

Grammar. What is it good for?

1 2 3 4 5 6
A **brief and** understandable **guide** to help you **easily negotiate**
7 8 9
your way through the grammatical maze. **Simple!**

1 - DETERMINER

Little words but very helpful.

Noun-modifiers. Stripped down versions of adjectives - useful in 'determining' a sentence but meaningless standing alone.

Indefinite:

"A cat sat on **the** mat."

Definite :

'**My** cat sat on **your** mat.'

2 - ADJECTIVE

Helping a noun come alive.

Why settle for a cat when you can have a **pedigree** cat?

Look out for common endings to help spot an adjective, e.g., **adorable**; **crowded**; **doubtful**; **powerless**; **terrible** etc.

English tends to place adjectives before a noun (**black** cat), while other languages do not (chat **noir**).

3 - CONJUNCTION

The glue between nouns. I like cats **and** dogs **but** I prefer cats. Invaluable to the English language but often overused. A conjunction is no substitute for punctuation **and** many writers often fail **because** they are unwilling to end a sentence **as** it is easier to go on and on **because** they don't know when to stop **and** give the reader a break **so as to** make a valid point.

4 - NOUN

A thing. Hugely simple yet annoyingly complicated. Nouns can be common (**cat**), proper (**America**), abstract (**love**), countable (**a plate**), uncountable (**music**), collective (**team**) or possessive (**the boy's**). Keep an eye out for nouns trying to trip you up, e.g., 'One Attorney General', but 'two Attorney**s** General'.

5 - ADVERB

How a verb is done. Adverbs are to verbs what adjectives are to nouns - they make things a bit more interesting.

How did the cat run? The cat ran **quickly**. A good rule of thumb is to look for an **-ly** ending to an adjective, e.g., doubtful (adjective) becomes **doubtfully** (adverb).

6 - VERB

A doing word. Mostly regular and easy to predict but occasionally irregular and badly behaved. As well as indicating something happening, verbs also tell us when they happened. I am currently **writing** this but by the time you read it, I will have **written** it. Always likely to bring back bad memories of French verb tables at school.

7 - PRONOUN

A noun substitute. When you don't want to wear someone's name out, you turn to pronouns.

Great for cutting your word count too. Instead of "John saw the cat so John went over to stroke the cat", you can say "John saw the cat so **he** went over to stroke **it**."

8 - PREPOSITION

Little words linking sentences, often verbs to nouns.

"I travelled **through** the night." Prepositions are the cause of one of English's biggest arguments - apparently they must not be used to end a sentence **with**. But don't lose any sleep - most people would never notice!

9 - INTERJECTION

Punctuation in the form of a word. Used to express emotion. **Amazing!**

Well, perhaps not always. 'New-wave' interjections are seen by many as the scourge of modern English. You may **LOL** at the thought but just make sure you don't leave your reader thinking **WTF!?!?**