Lesson 1: Parts of Speech and Basic Sentence Structure

Welcome to Lesson 1

Parts of Speech and Basic Sentence Structure

Welcome to the first lesson in the online grammar component of English for Speech-Language Pathology.

In this lesson, you will learn how English words are classified and how they are combined to form sentences.

Grammar is important for Speech-Language Pathology students because professionals need to understand how language is structured and how grammatical forms are used in communication.

Before you start

Think about this sentence:

The child produces sounds.

Can you identify:

- the person performing the action?
- the action?
- what is being produced?

You will learn how to answer these questions in this lesson.

Parts of Speech

1. Nouns

A **noun** identifies a person, place, thing, concept, or idea.

Examples:

child
therapist
language
speech
assessment
communication
vocabulary

Example:

The **therapist** conducted an assessment.

2. Verbs

A **verb** expresses an action, event, or state.

Examples:

speak
communicate
produce
understand
assess
listen
develop

Example:

The child **produces** sounds.

3. Adjectives

An **adjective** describes a noun.

Examples:

clear
difficult
limited
expressive
receptive
verbal

Example:

The child has **limited** vocabulary.

4. Adverbs

An **adverb** can describe how, when, where, or how often something happens.

Examples:

slowly
clearly
carefully
frequently
appropriately

Example:

The child speaks **slowly**.

5. Pronouns

A **pronoun** can replace a noun or noun phrase.

Examples:

I, you, he, she, it, we, they, him, her, them

Example:

The child entered the room. **He** sat beside the therapist.

Pronouns are particularly important in clinical writing because unclear reference can make a sentence difficult to understand.

6. Prepositions

Prepositions express relationships such as place, time, direction, or association.

Examples:

in, on, at, under, between, with, from, to

Examples:

The child is **in** the therapy room.

The therapist spoke **with** the parent.

7. Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses.

Examples:

and, but, or, because, although, while, if

Example:

The child understands instructions **but** has difficulty expressing ideas.

8. Determiners

Determiners occur before nouns and help specify or quantify them.

Examples:

a, an, the, this, that, these, those, some, many, each

Examples:

The child attended therapy.

A therapist conducted the assessment.

Activity 1 – Identify the Part of Speech

Question 1

The child **speaks** clearly.

What type of word is **speaks**?

- Noun
- Verb
- Adjective
- Preposition

Feedback:

Correct. "Speaks" is a verb because it describes the action performed by the child.

Question 2

The therapist conducted a **careful** assessment.

What type of word is **careful**?

- Noun
- Adjective
- Verb
- Adverb

Question 3

The child responded **quickly**.

What type of word is **quickly**?

- Adjective
- Noun
- Adverb
- Pronoun

Subject, Verb and Object

One of the most common English sentence patterns is:

Subject + Verb + Object

Example

The child produces sounds.

Function	Example
Subject	The child
Verb	produces
Object	sounds

Subject

The **subject** tells us who or what performs the action.

The child produces sounds.

Verb

The **verb** tells us what the subject does or what happens.

The child **produces** sounds.

Object

The **object** is often the person or thing affected by the action.

The child produces **sounds**.

More clinical examples

Example 1

The therapist assesses language.

Subject = **The therapist**
Verb = **assesses**
Object = **language**

Example 2

The student writes a report.

Subject = **The student**
Verb = **writes**
Object = **a report**

Example 3

The child follows instructions.

Subject = **The child**
Verb = **follows**
Object = **instructions**

Subject–Verb Agreement

The verb must agree with the subject.

Singular subject

The child **speaks** clearly.

The therapist **assesses** language.

Plural subject

The children **speak** clearly.

The therapists **assess** language.

Remember

With the **present simple**:

He / She / It → verb + s

He speaks.

She communicates.

The child produces.

But:

I / You / We / They → base verb

They speak.

We communicate.

The children produce.

Question 3

Choose the correct sentence.

A. The child speak clearly.
B. The child speaks clearly.
C. The child speaking clearly.
D. The child clearly speak.

Feedback

Correct:

The child speaks clearly.

The subject **the child** is singular, so the present-simple verb takes **-s**.

Grammar in Speech-Language Pathology

Grammar can be examined in language samples and clinical contexts.

Consider:

The child eat apple.

The intended meaning may be understandable, but the sentence contains grammatical problems.

A standard grammatical form would be:

The child eats an apple.

Two features need attention:

1. Subject–verb agreement

eat → **eats**

because **the child** is singular.

2. Article use

apple → **an apple**

because the singular countable noun requires an appropriate determiner in this context.

Another example

The children plays with the toy.

Correct:

The children play with the toy.

The subject **children** is plural, so we use **play**, not **plays**.

Clinical Application

Read the following short language sample:

The boy want juice. He point to the cup. The therapist give him the cup.

Ask students:

How many grammatical errors can you identify?

Possible corrections:

The boy **wants** juice.

He **points** to the cup.

The therapist **gives** him the cup.

This activity introduces students to the idea that grammatical analysis involves examining the relationship between words and sentence structure.

Question 4 – Clinical Application

Choose the correct version.

The child want water.

A. The child want water.
B. The child wants water.
C. The child wanting water.
D. The child wanted water.

Feedback:

Correct. "The child" is singular, so the present-simple verb is "wants."

FINAL PRACTICE – Sentence Analysis

Give students these three sentences:

Sentence 1

The child produces sounds.

Subject: The child
Verb: produces
Object: sounds

Sentence 2

The therapist assesses language.

Subject: The therapist
Verb: assesses
Object: language

Sentence 3

The student writes a clinical report.

Subject: The student
Verb: writes
Object: a clinical report

References

Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge Grammar of English: A Comprehensive Guide*. Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, R. (2019). *English Grammar in Use* (5th ed.). Cambridge University Press.