

Definitions of Common English Terms

NOUN: The naming words in a sentence. Ask yourself **who** or **what** or **where**. Nouns are the names of things such as people, places or things.

Example: The cat sat on the mat outside my house.

Who, what and where? There are three naming words. The **nouns** are cat, mat and house.

VERB: The doing or being words in a sentence. Ask yourself what is being done.

Example: The cat sat on the mat.

What did the cat do? It sat on the mat. The **verb** is SAT.

ADJECTIVE: The describing words in a sentence. Adjectives **describe nouns**. Ask yourself what the noun is like.

Example: The black cat ate the tasty cheese.

What are the cat and the cheese like? The **adjectives** are black and tasty.

ADVERB: Adverbs are describing words (like adjectives) but they **describe verbs**. Ask yourself how a verb was done.

Example: The bird flew quickly.

How did the bird fly? The **adverb** is quickly.

CONJUNCTION: Conjunctions are joining words. Two separate sentences can be joined with a conjunction. Some common ones are: **and, or, yet, but, for**.

*Example: The dog is brown. It barks at a cat. The dog is brown **AND** it barks at a cat.*

The **conjunction** is and.

ANTONYM: Words that are **opposite** in meaning.

Example: BIG is the opposite of SMALL. They are antonyms.

SYNONYM: Words that are similar in meaning.

Example: LITTLE is similar to SMALL. They are synonyms.

HOMONYMS: Words that **sound the same** but are **spelt differently**.

Example: READ and RED, MADE and MAID. They are homonyms.

SUBJECT: The noun that the sentence is about. Ask **who** or **what** is doing the action.

Example: James ate his dinner.

Who is the sentence about? The sentence is about James. The **subject** is James.

OBJECT: The noun that the subject acts on. Ask **who** or **what** the subject does its action to.

Example: James ate his dinner.

What did James eat? **His dinner** is the **object** of the sentence.

PREDICATE: The predicate is all the information about the **subject**. It starts with a verb.

Example: James ate his dinner.

What is the information about James? The **predicate** of the sentence is **ate his dinner.**

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE:

The part of the sentence which can stand alone. It makes sense by itself.

Example: She screamed when the ghost appeared.

Which part can stand alone? The **independent clause** of the sentence is **she screamed.**

DEPENDENT CLAUSE:

The part of the sentence which cannot stand alone. It does not make sense by itself.

Example: She screamed when the ghost appeared.

Which part cannot stand alone? The **dependent clause** is **when the ghost appeared.**

DIRECT SPEECH:

The exact words spoken by someone and recorded in a sentence.

Example: Peter said, "I have lost my kitten," and then he cried.

The exact words from Peter have been included and surrounded with **quotation marks**.

INDIRECT SPEECH:

The things that someone said, but not their actual words.

Example: Peter said that he lost his car and then he cried.

No quotation marks are used.