

# Cheat Sheet Module 12

## Essential Concepts

### Nouns and Pronouns

- **Nouns name people, places, things, or ideas and come in several forms.** Nouns can be proper (specific and capitalized), common (general), concrete (tangible), abstract (intangible), compound (two words joined), or verbal (derived from verbs but used as nouns). Proper noun-based adjectives are capitalized only when literal.
- **Noun behavior affects grammar through agreement, countability, and pluralization.** Nouns must agree with verbs, especially collective nouns that may be singular or plural depending on context. Count nouns can be pluralized, while non-count nouns cannot. Regular plurals follow predictable patterns; irregular plurals do not and often require memorization.
- **Pronouns replace nouns and must clearly refer back to their antecedents.** Personal, reflexive, demonstrative, indefinite, and relative pronouns all substitute for nouns. Ensuring pronouns clearly and correctly refer to their antecedents is essential for clarity.
- **Pronouns have different forms depending on their grammatical role.** Subject pronouns perform actions (e.g., *she* runs), object pronouns receive actions (e.g., they saw *her*), and possessive pronouns show ownership (e.g., *his* book, *mine* is new). Reflexive pronouns refer back to the subject of the sentence (e.g., he blamed *himself*).
- **Relative pronouns link clauses and vary by context and formality.** Use *who* for people and *that* or *which* for things. *Whom* is used for objects of verbs or prepositions, though *who* is increasingly acceptable. Commas help determine when to use *that* (restrictive) versus *which* (nonrestrictive).

### Verbs

- **Verbs come in several core types that shape sentence structure and meaning.** Verbs may be active (expressing action), linking (equating subject and complement), helping (supporting another verb), or multi-word (like phrasal verbs with distinct meanings).
- **Transitive and intransitive verbs differ based on object use.** Transitive verbs require a direct object to complete their meaning (e.g., "She writes poems"), while intransitive

verbs do not (e.g., "She writes"). Some verbs can function as both, depending on context.

- **Verb tense and aspect determine the time and duration of actions.** Simple, perfect, progressive, and perfect progressive aspects allow for precision in describing when and how actions occur. Tense consistency is essential for clarity and grammatical correctness throughout writing.
- **Subject-verb agreement ensures that verbs match their subjects in number and person.** Singular subjects require singular verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs. Special attention is needed with compound subjects, collective nouns, and constructions using *or* and *either/or*.
- **Non-finite verbs (gerunds, participles, and infinitives) function differently from main verbs.** Gerunds end in -ing and act like nouns, participles modify nouns like adjectives, and infinitives often begin with "to" and can serve various roles—making them essential for constructing more complex sentence structures.

## Other Parts of Speech

- **Adjectives modify nouns and follow a specific order.** Adjectives describe qualities like size, color, age, and opinion. When using several together, they should follow the "royal" order (Determiner, Opinion, Size, Age, Shape, Color, Origin, Material, Purpose), and only coordinate adjectives—those from the same category—require commas.
- **Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.** Adverbs answer how, when, where, or to what extent something happens and often (but not always) end in -ly. They can modify entire sentences and follow their own standard order: Manner, Place, Frequency, Time, Purpose.
- **Prepositions show relationships and must pair correctly with their objects and verbs.** Prepositions indicate relationships in time, space, and logic, and form prepositional phrases with nouns or pronouns. Word choice matters—verbs often require specific prepositions, and incorrect pairings can change meaning or lead to errors.
- **Articles ('a,' 'an,' and 'the') introduce nouns and follow rules based on sound, specificity, and context.** Use "a" before consonant sounds and "an" before vowel sounds. "The" refers to specific, known nouns. Articles generally appear at the start of noun phrases, though some modifiers (e.g., "all," "such," "quite") may come before them.
- **Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses and follow specific rules based on type.** Coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) link equal elements and use commas when joining independent clauses. Subordinating conjunctions join dependent and independent clauses, requiring a comma only when the dependent clause comes first. Correlative conjunctions work in pairs and demand subject-verb agreement. Adverbial conjunctions link complete thoughts and need a semicolon before and a comma after when joining sentences.

## Sentence Structure

- **Every complete sentence must have a subject and a predicate.** The subject tells who or what the sentence is about, while the predicate tells what the subject does or is. Sentences can have compound subjects or predicates, and in rare cases, the predicate may come before the subject in inverted sentence structures.
  - **Direct and indirect objects clarify the action in a sentence.** A direct object receives the action of the verb (answering “what?” or “whom?”), while an indirect object tells to or for whom the action is done. Both can appear in the same sentence and are key to understanding verb relationships.
  - **Phrases and clauses serve different grammatical roles.** Phrases are groups of words without both a subject and a verb, while clauses include both. Independent clauses express complete thoughts and can stand alone; dependent clauses cannot and must be attached to independent clauses.
  - **Sentence patterns and types affect clarity and style.** Common sentence patterns include subject + verb, subject + verb + direct object, and subject + verb + indirect object + direct object. Sentences can also be classified as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex depending on their clause structure.
  - **Punctuation patterns support sentence structure.** Correct use of commas, semicolons, and periods depends on sentence type. For example, compound sentences need punctuation between independent clauses, and introductory or dependent clauses often require commas to separate them from main ideas.
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# Glossary

## active verbs

verbs that express a specific action performed by the subject (e.g., run, jump, contain, kick)

## adjective

an adjective describes or modifies a noun, providing more detail about qualities like size, color, number, or personality

## adverb

a word that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb by describing how, when, where, or to what extent something happens

## **adverbial conjunctions**

words or phrases that connect independent clauses and show relationships like cause, contrast, or sequence (e.g., however, therefore, moreover). they require punctuation, often a semicolon before and a comma after when joining sentences

## **antecedent**

the noun that a pronoun refers back to or replaces in a sentence

## **antecedent clarity**

the principle that a pronoun's reference must be unmistakably clear, ensuring the noun it replaces (its antecedent) is easily identifiable and avoids reader confusion

## **article**

an article is a word placed before a noun to show whether the noun is specific or general. English has three articles: a, an, and the

## **bare infinitive**

the base form of a verb used without to, typically following modal verbs or certain expressions (e.g., can go, let him speak)

## **clause**

a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb; it can be independent (a complete sentence) or dependent (a sentence fragment)

## **collective nouns**

nouns that refer to a group of individuals acting as a single unit or as separate members, such as family, team, or audience; verb agreement depends on whether the group is viewed as one or many

## **command sentence**

a simple sentence that gives a direction or instruction and typically omits the subject, which is implied to be "you." Example: Close the window.

## **common nouns**

general names for people, places, things, or ideas that are not capitalized unless they start a sentence (e.g., girl, city, watch)

## **comparable adjectives**

comparable adjectives show varying degrees of a quality, using forms like more (comparative) and most (superlative) to express comparison

## **complement (of a preposition)**

the noun or pronoun that follows a preposition to complete its meaning (e.g., in the house, under the table, after dinner)

## **complex sentence**

a complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Example: Because it was raining, we canceled the picnic.

## **compound nouns**

nouns formed by combining two or more words into a single unit, written as one word (daydream), hyphenated (dry-cleaning), or with a space (vacuum cleaner)

## **compound predicate**

a compound predicate has two or more verbs or verb phrases that share the same subject, connected by a coordinating conjunction. Example: She washed the dishes and dried them.

## **compound sentence**

a compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, a semicolon, or a conjunctive adverb. Example: The experiment was successful, but the results were unexpected.

## **compound-complex sentence**

a sentence containing at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. Example: Although she was tired, she finished the project, and she emailed it to her boss.

## **conjunctions**

words that connect words, phrases, or clauses within a sentence

## **coordinating conjunctions**

conjunctions that join equal elements (e.g., two nouns, phrases, or independent clauses). The most common are remembered by the acronym FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

## **correlative conjunctions**

paired conjunctions (e.g., either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also) that link equal sentence elements, requiring careful attention to subject-verb agreement based on the element closest to the verb

## **count nouns**

nouns that can be counted and made plural (e.g., apple, book, fox); they can be used with numbers and articles like a or an

## **definite article**

the is the definite article; it refers to a specific noun that is already known to the reader or listener

## **demonstrative pronoun**

a pronoun that replaces a noun by pointing to something specific in relation to distance or time (e.g., this, that, these, those), with this and these indicating closeness and that and those indicating distance

## **dependent clause**

a dependent clause contains a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought; it must be attached to an independent clause to form a complete sentence

## **direct object**

a direct object is a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause that receives the action of the verb directly; it answers what? or whom? after the verb

## **gerund**

a verb ending in -ing that acts like a noun (e.g., swimming is fun)

## **helping verbs**

verbs that come before the main verb to form a verb phrase and express tense, mood, or voice (e.g., have eaten, is going, can ride)

## **indefinite article**

a and an are indefinite articles; they refer to a non-specific or general noun. Use a before words beginning with a consonant sound (e.g., a cat), and an before words beginning with a vowel sound (e.g., an orange)

## **indefinite pronoun**

a pronoun that refers to one or more unspecified people or things (e.g., anyone, each, nobody, one), often used to generalize or indicate unknown quantities or identities

## **independent clause**

an independent clause contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought, making it able to stand alone as a sentence

## **infinitive**

an infinitive is the base form of a verb usually preceded by to (e.g., to write) and functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb

## **intransitive verbs**

action verbs that do not require a direct object (e.g., he sleeps peacefully)

## **irregular plurals**

nouns that do not follow standard pluralization rules and instead change form in unique ways (e.g., man → men, mouse → mice, deer → deer)

## **irregular verbs**

verbs that do not follow standard patterns when changing tenses. instead of adding -ed for the past tense, they often change form entirely (e.g., go → went, run → ran, eat → ate)

## **linking verbs**

verbs that connect the subject to a subject complement, showing a state of being or condition rather than action (e.g., is, seems, becomes); they act like an equal sign (e.g., she is happy)

## **multi-word verbs**

verbs made up of two or more words that function together as a single verb and often carry a different meaning than the individual words (e.g., shut up, find out, carry out)

## **non-comparable adjectives**

non-comparable adjectives describe absolute or binary states (e.g., dead, true, unique) that generally do not vary in degree

## **non-count nouns**

nouns that represent a mass or concept that cannot be counted or made plural (e.g., furniture, advice, happiness); they require quantifiers like some, much, or a piece of

## **non-finite verbs**

verb forms that do not show tense and cannot stand alone as the main verb in a sentence. Types include gerunds, participles, and infinitives

## **noun**

words that name people, places, things, or ideas, including both general terms (e.g., book, city) and specific ones (e.g., Dr. Nguyen, Puerto Rico)

## **participle**

a verb form used as an adjective. present participles end in -ing (e.g., the sleeping baby); past participles often end in -ed, -en, or irregular forms (e.g., the broken toy)

## **personal pronoun**

a pronoun that replaces a specific noun referring to a person or thing (e.g., I, she, they) and changes form based on case and number

## **phrase**

a phrase is a group of words that acts as a single part of speech and lacks both a subject doing the action and a complete verb

## **plural nouns: regular plurals**

nouns that form the plural by following standard rules, usually by adding -s or -es (e.g., cats, foxes, heroes) or changing -y to -ies after a consonant (e.g., skies)

## **possessive pronoun**

a pronoun that shows ownership; may function independently (mine, yours) or modify a noun (my, your)

## **predicate**

the predicate is the part of a sentence that contains the verb and tells what the subject does, is, or experiences; it includes the verb and any modifiers or objects. Every complete sentence consists of a subject and a predicate

## **preposition**

a word that shows the relationship between its complement and another element in the sentence, often indicating direction, time, location, or cause (e.g., in, on, before, under)

## **pronoun**

a word that takes the place of a noun and can function as a subject or object in a sentence (e.g., he, they, this, who, everyone)

## **pronoun agreement**

the grammatical rule that a pronoun must match its antecedent in number (singular or plural), gender, and person to maintain clarity and correctness in a sentence

## **proper nouns**

specific names of people, places, or organizations that are always capitalized (e.g., New York, Google, Elizabeth)

## **reflexive pronoun**

a pronoun that refers back to the subject of the sentence and ends in -self or -selves (e.g., myself, herself, themselves)

## **relative pronoun**

a pronoun that introduces a dependent clause and relates it to a noun (e.g., who, whom, whose, that, which); used to add information or describe the noun it follows

## **royal order of adjectives**

the standard sequence in which multiple adjectives should appear before a noun to maintain clarity and natural flow. When two or more adjectives are used, they typically follow this order: determiner → observation → size → shape → age → color → origin → material → qualifier → noun. For example: "Those beautiful large round old blue Italian glass serving bowls"

## **royal order of adverbs**

the typical sequence in which multiple adverbs appear in a sentence—manner, place, frequency, time, and purpose—to maintain clarity and natural flow. Example: She sang (manner) beautifully (place) in the hall (frequency) every week (time) to practice for the recital (purpose).

## **simple sentence**

a simple sentence contains one independent clause and no dependent clauses, though it may have a compound subject or predicate. Example: The sun set behind the hills.

**subject**

the subject is the noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause that a sentence is about. Every complete sentence consists of a subject and a predicate

**subject-verb agreement**

the rule that verbs must match their subjects in number and person. Singular subjects take singular verbs (she writes), while plural subjects take plural verbs (they write). Compound subjects joined by and require plural verbs (the cat and dog are outside)

**subordinating conjunctions**

words that connect a dependent clause to an independent clause, showing relationships like time, cause, condition, or contrast (e.g., because, although, since, if, when)

**transitive verbs**

action verbs that require a direct object to complete their meaning (e.g., she wrote a letter)

**verb tenses**

forms of verbs that show when an action happens. The three basic tenses are: present (she works), past (she worked), and future (she will work). In the present tense, third-person singular subjects take an -s ending

**verb types**

categories of verbs based on their function in a sentence, including active, linking, helping, and multi-word forms

**verbal nouns**

nouns derived from verbs that function like regular nouns in a sentence; includes gerunds and other forms like running, jogging, and meeting