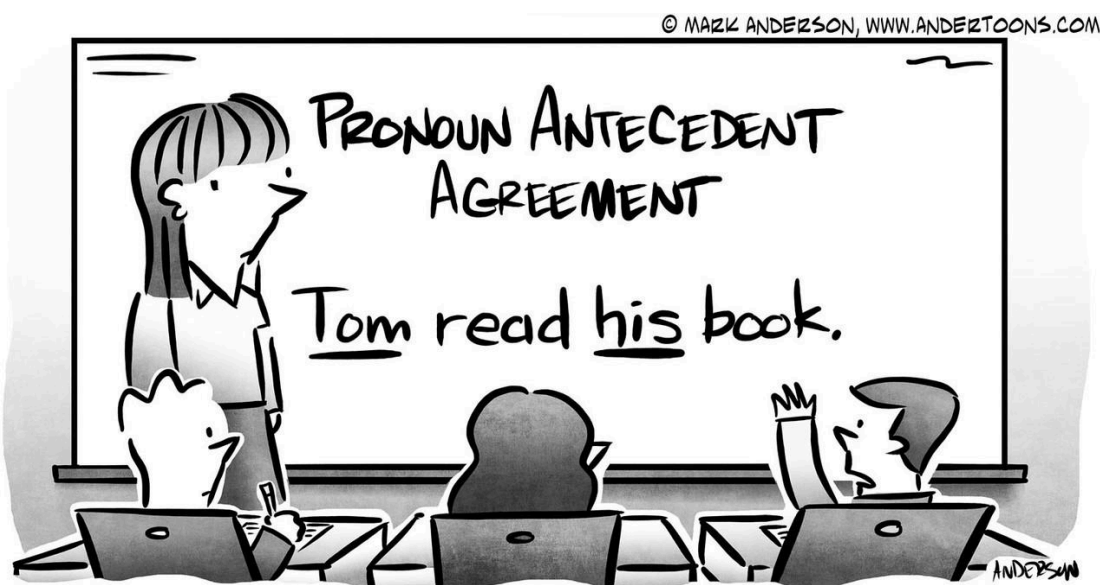


INTRODUCTORY LESSONS TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR- 2024



"Of course they agree; they're the same person."

Taken from: <https://andertoons.com>

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ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING AND TRANSLATION COURSES

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

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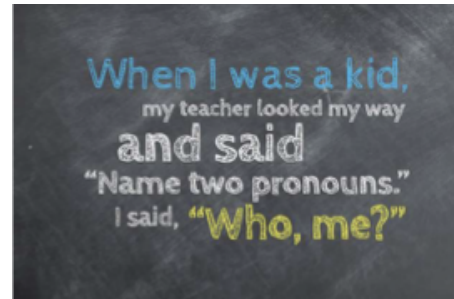
WARMING UP: What counts as Grammar? ... and what doesn't.

1. State whether the memes and jokes below are related to grammar or not. Be ready to justify your answer.

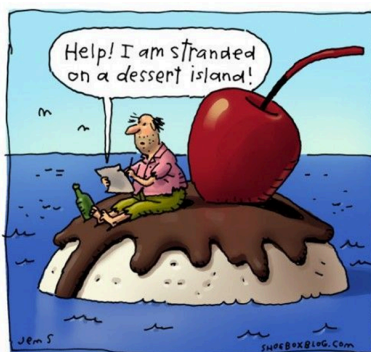
1. ¹



2. ²



3. ³



4. ⁴

The past, the present,
and the future walk
into a bar...

It was tense.

¹ <https://languagearts.mrdonn.org/grammar.html>

² <https://jbrish.com/humor-pronoun-grammar-quote-joke/>

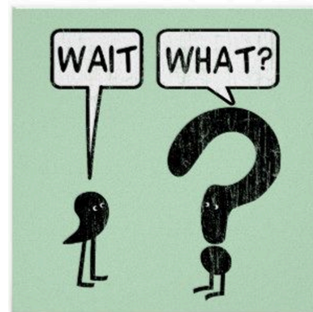
³ https://www.boredpanda.com/grammar-jokes-and-puns/?utm_source=pinterest&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=organic

⁴ https://www.boredpanda.com/grammar-jokes-and-puns/?utm_source=pinterest&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=organic

5. ⁵



6. ⁶



7. ⁷



8. ⁸



2. LANGUAGE PRODUCTIVITY AND CREATIVITY. Observe the two words invented⁹ by a child below and answer:

- What do you think these words mean?
- What word class do they belong to? Are they similar to other words you know? Which ones?
- What has the child managed to do to create these words?

⁵<https://www.buzzfeed.com/javiernoreno/things-youll-only-find-funny-if-youre-a-grammar-nerd-1?epik=dj0yJnU9aWdjUE9aaEJ0dktFQ2dsRDJ4TDdiYVM1OEtvbWcteWEmcD0wJm49NDF5NkZGbkRrUnlxbExBUm5uTXRGUSZ0PUFBQUFBR1hNcDhj>

⁶ <https://ar.pinterest.com/pin/AdnYCIzEtuzoFbLhMODgAhNHNSV1w7xbLkP0eHz3kXsnHjZO-O3H1es/>

⁷<https://manybooks.net/articles/watch-your-grammar-seven-funny-grammar-memes>

⁸ <https://br.ifunny.co/picture/every-time-you-use-your-for-you-re-you-make-igExlx1Z8>

⁹ <https://ordinarybites.blogspot.com/2016/02/diccionario-de-la-lengua-infantil.html?m=1>

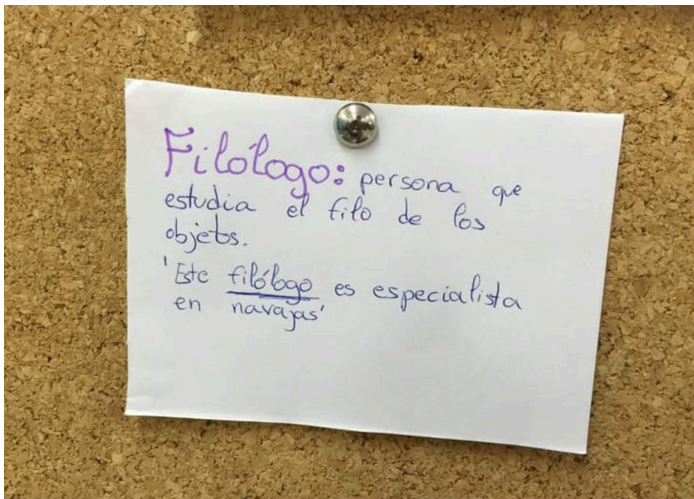
quemoso

loquicidad

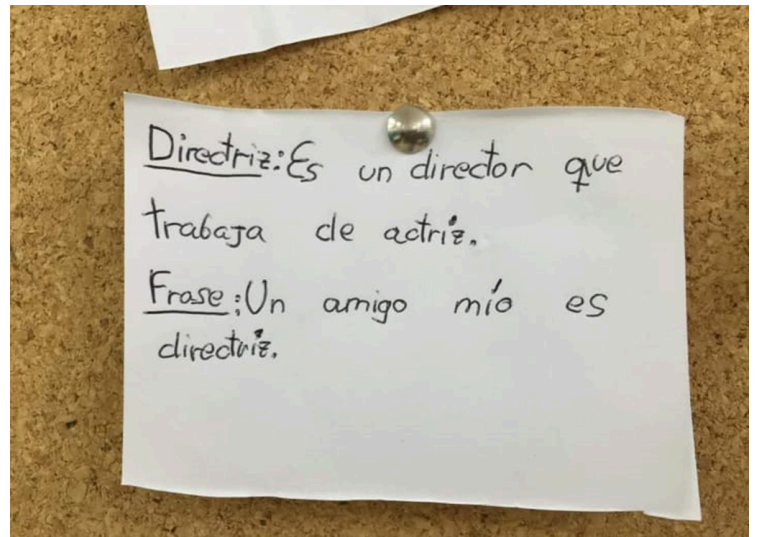
Now, observe the three definitions¹⁰ written by some Spanish-speaking children and answer:

- Why do the definitions make sense?
- What have children done to create them?

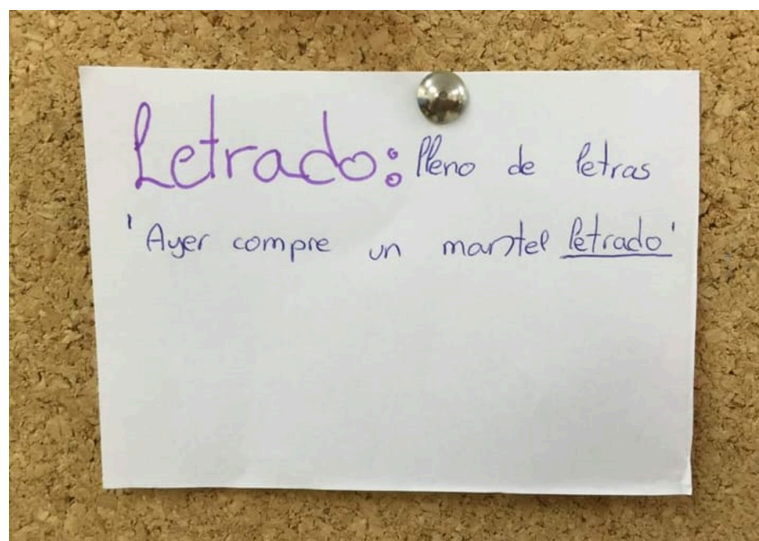
1.



2.



3.



¹⁰ https://www.facebook.com/cesar.bona.37/posts/585831048226704?ref=embed_post

3. Have a look at the pictures below related to the text *What is Bitcoin?* and decide whether the sentences are True or False.



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1. Bitcoin is a physical form of currency.
2. Bitcoin is a type of money that exists only in electronic form.
3. Many shops currently accept Bitcoin as a means of payment.
4. Some countries have banned the use of Bitcoin altogether.
5. PayPal allows its customers to buy and sell Bitcoin.
6. There is only one way to acquire Bitcoins: using traditional currency.

PART 1. VERBS

1. ARGUMENT STRUCTURE.

Read the extract below about Bitcoins and answer the questions.

What is Bitcoin?

Bitcoin, often described as a cryptocurrency, a virtual currency or a digital currency, is a type of money that is completely virtual.

It's like an online version of cash. Can use it to buy products and services, but not many shops accept yet and some countries have banned Bitcoin it altogether.

However, some companies are beginning to buy into its growing influence.

For example, in October last year, the online payment service, PayPal, announced that it would be allowing its customers to buy.

How do people get Bitcoins?

¹¹<https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/mercados/El-bitcoin-alcanza-los-26300-dolares-su-nivel-mas-alto-en-nueve-meses-20230314-0031.html>

¹² <https://www.shutterstock.com/es/image-vector/most-used-currency-symbols-1289756629>

¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/PayPalSinFronteras/>

There are three main ways people get Bitcoins:

- You can buy Bitcoins using 'real' money.
- You can sell things and let people pay you with Bitcoins.
- Or they can be created using a computer.

Adapted from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/25622442>

a. Have a look at the verbs in the sentences under the heading “What is Bitcoin?”. What aspect is strange in some of them? Add any phrases that are necessary in the sentences to correct the grammar.

b. What have the changes consisted in? Observe each sentence where you have added phrases to answer this question.

c. What happens with the sentences if these phrases are not present?



The obligatory elements that are selected by the verb are called **arguments**. If any of them is not present, the sentence is **ungrammatical**. The **argument structure** of a verb contains information about the number of arguments. It gives information about the **number of obligatory elements** in a sentence with a given verb. A sentence is **grammatical** when the verb is accompanied by all the elements it requires. If this does not happen, or if there are more elements than the ones required by the verb, the sentence is **ungrammatical**. Ungrammatical sentences are marked with an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the sentence as in the ungrammatical phrase **much bitcoins*.

2. ARGUMENTS AND ADJUNCTS. Analyse the sentences below: identify the main verb and its arguments (obligatory elements).

- a. I sent him a request and I joined his live broadcast on Instagram.
- b. Last year, my mum almost downloaded the Tik-Tok app.
- c. Her last reel received 1k likes.
- d. Their business started in 1990 when social media was not so active.



Some other **non-obligatory** elements can appear in the sentence. These elements are not arguments. They are called **adjuncts**, and their function is to add extra information to the sentence. If they are not present, the sentence is still a grammatical one because the argument structure of the verb is still complete.

3. ARE THESE SENTENCES GRAMMATICAL OR UNGRAMMATICAL? Consider the sentences below and state whether they are possible or impossible in English. To do so, write an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the sentences that you think are ungrammatical. Be ready to explain why.

- a. Joined her Youtube channel for recipes.
- b. A content creator generates high-quality content to attract potential customers.
- c. An influencer sells directly to customers.
- d. An average tiktokker posts every day.
- e. The industry has become more competitive as new influencers enter the social media landscape.



Our knowledge of Language can help us produce and understand an infinite number of sentences. What is more, this knowledge allows native speakers to produce and distinguish the difference between grammatical and ungrammatical forms. It does not matter whether we have heard them before or not, we can tell if they are correct or not. As speakers of a language, we have the capacity to judge whether a sentence is possible (**grammatical**) in a language or not possible and **ungrammatical**.

The ones that are possible are said to be **grammatical sentences** and the ones which are **not possible** in a given language are labelled as **ungrammatical sentences**. These are introduced with an **asterisk**, this symbol *, at the beginning of the sentence.

4. IMPLICIT ARGUMENTS AND ARGUMENT STRUCTURE. Read the text “Social media influencers” below and answer the questions.

Social media influencers

It is estimated that about 40 per cent of the world's population use social media, and many of these billions of social media users look up to influencers to help them decide what to buy and what trends to follow.

So what is an influencer and how do we become one?

An influencer is a person who can influence the decisions of their followers because of their relationship with their audience and their knowledge and expertise in a particular area, e.g. fashion, travel or technology.

Influencers often have a large following of people who pay close attention to their views. They have the power to persuade people to buy things, and influencers are now seen by many companies as a direct way to customers' hearts. Brands are now asking powerful influencers to market their products.

More and more people are keen to become influencers too. If you are one of them, then here are five **tips** on how to do it:

1. Choose your niche

What is the area that you know most about? What do you feel most excited talking about? Find the specific area that you're the most **interested** in and develop it.

2. Select your medium and write an interesting bio

Most influencers these days are bloggers and micro-bloggers. Decide which medium – such as your own online blog, Instagram or Snapchat – is the best way to connect with your followers. When you have done that, write an attention-grabbing bio that describes you and your specialty area in an interesting and unique way.

3. Post new material regularly and consistently

Many influencers make posts daily on their social media accounts. The more you post, the more likely people will follow you. Also, ensure that your posts are consistent and possibly follow a theme.

4. Tell your audience an interesting story

Whether it is a photo or a comment that you are posting, use it to tell a story that will catch the **attention** of your followers and help them connect with you.

5. Publicise your posts on a variety of social media

Use hashtags and catchy titles and make sure people can easily find you. There is no point in writing the most exciting blogposts or posting the most attractive photographs if no one is going to see them.

If you want to become a social media influencer, you need to be patient. Keep posting and your following will gradually increase. Good luck!

Adapted from: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading/b1-reading/social-media-influencers>

a. Analyse the subheadings from 1 to 5. Spot the verbal predicates and state their argument structure.

b. Are all the arguments selected by the verb present in the sentence? Why are they still grammatical?

c. Compare the sentences in set (1) and (2). State if the problem is related to the verbs' argument structure or thematic structure. Write the correct symbol at the beginning of the sentence. Explain.

1. a. Tell your audience an interesting story.
b. Tell your shoes an interesting story.
2. a. Select your medium and write an interesting bio.
b. Select and write.

d. Are the following sentences ungrammatical or odd?

1. She likes.
2. Mountains like bears.
3. My car is scared of spiders.
4. I left on the table.
5. The tree is walking in the park.



The verb also imposes restrictions on the **type** of arguments it can select. That is to say, the verb and its argument must have a particular **semantic relationship** for the sentence to make sense. This information of the **kind of arguments** a verb can select is called **thematic structure**. For example, a sentence like *Marie ate a shoe* is grammatical if we just consider the number of elements this verb selects. However, there is a problem with the **meaning (semantics)** of the sentence. The verb *eat* only accepts “edible objects” as complements. For this reason, the sentence is grammatical but its meaning is **odd**. **Odd sentences** are marked with a question mark (?).

PART 2. NOUNS & ADJECTIVES. MORPHOLOGICAL AND DISTRIBUTIONAL CRITERIA

1. ROOTS AND AFFIXES. In the following groups of words, identify the root of the different lexical items and the affixes attached to them. What types of affixes can you identify in the different words? Do they change the category of the words?

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- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1.a. build | b. builder | c. building |
| 2.a. possible | b. impossible | c. possibility |
| 3.a. uncomfortable | b. discomfort | c. comfort |
| 4.a. predict | b. unpredictable | c. prediction |



2. SIMPLE AND COMPLEX WORDS. Are the following words simple or complex?

- a. members b. twit c. influencer d. social

If you have difficulty in deciding whether particular words are simple or complex, consider the questions below to guide your answer.

- Do all suffixes provide the same type of information?
- If there are any affixes added, is there a change in meaning in the word that is formed?
- Does the resulting word belong to the same word category?



Complex words can take one or more affixes. There are two types of affixes. Affixes that change the word category, add substantial meaning, or both are called **derivational affixes**. Affixes that do not change the category of the word but rather change the form of it so that it fits into different grammatical contexts are called **inflectional affixes**. These affixes add grammatical information about person, number, gender, tense, etc.

Derivational suffix: build - **builder**; controversy-**controversial**.

Inflectional suffix: actor - **actress** (gender); post - **posted** (tense); watch (noun) - **watches** (number).

These provide useful **word-internal information** that can help you determine the **word class** or **category** a word belongs to.



Nouns: The properties of a particular noun are assumed to be common to the whole class that the noun belongs to. **Common nouns** may denote people, animals, objects, places, qualities, substances,

¹⁴ <https://www.greatheartsamerica.org/13-grammar-puns-bad-theyre-good/enhanced-buzz-5305-1462150838-8/>

events, activities or results, emotional states or sensations. For instance, the noun *cat* designates the set of beings that are characterized as *domestic mammals* that belong to the family of felines.

Proper nouns identify a single referent and may designate different entities, such as people, animals, religious and mythological divinities, places, books, clubs and other institutions, festivals and historical periods. They can be the complement of either a determiner or quantifier. For example: *There are many important documents at The Library of Congress*. The noun *Library* is the complement of the determiner *The*.

Proper names make reference to a particular individual or person.



Adjectives are words that describe or classify nouns. Depending on the language, they occupy different **positions** in relation to nouns. In Spanish, adjectives usually come after the noun. On the other hand, in English, adjectives usually go before the noun they describe. But this is not the only difference in relation to adjectives in English and Spanish, since they also have other discrepancies. For example, in Spanish, adjectives contain the same information as regards number and gender as the noun they modify. In other words, the adjective **agrees** with the noun in number (singular, plural) and gender (feminine, masculine). However, there is no explicit **agreement** between adjectives and nouns in English. That is to say, there are no overt inflectional affixes attached to the adjectives in English. Adjectives remain the same irrespective of the grammatical information nouns contain. For example: in a phrase like *smart girls*, the adjective *smart* does not show overt morphology in relation to number or gender. For this reason, the phrase **smarts girls* is ungrammatical in English.

3. INTEGRATION.

a. Analyse the words in bold in the text “Social media influencers” above and describe them using morphological and distributional criteria.

1. followers
2. interested
3. attention
4. tips

Note. To complete the descriptions, read the explanation about MORPHOLOGICAL and DISTRIBUTIONAL criteria below and the examples on how to do so.



Word classes are not only divided considering their meaning. This means that knowing the meaning of a word is not enough to be able to use it properly in a particular sentence or discourse. They are grouped by taking into account their morphology and distribution.

Morphological properties of words are the various forms we find for different words. For example, the word *chats* can be broken down into *chat* and *-s*, where the second part represents the plural of the word and is called the plural suffix. The fact that the word *chat* can take the plural *-s* suffix places it in the category of nouns because only nouns can take plural *-s* in English. There are many types of affixes and different word categories are associated with certain affixes and not others. For example, the word *chat* cannot take the suffix *-ous* (**chatous*), as this suffix is typically found in adjectives such as *dangerous*, *marvelous*, etc.

On the other hand, **distributional properties** refer to the positions that some words can occupy in a sentence. Clearly, this is determined by the category a word belongs to. For instance, in English adjectives premodify nouns, as shown in the phrase *a nice filter*, where the adjective *nice* premodifies the noun *filter*. This is the correct version in English, as it is not possible to have the adjective as a postmodifier: **a filter nice*.

Examples:

Many **influencers** post daily on their social media accounts.

According to **morphological criteria**, the word *influencers* is a noun because it contains the suffix *-(e)r*, which derives the word from a verb to a noun. This is typical of other nouns such as *teacher*, *singer*, *player*, etc. It also contains the suffix *-s* which carries information about plural number, and which is typical of countable nouns such as *moths*, *dogs*, *cats*, etc. According to **distributional criteria**, *influencers* is a noun because it is the noun head in the noun phrase [influencers] and it is the complement of the quantifier *many*. They together form the Quantifier Phrase [many influencers].

There is no point in writing the most exciting blogposts or posting the most **attractive** photographs if no one is going to see them.

According to **morphological criteria**, the word *attractive* is an adjective because it contains the suffix *-ive*, which derives the word from a verb to an adjective and which is typical of other adjectives such as *supportive*, *interactive*, *sensitive*, etc. According to **distributional criteria**, *attractive* is an adjective in the superlative form because it's preceded by the degree word *most*. It is the head of the AP [most attractive]. It pre-modifies the noun head *photographs* in the Noun Phrase [most attractive photographs].

b. Look at the text below and classify the nonsense words into ADJECTIVES or NOUNS. To get to the right conclusion you will need to pay attention to:

(1) MORPHOLOGICAL CRITERIA: the affixes each word selects (if any is present); and/or

(2) DISTRIBUTIONAL CRITERIA: the position they occupy in the phrase or sentence.

Ladies and gentlemen, **mobos**¹ and **tramps**²,
cross-eyed mosquitoes, and bow-legged ants,
I come before you to sit behind you
and tell you a story I know nothing about.
Admission is free, so pay at the door,
pull out a chair, and sit on the floor.
One **yainy**³ day in the middle of the night,
two **hippous**⁴ boys arose to fight.
Back-to-back, they faced each other,
drew their **quowns**⁵ and shot each other.

A **croushal**⁶ man shrieked at the **gright**⁷,
and a **lame**⁸ man danced at the **pranctic**⁹ sight.
A deaf policeman heard the **poisance**¹⁰
and came to kill the two **yurking**¹¹ boys.
If you don't believe this **memment**¹² is true,
ask the blind man, for he saw it too.

[Adapted from <http://playgroundjungle.com/2009/12/ladies-and-gentlemen-hobos-and-tramps.html>]