

1. Grammar Overview

Lesson in a Nutshell

The parts of speech may be divided into **substance**, **motion**, and **relationship**.

a. **Substance**

- i. **nouns** (persons, places and things)
- ii. **articles** (“the” and “a” in English)
- iii. **adjectives** (modify nouns)
- iv. **pronouns** (stand in for nouns)

b. **Motion**

- i. **verbs** (action words)
- ii. **adverbs** (modify verbs)
- iii. **participles** (verbal adjectives)
- iv. **infinitives** (verbal nouns)

c. **Relationship**

- i. **prepositions** (anything you can do with a box)
- ii. **conjunctions** (connect words and phrases and clauses)

Close your eyes.

Now open them.

What do you see?

To answer this question you will use language. Language is fascinating.

But language is not reality.

Language is just a series of arbitrary noises we make and attach to reality. Say the word “monkey,” for example. A long time ago we English speakers agreed that this strange sound would call to mind the furry critter that lives in trees and swings by its tail. But this is only true in English. Saying the word “monkey” in China would be as meaningless as saying the word “Hou-Zi” in America.

There are patterns that every language follows. These patterns are called grammar.

We will break grammar into three categories: Substance, Motion, and Relationship.

Substance

By “substance” I mean the things. The people. The places. The “stuff” of life. The first thing a child does when she learns a language is point and name: “Mommy!” “Daddy!” “Bottle!”

The names are **nouns**. For example,

monkey.

If you want to call special attention to a thing you can use the **article**. Not just any monkey.

the monkey.

If you want to further describe what you see, you can attach an **adjective**.

The *brown* monkey.

If you get tired of saying monkey over and over, you use a **pronoun** to stand in for the noun.

I saw the brown monkey. *It* was eating bananas.

Motion

What if you want to describe how the things move? You would select a **verb**, an action word.

The monkey *flies!*

And if you want to further describe the action you use an **adverb** to modify the verb.

The monkey flies *joyfully!*

What if you wanted to use a verbal idea to modify a noun? You would have to create a verbal adjective. These are called **participles**. Don't let the scary word scare you. It's simple. As simple as...

a *flying* monkey

See? The participle “*flying*” is a verbal idea, used like an adjective to describe a noun — a verbal adjective. These are participles. Usually, in English, these are the “ing” words.

Infinitives are the “to be” verbs. They are verbal nouns.

To love is my highest ambition.

Do you see how “to love” in the sentence above could be replaced with a noun?

Health is my highest ambition.

The “to- _____” combination acts just like a noun, but not just any noun, a noun in motion. Infinitives are verbal nouns.

Relationship

What if you want to describe the relationships between things? You use a **preposition**.

The monkey flew **over** my house!

And if you want to link two words or ideas together you use **conjunctions**.

The monkey **and** his wife were laughing at how easy this is.

I want to teach you Greek **but** I do not want to bore you.

Don't let anyone fool you. At the core, language is simple. **Substantives (nouns, articles, adjectives, pronouns)** are put into **Motion (verbs, adverbs, participles, infinitives)**. **Relationships** are described by **prepositions and conjunctions**.

Language is so simple that every one of God's children uses it. In fact, the stupidest people do the most talking.

Grammar only gets confusing when you get into the details. When you begin to feel overwhelmed in your study of Greek, review this basic summary. It will help you keep the big picture in mind.