ly* word *slowly*. *Slowly* describes the verb *arrives*; therefore, we know that *slowly* is an adverb.

- The lowly **worm** climbs up a winding stair.

We note the *–ly* word *lowly*. *Lowly* describes the noun *worm*; therefore, we know that *lowly* is an adjective.

YOUR TURN 2.3

In each of the following sentences, begin by locating the *–ly* word. Then determine whether that word is an adverb or an adjective by identifying the word being described.

Example:

- It *swiftly* arises around me, spreading the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth.

The *–ly* word *swiftly* describes the verb *arises*; therefore, *swiftly* is an adverb.

Another example:

- We speak through *sickly* smiles.

The *–ly* word *sickly* describes the noun *smiles*; therefore, *swiftly* is an adjective.

1. My feet were honored in this way by these *heavenly* socks. [Is *heavenly* an adjective or an adverb? How do you know?]
2. The brothers greeted the girl *joyfully*. [Is *joyfully* an adjective or an adverb? How do you know?]
3. Then return to the world, and you may *finally* walk in the world of man. [Is *finally* an adjective or an adverb? How do you know?]
4. Sitting before the oven I hear the orange coils tick the *early* hour before school. [Is *early* an adjective or an adverb? How do you know]

ANSWERS 2.3

1. My feet were honored in this way by these heavenly **socks**. [*The "–ly" word "heavenly" describes the noun "socks"; therefore, "swiftly" is an adjective.*]
2. The brothers **greeted** the girl *joyfully*. [*The "–ly" word "joyfully" describes the verb "greeted"; therefore, "joyfully" is an adverb.*]
3. Then return to the world, and you may *finally* **walk** in the world of man. [*The "–ly" word "finally" describes the verb "walk"; therefore, "finally" is an adverb.*]
4. Sitting before the oven I hear the orange coils tick the *early* **hour** before school. [*The "–ly" word "early" describes the noun "hour"; therefore, "early" is an adjective.*]

Lesson 2.4: Non –*ly* Adverbs

Most adverbs are –*ly* words; however, there are also some non –*ly* adverbs, such as those listed below:

adverbs of place:

- somewhere/anywhere
- here/there
- in/out

adverbs of frequency:

- never/sometimes/always
- rarely/seldom/often

adverbs of time:

- already
- just
- now/soon/later
- then
- tomorrow/today/yesterday

and a couple others:

- fast
- well

YOUR TURN 2.4

In each of the following sentences, identify the non *–ly* adverb that is describing the boldfaced verb.

example: I protested the weapons build-up and later **worked** with Navajo uranium miners to gain compensation for cancer deaths.

answer: The non *–ly* adverb *later* is describing the verb *worked.*

The list of non -*ly* adverbs reappears here:

- *already, always, anywhere, fast, here, in, just, later, never, now, often, out, rarely, seldom, sometimes, somewhere, soon, then, there, today, tomorrow, well, yesterday*

1. Let us enjoy the moment, though tomorrow we **starve**.
2. One day, this kind of knowing just **happens**.
3. Proof lies in the work of Japanese master Basho, whose poems have already **endured** for three centuries.
4. She took me to her elfin grotto, and there she **wept**.
5. The tarbrush **fell** to earth somewhere in Missouri, unnoticed among a herd of Guernsey cows.

ANSWERS 2.4

1. Let us enjoy the moment, though tomorrow we **starve**. [*The non "–ly" adverb "tomorrow" is describing the verb "starve."*]
2. One day, this kind of knowing just **happens**. [*The non "–ly" adverb "just" is describing the verb "happens."*]
3. Proof lies in the work of Japanese master Basho, whose poems have already **endured** for three centuries. [*The non "–ly" adverb "already" is describing the verb "endured."*]
4. She took me to her elfin grotto, and there she **wept**. [*The non "–ly" adverb "there" is describing the verb "wept."*]
5. The tarbrush **fell** to earth somewhere in Missouri, unnoticed among a herd of Guernsey cows. [*The non "–ly" adverb "somewhere" is describing the verb "fell."*]

Lesson 2.5: Adverbs That Appear Inside Verb Phrases

In most cases all the words within a verb phrase are part of the verb. However, if there are any non-verb words within a verb phrase, those words will be adverbs.

Will be running is a three-word verb phrase. But what about *will rapidly be running*? The verb tests we've learned will work for each word in the phrase.

- **main verb**: *running*—Today I run; yesterday I ran.
- **helping verb**: *be*—It's on the list.
- **helping verb**: *will*—It's on the list.

What about *rapidly*? Main verb? Today I rapidly; yesterday I rapidlied? No: it sounds awkward.

Helping verb? Is it on the list? No: it's not on the list.

Rapidly is not a verb—it's an adverb. Thus the four-word phrase *will rapidly be running* consists of a three-word verb with an adverb inserted into the midst of it.

Note: The adverb *not* will commonly be found appearing within a verb. However, *not* often appears as part of a contraction. To determine which words in a verb phrase are verbs and which are adverbs, we must unpack contractions.

Example:

- I *don't want* them to make my little girl a princess.

First we unpack the verb phrase. We convert *don't want* to *do not want*. The verb in this sentence is *do want*; the word *not* (*n't*) is an adverb hiding within a contraction.

- I **do**n't **want** them to make my little girl a princess. (or)
- I **do** not **want** them to make my little girl a princess.

YOUR TURN 2.5

Each of the following sentences contains a two-word verb phrase with an adverb inside it. For each, determine which words are part of the verb phrase and which word is the adverb. Remember to unpack contractions.

example: And yet the eye of heaven **is** <u>often</u> **dimmed**.

answer: verb phrase: *is dimmed*; adverb: *often*

1. Here on the flanks of the Olympics, the rain will always fall on our parades.
2. I have silently gazed on the silver, the gold, the cloths, and the silks from Novgorod.
3. Today she wouldn’t know our names.
4. The pretense will eventually destroy him.

ANSWERS 2.5

1. Here on the flanks of the Olympics, the rain **will** always **fall** on our parades. [*verb phrase: "will fall"; adverb: "always"]*
2. I **have** silently **gazed** on the silver, the gold, the cloths, and the silks from Novgorod. [*verb phrase: "have gazed"; adverb: "silently"]*
3. Today she **would**n't **know** our names. [*verb phrase: "would know"; adverb: "not"]*
4. The pretense **will** eventually **destroy** him. [*verb phrase: "will destroy"; adverb: "eventually"]*

Lesson 2.6: Functions of Adverbs

We have learned that adverbs modify or describe the actions of verbs. At this point we'll focus on being more specific about the relationship between adverbs and verbs. One way to do this is to focus on the questions that adverbs answer:

- When? (adverbs of time or frequency)
- Where? (adverbs of place or direction)
- How often? (adverbs of degree)
- How? (adverbs of manner)

Here are some examples:

- **When?** I **can** already **tell** you think I'm a dragon.

When can I tell? *Already.*

- **Where?** He went on to describe a pencil drawing of young apple trees he **had seen** somewhere.

Where had he seen the drawing? *Somewhere.*

- **How often?** Their fate **was** seldom **held** in their own hands.

How often was their fate held? *Seldom.*

- **How?** We **take** our newborn tenderly in our arms, making good thoughts.

How do we take our newborn? *Tenderly.*

YOUR TURN 2.6

For each of the following, identify the adverb and determine which question the adverb is answering—*when*? *where*? *how often*? or *how*? Each question will be used twice.

example: I burst into tears on the forecourt, **filled** <u>suddenly</u> with the pain of his aloneness.

answer: The adverb *suddenly* is answering the *how* question.

1. Daily, their radio tells me the news from behind them. [*What is the adverb in this sentence? Which of the four questions is it answering?*]
2. I shall walk softly and learn by going where I have to go. [*The adverb? Which question?*]
3. Let us enjoy this moment, though tomorrow we starve. [*The adverb? Which question?*]
4. My father worked like this, making small mounds he'd later gather up in his bucket. [*The adverb? Which question?*]
5. One day, a few months before our parting, we clung to each other like monkeys, weeping helplessly at the seeming madness of it all. [*The adverb? Which question?*]
6. The others wanted to move to Los Angeles where they would rarely call their mothers. [*The adverb? Which question?*]
7. The people push through the streets while I remain here and no one sees me. [*The adverb? Which question?*]
8. To be local was to be welcome anywhere. [*The adverb? Which question?*]

ANSWERS 2.6

1. Daily, their radio **tells** me the news from behind them. [*The adverb "daily" is answering the "how often" question.*]
2. I shall **walk** softly and learn by going where I have to go. [*The adverb "softly" is answering the "how" question.*]
3. Let us enjoy this moment, though tomorrow we **starve**. [*The adverb "tomorrow" is answering the "when" question.*]
4. My father worked like this, making small mounds he'd later **gather up** in his bucket. [*The adverb "later" is answering the "when" question.*]
5. One day, a few months before our parting, we clung to each other like monkeys, **weeping** helplessly at the seeming madness of it all. [*The adverb "helplessly" is answering the "how" question.*]
6. The others wanted to move to Los Angeles where they would rarely **call** their mothers. [*The adverb "rarely" is answering the "how often" question.*]
7. The people push through the streets while I **remain** here and no one sees me. [*The adverb "here" is answering the "where" question.*]
8. To be local was to be **welcome** anywhere. [*The adverb "anywhere" is answering the "where" question.*]

In numbers 1-7, the adverbs are describing verbs. But in number 8, the adverb "anywhere" is describing the adjective "welcome." More on this in the next lesson.

Lesson 2.7: Adverbs Modifying Adjectives or Other Adverbs

Till now, our study of adverbs has focused on those adverbs that modify or describe verbs. Now we'll spend some time studying adverbs that modify or describe adjectives or other adverbs.

Analyzing adverbs that modify or describe adjectives or other adverbs is a two-step process.

The following sentence contains an adverb modifying an adjective:

- HE is literally **nonexistent**.

In this example, the pronoun *he* is being described by the adjective *nonexistent*, which in turn is being described by the adverb *literally*. Or, moving in the other direction, we jump from *literally* to *nonexistent* to *he*.

HE is literally **nonexistent**.

- *literally* (adverb) DESCRIBES *nonexistent* (adjective) DESCRIBES *he* (pronoun)
- *he* IS DESCRIBED BY *nonexistent* IS DESCRIBED BY *literally*

Our aim is to identify an adverb describing an adjective describing a noun or pronoun.

- adverb → adjective → noun/pronoun

But to arrive at that adverb, we need to start at the other end of the sequence:

- noun/pronoun ← adjective ← adverb

Here is another example of an adverb modifying an adjective. Again, note that we are working from the noun/pronoun to the adverb.

- IT is true, even if unashamedly **small**.

In this example, the pronoun is *it*; the adjective describing *it* is *small*; the adverb describing *small* is *unashamedly*. Moving backwards, we jump from *unashamedly* to *small* to *it*.

- *unashamedly* (adverb) → *small* (adjective) → *it* (pronoun)
- *it* ← *small* ← *unashamedly*

There are fewer cases of adverbs modifying other adverbs, but here is an example:

- The years PASS very **quickly** with this earth.

In this case, our aim is to identify an adverb describing an adverb describing a verb.

- adverb → adverb → verb

And once again, in order to accomplish this feat, we must work backwards:

- verb ← adverb ← adverb

In *The years PASS very **quickly** with this earth*, the verb is *pass*; the adverb describing *pass* is *quickly*; the adverb describing *quickly* is *very*. Moving backwards, we jump from *very* to *quickly* to *pass*.

- *very* (adverb) → *quickly* (adverb) → *pass* (verb)
- *pass* ← *quickly* ← *very*

These are the adverbs most commonly used to modify or describe other adverbs: *very, so, almost, too, quite, not.*

YOUR TURN 2.7

Identify the three-word thread in each of the following sentences. In numbers 1 and 3, the three-word thread is this:

- adverb → adverb → verb

In numbers 2 and 4, the three-word thread is this:

- adverb → adjective → noun or pronoun

However, to figure out which words are describing which, you'll need to start with the right-hand word and work backwards.

example: (adverb → adverb → verb): There, waiting for me, was the one I KNEW SO **well**.

answer: The adverb *so* describes the adverb *well*, which describes the verb *knew*.

example: (adverb → adjective → noun or pronoun): Big, robust people crouch behind badly **cracked** PIPES.

answer: The adverb *badly* describes the adjective *cracked*, which describes the noun *pipes*.

1. She very deliberately waited, perhaps for my father to come home. [*adverb → adverb → verb*]
2. Sal has been incredibly romantic, the way he's run away from his responsibilities. [*adverb → adjective → noun or pronoun*]
3. Quite recently, I ran my hand over the side of this dangerous animal. [*adverb → adverb → verb*]
4. The cool yellow of this blouse clashes with the buttermilk heather in my skirt, which makes me slightly queasy. [*adverb → adjective → noun or pronoun*]

ANSWERS 2.7

1. She very deliberately waited, perhaps for my father to come home. [*The adverb* very *describes the adverb deliberately, which describes the verb waited.*]
2. Sal has been incredibly romantic, the way he's run away from his responsibilities. [*The adverb* incredibly *describes the adjective* romantic, *which describes the noun* Sal.]
3. Quite recently, I ran my hand over the side of this dangerous animal. [*The adverb* quite *describes the adverb* recently, *which describes the verb* ran.]
4. The cool yellow of this blouse clashes with the buttermilk heather in my skirt, which makes me slightly queasy. [*The adverb* slightly *describes the adjective* queasy, *which describes the pronoun* me.]

Lesson 2.8: Misplaced Adverbs

Adverbs require precise placement so as not to create confusion or misreading. To avoid such confusion, try to place modifiers close to the words they modify.

Example:

- Colonel Mustard read the instructions for removing tartar from his teeth slowly.
- Colonel Mustard slowly read the instructions for removing tartar from his teeth.

In the first example, the adverb *slowly* is misplaced. *Slowly* does not refer to the proper speed for removing tartar, but to Colonel Mustard's reading speed. Therefore, the second example is correct.

Another example:

- Miss Scarlett almost flosses every morning.
- Miss Scarlett flosses almost every morning.

The first example implies that Miss Scarlett gets close to flossing—she walks into the bathroom and holds the floss in her hands—but she never quite gets around to actually doing it. The second example, therefore, is correct.

The **limiters** are a group of adverbs that can be especially troublesome. Be on the watch for words such as:

- *almost, barely, just, hardly, only,* and *nearly.*

YOUR TURN 2.8

For each of the instructions below, use this sentence: *Mr. Green was asked to repair the station wagon*. To this sentence, add the word *only* according to the instructions given.

1. Add the word *only* to indicate that no one else would be repairing the station wagon.
2. Add the word *only* to show that Mr. Green was not ordered to make the repairs; the choice is up to him.
3. Add the word *only* to show that Mr. Green could not sell the station wagon or dismantle the station wagon or anything else—just repair it.
4. Add the word *only* to show that Mr. Green is not allowed to repair any other vehicles.

ANSWERS 2.8

1. Only Mr. Green was asked to repair the station wagon. [*No one else would be repairing the station wagon.*]
2. Mr. Green was only asked to repair the station wagon. [*Mr. Green was not ordered to make the repairs; the choice is up to him.*]
3. Mr. Green was asked to only repair the station wagon. [*Mr. Green could not sell the station wagon or dismantle the station wagon or anything else—just repair it.*]
4. Mr. Green was asked to repair only the station wagon. [*Mr. Green is not allowed to repair any other vehicles.*]

Lesson 2.9: Avoiding Intensifiers

One type of adverb is the **intensifier**. The most common of these is the word *very*.

Study the examples:

- I was very excited to be representing the Sweater Club.
- I was excited to be representing the Sweater Club.

Do you really feel that the person in the first sentence is far more excited than the person in the second sentence? Probably not.

Intensifiers are devices for adding unearned impact to a sentence. Though they exist, they are often better left unused. Intensifiers leave the reader with a sneaky suspicion that, if we had worded our ideas well to begin with, we wouldn't have needed the intensifier.

- **common intensifiers:** *absolutely, awfully, definitely, fairly, incredibly, major, particularly, quite, rather, really, so, too, totally, very*

Note: But do retain intensifiers that actually say something. For example, in the sentence *I feel surprisingly feisty today*, the intensifier *surprisingly* adds the information that, on this day, we would have expected the speaker in the sentence to be feeling calm.

YOUR TURN 2.9

This is a three-step Your Turn:

A. Read the sentence as written—with the intensifier in place.
B. Read the sentence again—this time without the intensifier.
C. Do you feel comfortable letting go of the intensifier? If so, nod sagely.

example: Scooter was <u>incredibly angry</u> when his traffic ticket arrived in the mail.

answer: (A) Scooter was <u>incredibly angry</u> when his traffic ticket arrived in the mail. (B) Scooter was <u>angry</u> when his traffic ticket arrived in the mail. (C) Nod sagely.

1. Around the <u>really ancient</u> track marched the army of unalterable law.
2. The spring and the summer and the winter frost move my <u>very faint</u> heart with grief.
3. I am <u>rather warm</u>, crossing dazed to sow the doubtful sea with drought.
4. The razor-tailed wren will <u>definitely pretend</u> he’s your friend.

ANSWERS 2.9

1. Around the really ancient track marched the army of unalterable law. *(A) with* really *(B) without* really *(C) nod*
2. The spring and the summer and the winter frost move my very faint heart with grief. *(A) with* very *(B) without* very *(C) nod*
3. I am rather warm, crossing dazed to sow the doubtful sea with drought. *(A) with* rather *(B) without* rather *(C) nod*
4. The razor-tailed wren will definitely pretend he's your friend. *(A) with* definitely *(B) without* definitely *(C) nod*

Lesson 2.10: Comparative and Superlative Forms

When adverbs are used to compare two people or two things, the **comparative** form is used. With three people or three things, the **superlative** form is used.

Examples:

- Oliver arrived late. (*Late* is an adverb describing the verb *arrived*.)
- Oliver arrived later than Fagin. (comparative—two people)
- Of all the people who attended the Characters from Dickens reunion, Oliver arrived the latest. (superlative—three or more people)

Here is an example of the same process, but this time with an *–ly* adverb and the words *more* and *most*.

- Anne's novel was warmly received.
- Emily's novel was more warmly received than Anne's. (comparative—of the two)
- Charlotte's novel was the most warmly received of all. (superlative—of the three)

Well and *badly* are exceptions to the rule. For these adverbs, the positive, comparative, and superlative forms are:

- well – better – best
- badly – worse – worst

YOUR TURN 2.10

For each of the following, which is the correct form of the adverb: comparative or superlative?

If two people or things are being compared, the answer will be *comparative*; if three or more people or things are being compared, the answer will be *superlative*.

example: I believe we should apprentice ourselves to whales and dolphins [eagerly] than to any human guru.

answer: comparative [whales + dolphins = two things being compared]

In our writing, we would want to produce *more eagerly* as the words to insert inside the brackets. However, for this exercise, we are considering only the act of comparison itself: are there two things? or more than two things?

1. Many girls went with pitchers to the reedy brook, but Lizzie looked at us [placidly].
2. Those of us who stayed behind hold our heads [proudly] than those who left the land during the hard times.
3. It is possible to step into a new life [gracefully] than your neighbor.
4. There are many ways to serve the world, but in being true to that small voice within, you are serving the world [profoundly].

ANSWERS 2.10

1. Many girls went with pitchers to the reedy brook, but Lizzie looked at us [placidly]. [*superlative—Lizzie is being compared to "many girls"*]
2. Those of us who stayed behind hold our heads [proudly] than those who left the land during the hard times. [*comparative—there are two groups: those that left and those that stayed behind*]
3. It is possible to step into a new life [gracefully] than your neighbor. [*comparative—there are two people: you and your neighbor*]
4. There are many ways to serve the world, but in being true to that small voice within, you are serving the world [profoundly]. [*superlative—the suggested way to serve the world is one among "many ways"*]

Lesson 2.11: Adverbial Subordinate Clauses

In Lessons 2.1 – 2.10 we have studied adverbs at the level of the single word. Here in Lesson 2.11 we visit our first adverbial word group—the **adverbial subordinate clause**.

Adverbial subordinate clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions**, listed here:

- *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*

We can take any sentence, add a subordinating conjunction to the front of it and, by doing so, create an adverbial subordinate clause.

Example:

1. Take a sentence: *the pair had left for points south*
2. Add a **subordinating conjunction** to the front of the sentence: ***after***
3. And we get an **adverbial subordinate clause**: ***after*** *the pair had left for points south*
4. Now we take another sentence: *we* FETCHED *the bluebird's mistimed egg from its box* [*Fetched* is the verb in this sentence.]
5. We add our **adverbial subordinate clause** to that sentence, and we get our finished product: *We* FETCHED *the bluebird's mistimed egg from its box* ***after*** *the pair had left for points south*.

We are using the term *adverbial subordinate clause* to refer to the words *after the pair had left for points south.* Let's put our terminology to the test. What makes this word group an *adverbial subordinate clause*?

adverbial: If this clause is adverbial, it must be describing a verb. In the sentence above, the adverbial subordinate clause *after the pair had left for points south* is describing the verb *fetched*—telling when the fetching was done.

subordinate: The sentence above consists of two parts:

1. we fetched the bluebird’s mistimed egg from its box
2. after the pair had left for points south (*adverbial subordinate clause*)

The first of these two parts can stand alone, as a sentence. The second part cannot—hence, the label *subordinate*.

clause: Clauses have subjects and verbs. In *after the pair had left for points south*, the subject is *pair* and the verb is *had left.*

In summary, what we are defining as *a sentence with a subordinating conjunction attached to the front of it* is, indeed, an adverbial subordinate clause.

Note: Many sentences that contain adverbial subordinate clauses are flip-floppable, meaning that the two halves can trade places.

Example:

- We fetched the bluebird’s mistimed egg out of its box **after** the pair had left for points south.

… can be flip-flopped to …

- **After** the pair had left for points south, we fetched the bluebird’s mistimed egg out of its box. [Also, note the added comma.]

YOUR TURN 2.11

For each of the following, identify:

A. the subordinating conjunction (the list: *after*, *although*, *as*, *because*, *before*, *if*, *since*, *so that*, *though*, *till*, *unless*, *until*, *when*, *whenever*, *wherever*, *while*)
B. the last word of the adverbial clause
C. the verb being described by the clause (found in the *other* part of the flip-floppable sentence)

example: **If** a man draws a door on a rock, only he WILL PASS through it.

answer: (A) if (B) rock (C) will pass

1. Though I might stumble under the load, I know that hope is a burden all of us shoulder.
2. Seven copies of myself will grow inside me because seven is a mystical number.
3. They hid the bowl and the spoon so that no one else could use them.
4. When those close to us implore us to stay behind and look to their needs, we must support the dream that our lives are crying out for.

ANSWERS 2.11

1. **Though** I might stumble under the load, I KNOW that hope is a burden all of us shoulder. *(A) though (B) load (C) know*
2. Seven copies of myself WILL GROW inside me **because** seven is a mystical number. *(A) because (B) number (C) will grow*
3. They HID the bowl and the spoon **so that** no one else could use them. *(A) so that (B) them (C) hid*
4. **When** those close to us implore us to stay behind and look to their needs, we MUST SUPPORT the dream that our lives are crying out for. *(A) when (B) needs (C) must support*

Adverbs—Glossary of Terms

adverbial subordinate clauses: A sentence with a subordinating conjunction added to the front of it is an adverbial subordinate clause. Commonly, adverbial subordinate clauses fill either the left-hand side or the right-hand side of a sentence:

- Seven copies of myself will grow inside me **because** seven is a mystical number. [on the right-hand side]
- **Because** seven is a mystical number, seven copies of myself will grow inside me. [on the left-hand side]

adverbs as answers to questions: Adverbs often answer the questions *when? where? how often?* and *how?*

adverbs inside verbs: *will rapidly be running* [and] *do not want*. Such adverbs (including *n't*) are not part of the verb.

adverbs: Words that describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

comparative form: Adverbs use the comparative form to compare two people or things: *later, more destitute*.

formed from adjectives: Many adverbs are simply adjectives with *–ly* added to them: *silently, surely, apparently*.

intensifiers: It is often better to delete intensifiers: *absolutely, awfully, definitely, fairly, incredibly, major, particularly, quite, rather, really, so, too, totally, very.*

non *–ly* adverbs: Of place: *somewhere/anywhere, here/there, in/out, somewhere.* Of frequency: *never/sometimes/always, rarely/seldom/often.* Of time: *already, just, now/soon/later, then, tomorrow/today/yesterday.* And others: *fast, well.*

placement of adverbs: There is a difference between *Miss Scarlett almost flosses every morning* and *Miss Scarlett flosses almost every morning*. We need to pay close attention to where we place the following limiters: *almost, barely, just, hardly, only, nearly.*

subordinating conjunctions: Words that begin adverbial subordinate

clauses: *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*

superlative form: Adverbs use the superlative form to compare three or more people or things: *latest, most destitute*.

Chapter 3: Test Questions

The questions you will encounter below test skills and knowledge drawn from Chapters 1 and 2. Verb questions and adverb questions are combined together. To do well on the test questions, you will need to identify the following. If you would like to brush up on any of the terms listed below, the lesson numbers are listed to the right of the terms.

- adverb inside a verb phrase: 2.5
- adverbial subordinate clause: 2.11
- comparative and superlative forms: 2.10
- gerund phrase: 1.16
- helping verb serving as a main verb: 1.18
- infinitive phrase: 1.13
- intensifier: 2.9
- misplaced adverb: 2.8
- non *–ly* adverb: 2.4
- participial phrase: 1.14 – 1.15
- passive verb: 1.5
- personifying the inanimate: 1.10
- phrasal main verb: 1.2
- subjunctive mood: 1.12
- *to be* verb: 1.7
- verb phrase: 1.4

For each test sentence, the first thing we should do—before we even look at the multiple-choice options—is to perform our own analysis of the sentence. We should identify the verbs, the adverbs, and any relevant phrases, clauses, or notable wordings appearing within the sentence. Once we've done that, *then* we can read the multiple-choice options.

The test questions consist of thirty-two sentences grouped into sections of four sentences each. The question being asked for all thirty-two sentences is the same:

- *Which of the following appear in this sentence?*

Some notes:

For convenience, the following word lists appear within the eight test sections for which they are relevant: five forms of the verb *to be*, helping verbs, intensifiers, limiters (words that are often misplaced), non *–ly* adverbs, phrasal verbs (the words that appear commonly as the second word of a phrasal verb), subordinating conjunctions.

The Answers sections follow these conventions:

- Verbs are boldfaced.
- Adverbs are underlined.
- Relevant phrases and clauses are bracketed.
- The first words of participial phrases, gerund phrases, infinitive phrases, and adverbial subordinate clauses are set in small caps.
- All answer choices get used at least once within each test section.

Good luck!

TEST PART 1

limiters (adverbs that are often misplaced): *almost, barely, just, hardly, only, nearly*

1. *A leaf of grass is no less than the work of the stars.* Which of the following are found in this sentence? **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an infinitive phrase (B) a misplaced adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a passive verb (E) a three-word verb phrase
2. *A stretcher will come to gather us up.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an infinitive phrase (B) a misplaced adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a passive verb (E) a three-word verb phrase
3. *He thrust his hand into the pile of gold, only keeping what his one hand could hold.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an infinitive phrase (B) a misplaced adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a passive verb (E) a three-word verb phrase
4. *His work has been performed by café poets.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an infinitive phrase (B) a misplaced adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a passive verb (E) a three-word verb phrase

ANSWERS PART 1

1. *A leaf of grass **is** no less than the work of the stars.*

(C) *Is* is the one-word *to be* verb.

2. *A stretcher **will come** [TO GATHER us up].*

(A) *To gather us up* is the infinitive phrase, beginning with the infinitive *to gather*.

3. *He **thrust** his hand into the pile of gold, only keeping what his one hand could hold.*

(B) The adverb *only* should be moved one word to the right so that it describes the amount being held rather than the act of keeping.

4. *His work **has been performed** by café poets.*

(D) The passive verb is *has been performed*. For the active version, we move the actor to the left of the verb: *café poets have performed his work.*

(E) *Has been performed* is the three-word verb phrase.

TEST PART 2

phrasal verbs (these words commonly appear as the second word of phrasal verbs): *in, out, up, down, on, off*

subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

5. *I let in the cat because the rain was splattering each window and wall.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverb inside a verb (B) an adverbial subordinate clause (C) an example of personifying the inanimate (D) an example of the subjunctive mood (E) a phrasal main verb

6. *I stared, and victory had filled up the little rented boat from the pool of standing wastewater.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverb inside a verb (B) an adverbial subordinate clause (C) an example of personifying the inanimate (D) an example of the subjunctive mood (E) a phrasal main verb

7. *When men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverb inside a verb (B) an adverbial subordinate clause (C) an example of personifying the inanimate (D) an example of the subjunctive mood (E) a phrasal main verb

8. *If I were to find nothing now, I must surely rent an apartment in the City of Death.* **CHOOSE THREE** (A) an adverb inside a verb (B) an adverbial subordinate clause (C) an example of personifying the inanimate (D) an example of the subjunctive mood (E) a phrasal main verb

ANSWERS PART 2

5. *I **let in** the cat* [*BECAUSE the rain **was splattering** each window and wall*].

(B) *Because the rain was splattering each window and wall* is the adverbial subordinate clause, beginning with the subordinating conjunction *because.*

(E) *Let in* is the phrasal main verb; *in* is part of the verb, not part of a prepositional phrase.

6. *I **stared**, and victory **had filled up** the little rented boat from the pool of standing wastewater.*

(C) *Victory*—an abstract, inanimate thing—has been personified (made human) thanks to the verb *filled up.*

(E) *Filled up* is the phrasal main verb; *up* is part of the verb, not part of a prepositional phrase.

7. *[WHEN men **spit** upon the ground], they **spit** upon themselves.*

(B) *When men spit upon the ground* is the adverbial subordinate clause, beginning with the subordinating conjunction *when.*

8. [*IF I **were** to find nothing now*], *I **must** surely **rent** an apartment in the City of Death.*

(A) The adverb *surely* appears inside the verb *must rent.*

(B) *If I were to find nothing now* is the adverbial subordinate clause, beginning with the subordinating conjunction *if.*

(D) Because of the subjunctive and the presence of *if*, we say *I were* instead of *I was.*

TEST PART 3

helping verbs: *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been, has, have, had, do, does, did, may, might, must, can, could, shall, should, will, would*

intensifiers: *absolutely, awfully, definitely, fairly, incredibly, major, particularly, quite, rather, really, so, too, totally, very*

phrasal verbs (these words commonly appear as the second word of phrasal verbs): *in, out, up, down, on, off*

9. *Because you have been spending time with Native Americans, you've discovered how the oral tradition works.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an intensifier that could be removed (B) a participial phrase (C) a phrasal main verb (D) a three-word verb (E) a two-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

10. *She speaks very clearly in her language of dreams.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an intensifier that could be removed (B) a participial phrase (C) a phrasal main verb (D) a three-word verb (E) a two-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

11. *Standing in ruins beside the cliffs, the palace called out for our attention.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an intensifier that could be removed (B) a participial phrase (C) a phrasal main verb (D) a three-word verb (E) a two-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

12. *The museum will be free of charge, open for the pilgrimages of ghosts.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an intensifier that could be removed (B) a participial phrase (C) a phrasal main verb (D) a three-word verb (E) a two-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

ANSWERS PART 3

9. [*BECAUSE you* ***have been spending*** *time with Native Americans*], *you'****ve discovered*** *how the oral tradition works*

(D) *Have been spending* is the three-word verb phrase.

10. *She* ***speaks*** *very clearly in her language of dreams.*

(A) The intensifier *very* adds little to the sentence.

11. [*STANDING in ruins beside the cliffs*], *the palace* ***called out*** *for our attention.*

(B) *Standing in ruins beside the cliffs* is the participial phrase, beginning with the present participle *standing.*

(C) *Called out* is the phrasal main verb; *out* is part of the verb, not part of a prepositional phrase.

12. *The museum* ***will be*** *free of charge, open for the pilgrimages of ghosts.*

(E) In the two-word verb phrase *will be,* the helping verb *be* is serving as a main verb.

TEST PART 4

non *–ly* adverbs: *somewhere/anywhere, here/there, in/out, somewhere, never/sometimes/always, rarely/seldom/often, already, just, now/soon/later, then, tomorrow/today/yesterday, fast, well*

subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

13. *The rock had sunk more solidly into place than the torn sponge.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a gerund phrase (E) a non *–ly* adverb

14. *The horses in blinders are tired from their tracing concrete circles around Central Park.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a gerund phrase (E) a non *–ly* adverb

15. *When my father worked like this, he would make small mounds that he'd later gather in his bucket.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a gerund phrase (E) a non *–ly* adverb

16. *Colleges might have been missing the opportunity to tap into the students' street smarts.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a gerund phrase (E) a non *–ly* adverb

ANSWERS PART 4

13. *The rock* ***had sunk*** *more solidly into place than the torn sponge.*

(B) The comparative adverb *more solidly* compares two things: a rock and a sponge.

14. *The horses in blinders are tired from their* [TRACING *concrete circles around Central Park*].

(D) *Tracing concrete circles around Central Park* is the gerund phrase, beginning with the gerund *tracing*: they are tired from their SOMETHING.

15. [*WHEN my father* ***worked*** *like this*], *he* ***would make*** *small mounds that he****'d*** *later* ***gather*** *in his bucket.*

(A) *When my father worked like this* is the adverbial subordinate clause, beginning with the subordinating conjunction *when.*

(E) *Later* is the non *–ly* adverb describing the verb *would gather.*

16. *Colleges* ***might have been missing*** *the opportunity to tap into the students' street smarts.*

(C) *Might have been missing* is the four-word verb phrase.

TEST PART 5

intensifiers: *absolutely, awfully, definitely, fairly, incredibly, major, particularly, quite, rather, really, so, too, totally, very*

subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

17. *A sparrow strains to reach a rotting berry.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) an infinitive phrase (D) an intensifier that could be removed (E) a three-word verb phrase

18. *Although the plants could not be saved, you brought your watering can to the pond's edge.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) an infinitive phrase (D) an intensifier that could be removed (E) a three-word verb phrase

19. *But today Satan has quite forgotten to say his prayers.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) an infinitive phrase (D) an intensifier that could be removed (E) a three-word verb phrase

20. *To prove the kindness of animals, this pigeon has given us the most friendly welcome of all.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) a comparative or superlative form (C) an infinitive phrase (D) an intensifier that could be removed (E) a three-word verb phrase

ANSWERS PART 5

17. *A sparrow* ***strains*** [*TO REACH a rotting berry*].

(C) *To reach a rotting berry* is the infinitive phrase, beginning with the infinitive *to reach.*

18. [*ALTHOUGH the plants* ***could*** *<u>not</u>* ***be saved***], *you* ***brought*** *your watering can to the pond's edge.*

(A) *Although the plants could not be saved* is the adverbial subordinate clause, beginning with the subordinating conjunction *although.*

(E) *Could be saved* is the three-word verb phrase.

19. *But today Satan* ***has*** *<u>quite</u>* ***forgotten*** [*TO SAY his prayers*].

(C) *To say his prayers* is the infinitive phrase, beginning with the infinitive *to say.*

(D) The intensifier *quite* adds little to the sentence.

20. [*TO PROVE the kindness of animals*], *this pigeon* ***has given*** *us the <u>most friendly</u> welcome of all.*

(B) The superlative adverb *most friendly* compares all the people and things referred to by the phrase *of all.*

(C) *To prove the kindness of animals* is the infinitive phrase, beginning with the infinitive *to prove.*

TEST PART 6

five forms of the verb *to be*: *is, am, are, was, were*

helping verbs: *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been, has, have, had, do, does, did, may, might, must, can, could, shall, should, will, would*

non –*ly* adverbs: *somewhere/anywhere, here/there, in/out, somewhere, never/sometimes/always, rarely/seldom/often, already, just, now/soon/later, then, tomorrow/today/yesterday, fast, well*

21. *For reasons too numerous to mention, I think about the streetsweeper often.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an example of personifying the inanimate (B) a non –*ly* adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a three-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

22. *The journey is a chance for you to begin a new life.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an example of personifying the inanimate (B) a non –*ly* adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a three-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

23. *The object behind the couch may have been a slipper knitted with the threads of twilight.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an example of personifying the inanimate (B) a non –*ly* adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a three-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

24. *My troubles rush over me.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an example of personifying the inanimate (B) a non –*ly* adverb (C) a one-word *to be* verb (D) a three-word verb phrase in which a helping verb is serving as a main verb

ANSWERS PART 6

21. *For reasons too numerous to mention, I **think** about the streetsweeper <u>often</u>.*

(B) *Often* is the non –*ly* adverb describing the verb *think.*

22. *The journey **is** a chance for you to begin a new life.*

C) *Is* is the one-word *to be* verb.

23. *The object behind the couch **may have been** a slipper knitted with the threads of twilight.*

(D) In the three-word verb phrase *may have been*, the helping verb *been* is serving as a main verb.

24. *My troubles **rush** over me.*

(A) *Troubles*—an abstract, inanimate thing—have been personified (made human) thanks to the verb *rush.*

TEST PART 7

phrasal verbs (these words commonly appear as the second word of phrasal verbs): *in, out, up, down, on, off*

25. *Because it was my only summer job, I turned off the mower and headed toward the gate.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverb that appears inside the verb (B) a gerund phrase (C) a participial phrase (D) a phrasal main verb (E) a three-word verb phrase

26. *One day, you will apologetically be regretting these thick quilts.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) an adverb that appears inside the verb (B) a gerund phrase (C) a participial phrase (D) a phrasal main verb (E) a three-word verb phrase

27. *She stopped fearing the place of her birth.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverb that appears inside the verb (B) a gerund phrase (C) a participial phrase (D) a phrasal main verb (E) a three-word verb phrase

28. *The Indians, carried by giant sea turtles, rode across the ocean.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverb that appears inside the verb (B) a gerund phrase (C) a participial phrase (D) a phrasal main verb (E) a three-word verb phrase

ANSWERS PART 7

25. [*BECAUSE it* ***was*** *my* <u>*only*</u> *summer job*], *I* ***turned off*** *the mower and* ***headed*** *toward the gate.*

(D) *Turned off* is the phrasal main verb; *off* is part of the verb, not part of a prepositional phrase.

26. *One day, you* ***will*** <u>*apologetically*</u> ***be regretting*** *these thick quilts.*

(A) The adverb *apologetically* appears inside the verb *will be regretting.*

(E) *Will be regretting* is the three-word verb phrase.

27. *She* ***stopped*** [*FEARING the place of her birth*].

(B) *Fearing the place of her birth* is the gerund phrase, beginning with the gerund *fearing*: she stopped SOMETHING.

28. *The Indians,* [*CARRIED by giant sea turtles*], ***rode*** *across the ocean.*

(C) *Carried by giant sea turtles* is the participial phrase, beginning with the past participle *carried.*

TEST PART 8

limiters (adverbs that are often misplaced): *almost, barely, just, hardly, only, nearly*

subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

29. *If the lemon tree were planted by my neighbor, I would still give it the water it needs.* **CHOOSE THREE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) an example of the subjunctive mood (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a misplaced adverb (E) a passive verb

30. *The whale dashed into the starboard side of the ship, almost frightening Ahab into paralysis.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) an example of the subjunctive mood (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a misplaced adverb (E) a passive verb

31. *The tiny krill are allowed by the whales to trickle in by the millions.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) an example of the subjunctive mood (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a misplaced adverb (E) a passive verb

32. *Marilyn should have been nibbling these crackers.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) an adverbial subordinate clause (B) an example of the subjunctive mood (C) a four-word verb phrase (D) a misplaced adverb (E) a passive verb

ANSWERS PART 8

29. [*IF the lemon tree* ***were planted*** *by my neighbor, I* ***would*** *still* ***give*** *it the water it needs.*

(A) *If the lemon tree were planted by my neighbor* is the adverbial subordinate clause, beginning with the subordinating conjunction *if.*

(B) Because of the subjunctive and the presence of *if*, we say *tree were planted* instead of *tree was planted.*

(E) The passive verb is *were planted.* For the active version, we move the actor to the left of the verb: *if my neighbor planted the lemon tree.*

30. *The whale* ***dashed*** *into the starboard side of the ship, almost frightening Ahab into paralysis.*

(D) The adverb *almost* should be moved two words to the right so that it says *nearly being paralyzed* instead of *nearly being frightened.*

31. *The tiny krill* ***are allowed*** *by the whales to trickle in by the millions.*

(E) The passive verb is *are allowed.* For the active version, we move the actor to the left of the verb: *the whales allow the tiny krill to trickle in.*

32. *Marilyn* ***should have been nibbling*** *these crackers.*

(C) *Should have been nibbling* is the four-word verb phrase.

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