

BEGINNING WRITING

TARGETING THE COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

Beginning Writing 1



Topics Include:

Understanding Parts of Speech, Understanding the Sentence, Developing Sentences, Developing Paragraphs, Ideas and Content, Practical Writing, Creative Writing, and more

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CORRELATED TO THE TRAITS OF WRITING

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Ideas: The Meaning and Development of the Message (Table of Contents abbreviation: I)
Organization: The Internal Structure (Table of Contents abbreviation: O)
Presentation: The Overall Appearance (Table of Contents abbreviation: P)
Sentence Fluency: The Rhythm and Flow of Words and Phrases (Table of Contents abbreviation: S)
Voice: The Personal Stamp of the Writer (Table of Contents abbreviation: V)
Word Choice: The Specific Vocabulary (Table of Contents abbreviation: W)

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UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Nouns*

A *noun* is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea.

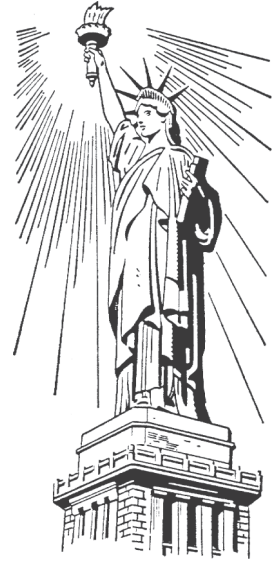
A *common noun* names any person, place, thing, or idea.

A *proper noun* names a specific person, place, thing, or idea.

EXAMPLES:

Common Nouns: **student, forest, pencil, confusion**

Proper Nouns: **Howard, Everglades, Statue of Liberty**



- A. First underline all the nouns in the following sentences. Then write **CN** above each *common noun* and **PN** above each *proper noun*.

1. Emily was training herself to become a spy.
2. The teenager anxiously prepared to complete her first mission.
3. Emily took off her shoes and tiptoed across the carpet.
4. The young spy quietly opened the door and peeked into the bedroom.
5. "Margo isn't doing her homework!" Emily yelled to her mother.
6. "I hate sneakiness!" Margo shouted at her sister.

- B. Rewrite each sentence. Replace the **boldface** common noun with a specific proper noun. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. The seashore is my favorite vacation spot.

Waikiki Beach is my favorite vacation spot.

2. The teacher carefully explained the rules.

3. Passengers were upset when the airline canceled flights.

4. The store offered a refund to every unhappy customer.

CHALLENGE: Select one of the proper nouns from Part B. On the back of this sheet, write three sentences telling about that person, place, or thing. For example, you might write three sentences about Waikiki Beach. Circle each noun you use.

UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Collective Nouns*

A *collective noun* names a group of persons or things. The word *jury* is a collective noun. So is the word *committee*.

A. Write a letter to match each collective noun in the first column with its description in the second column. The first one has been done for you.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>c</u> crowd | a. a group of many |
| 2. _____ flock | b. a lot of bees flying together |
| 3. _____ swarm | c. a great number of persons gathered together |
| 4. _____ class | d. women who feel a common bond |
| 5. _____ sisterhood | e. students who meet with a teacher |

Depending on how the collective noun is used in the sentence, it may take a singular or plural verb. Here are the rules:

- If you are thinking of the collective noun as a single unit, use a singular verb.
EXAMPLE: The *committee* is meeting once a month.
- If you are thinking of the group members as separate individuals, use a plural verb.
EXAMPLE: The *jury* are entering the courtroom one by one.

B. Read each sentence about the 2000s. Then underline the collective noun that is the subject of the sentence. Finally, circle the verb form that agrees with the subject.

1. The year is 2006, and the Senate (has / have) voted to make Samuel Alito the new member of the U.S. Supreme Court.
2. Today, a family often (needs / need) more than one car.
3. It is 2000, and the team from the United States (is / are) attending the summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia.
4. The U.S. Army (had / have) invaded Iraq in March of 2003 under the codename "Operation Iraqi Freedom."
5. President George W. Bush and the FEMA Committee (has / have) sent representatives to assess the damage from Hurricane Katrina.

CHALLENGE: On the back of this sheet, write a brief news report about a concert, a big game, or some other group event. Circle each collective noun you use. Be sure to use the correct verb form.

UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Verbs*

Verbs are words that express an action or a state of being. Action verbs (run, talked, went) tell what people *do*. Other verbs (is, am, are) express a *state of being*.

A. Add a verb to complete each sentence. Then, on the line before the sentence, tell what the verb expresses. Write **A** for *action* or **S** for *state of being*.

1. _____ Many people _____ the taste of chocolate.
2. _____ Montezuma, a ruler of the ancient Aztecs, _____
50 cups of hot chocolate a day.
3. _____ Hot chocolate _____ still a favorite drink.
4. _____ Chocolate, however, _____ quite high in calories.
5. _____ Do you _____ chocolate or vanilla?

Most verbs change form to show the *time* something is happening. The form of a verb shows whether something is happening now, has happened in the past, or will happen in the future.

EXAMPLES: The car needs a tune-up. (present)
The car needed a tune-up last month. (past)
The car will need a tune-up in three months. (future)

B. The action in the following paragraph takes place in the present. First underline each verb. Then rewrite the paragraph on the back of this sheet. Replace each present-tense verb with a past-tense verb. The first one has been done for you.

In my grandma's living room was a portrait of Elvis Presley on black velvet. Everyone in the family voices an opinion about the picture. Uncle Leo calls it hideous. Aunt Sally groans when she looks at it. When I look at the picture, I feel happy. I believe it is the most beautiful thing in Grandma's house.



UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Verb Phrases*

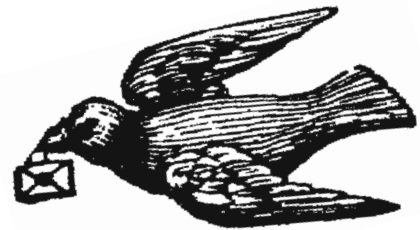
One or more *helping verbs* are often used along with the *main verb* in a sentence. Together, the helping verb or verbs and main verb make up a *verb phrase*. A helping verb can show time or add meaning to the main verb.

EXAMPLES: The mechanic *will* check the tires before we leave.
The mechanic *should* check the fluid levels too.
The mechanic *has been* working for an hour.

Sometimes the words in verb phrases are separated by other words.

EXAMPLES: You *should not pay* your bill until the work is completed.
I *had never seen* such a big repair bill!

Find the complete verb phrase in each sentence. Write it on the line. *Hint:* The number in parentheses tells how many words are in the verb phrase.



1. During World War II, a homing pigeon named Beachcomber would carry messages across enemy lines.
2. In all, 32 homing pigeons were used in the war.
3. Homing pigeons have been used for service and for sport.
4. Their owners will often release them far from home.
5. The birds will cleverly find their way across many miles.
6. A racing pigeon must reach its home loft as quickly as possible.
7. That weary bird over there must have been flying all day!

(2) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(2) _____

(2) _____

(2) _____

(4) _____

CHALLENGE: On the back of this sheet, write three sentences about a race or contest. Use a verb phrase in each sentence. Circle the main verb and underline the helping verb in each verb phrase.

UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Irregular Verb Forms*

Add *-ed* or *-d* to form the past tense of a *regular verb*.
To form the past tense of an *irregular verb*, you will usually change the spelling.

EXAMPLES:

REGULAR VERB:
PRESENT PAST
look **looked**

IRREGULAR VERB:
PRESENT PAST
sing **sang**



- A. Read the irregular past-tense verb forms in the box. Then complete the puzzle by matching each one to a present-tense form listed as a clue.

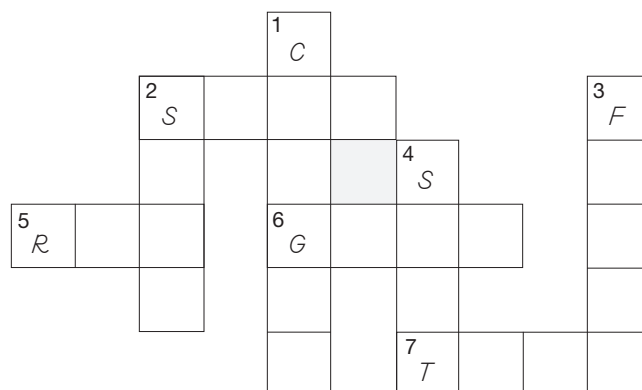
ran	swam	caught	grew
tore	sent	sank	froze

ACROSS

2. swim
5. run
6. grow
7. tear

DOWN

1. catch
2. sink
3. freeze
4. send



- B. Fill in each blank with the past-tense form of the verb in parentheses. The verb you write should *rhyme* with the words in *italics*. The first one has been done for you.

1. With a bong and a *clang*, the steeple bell (ring) *rang*.
2. The baby eagle grew and *grew*; then from its nest it bravely (fly) _____.
3. Into the shady, peaceful *cove*, my little boat I slowly (drive) _____.
4. The list of promises each candidate (write) _____, should help us decide just how to *vote*.

CHALLENGE: On the back of this sheet, write five sentences using the past-tense form of the following verbs: *steal*, *catch*, *dive*, *do*, *buy*.

UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Pronouns*

Imagine you are writing a story about a fellow named Mike. How do you avoid repeating the word *Mike* in your story? You use pronouns! A *pronoun* is a word that takes the place of a noun. Notice the **boldface** pronouns in the following example:

Mike plays baseball for the Riverside Rockets. **He** is **their** star pitcher. When **he** winds up, batters stop breathing! **They** wait nervously for **his** fast ball. **They** know the umpire is likely to call, "Strike three. **You** are out!"

A. Circle the three words in each group that are *not* pronouns.

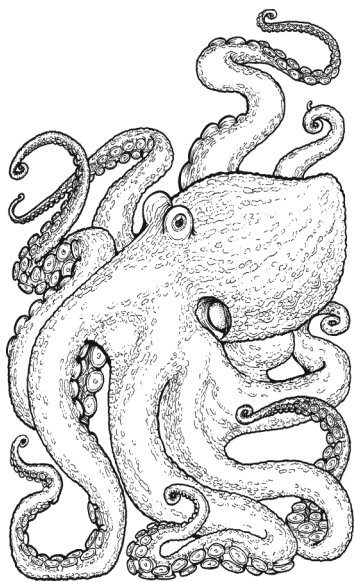
1. it Karen him her Marvin president
2. they teenagers yellow my I Rudy
3. car our us family we Charlene

A pronoun must always agree with the noun it replaces.

INCORRECT: *People* should not volunteer for a job unless *he* really wants to do it.

CORRECT: *People* should not volunteer for a job unless *they* really want to do it.

B. Complete each sentence with one of these pronouns: *one, they, it, its*.
Notice that each pronoun replaces a **boldface** noun or nouns.



1. The **octopus** is a fascinating creature, but some people think _____ is scary.
2. The octopus has eight twisting **tentacles**.
_____ help the creature move along the ocean floor.
3. The **octopus** uses _____ tentacles when hunting.
4. When an octopus's **tentacle** is cut off, a brand new _____ grows!

CHALLENGE: On the back of this sheet, write a short paragraph about an animal with a frightening appearance. Use pronouns to avoid repetition—and make sure each pronoun agrees with the noun it replaces!

UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: *Indefinite Pronouns*

Indefinite pronouns can cause writers problems. These pronouns include words like *all*, *each*, *either*, *few*, and *none*. As with other pronouns, writers must make sure that every indefinite pronoun agrees with its verb.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

SINGULAR				MAY BE SINGULAR OR PLURAL		
either	anyone	no one	each	any	more	some
neither	everybody	none		all	most	

A. Read each sentence. Then circle the indefinite pronoun and underline its verb. Finally, write **S** if the pronoun is *singular* or **P** if it is *plural*. The first one has been done for you.

1. P (All) of the party guests have been given a list of items for the scavenger hunt.
2. _____ Each of the party guests has been given a list of items for the scavenger hunt.
3. _____ Everybody in the group is expected to participate.
4. _____ Some of the guests don't want to join the hunt.
5. _____ A few feel silly going door to door asking for unusual objects.
6. _____ Most think it sounds like great fun!
7. _____ I'll bet that nobody will be able to find a wooden clothespin.

B. Complete the two sentences below. Make sure to use a verb that agrees with the **boldface** indefinite pronoun.

1. **All** of the job applicants _____.
2. **Both** Hector and Neil _____.

CHALLENGE: Indefinite pronouns are often the subject of a sentence. In fact, one indefinite pronoun and one verb can make a complete sentence!

EXAMPLES: *Everyone screamed. Nobody answers.*

On the back of this sheet, write three two-word sentences containing an indefinite pronoun and a verb.

BEGINNING WRITING

TARGETING THE COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

Beginning Writing 1

Beginning Writing 2