

An Introductory English Grammar

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Name of the Course: Syntax

The ninth lecture : Basic Sentence Patterns

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Parts of Speech: Positional classes

- ❖ **Nominal: Certain positions are characteristically the habitation of nouns (SV, SC, DO, IO, OC, OP, RO).**
- ❖ **But occupancy of these positions does not positively identify nouns because words of other form-classes can occupy them as well.**

❖ **Examples:**

The rich live on the bay.

Here the SV slot is occupied by an adjective “rich”

Verbals

❖ **Verbals:** are those forms that occupy verb positions.

In order to identify the other verbal positions, we must first make a distinction between two kinds of verb forms. Certain verb forms and verb phrases have complete assertive power; they are needed to make a sentence go. Here are some examples:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| a. I <i>choose</i> carefully. | } | Contrastive inflection for person |
| She <i>chooses</i> carefully. | | |
| b. She <i>chooses</i> carefully. | } | Contrastive inflection for number |
| They <i>choose</i> carefully. | | |
| c. They <i>choose</i> carefully. | } | Contrastive inflection for tense |
| They <i>chose</i> carefully. | | |
| d. She <i>has been</i> chosen carefully. | } | Contrastive inflection for <u>person</u> and number |
| They <i>have been</i> chosen carefully. | | |
| e. I <i>am</i> being chosen. | } | Contrastive inflection for person, number, and tense |
| They <i>were</i> being chosen. | | |

C. Adjectivals

Adjectivals, like nominals and verbals, occupy certain characteristic sentence positions.

1. The first position is that between the determiner (that is, words like *a, the, this, that, these, those, his, her, our, their, Johnny's*) and the noun, for example,

That joyful freshman³

In this noun phrase joyful is an adjective by form—the source noun joy plus the derivational suffix -ful—and an adjectival by position. This position may be occupied by two other form-classes and by uninflected forms. The noun is shown in

That college freshman

The verb appears in

That laughing freshman

That recommended freshman

And here are uninflected words in this adjectival slot:

An inside job

Her inmost thoughts

A series of adjectivals may occur between the determiner and the noun, as in

The many earnest university seniors

2. The second adjectival position is the third slot in Pattern 1:

N	be	Aj
Those boys	are	young

3. The third adjectival position is the third slot in Pattern 4:

N	LV	Aj
The boat	remained	<i>wet, shiny.</i>
The man	appeared	<i>aghast, aware.</i>
The man	seemed	<i>in the money (= rich).</i>

4. The fourth adjectival position is the one after the noun. It accepts adjectives, adverbs, verbs (participles), uninflected words, and word groups.

Examples: adjectivals: The waitress, *old* and *weary*, sat heavily down.
The blondes *especially* → wore blue.
That girl *jogging* is my sister.
The floor *below* is rented.

When an adjective is in this postnoun position, it usually does not occur alone but with another adjectival, as in

A fire, *red* and *yellow*, threw shadows around the room.

or with a modifier, as in

The plumber, rather *angry*, threw down his wrench.

There are occasional instances, however, in which the adjective does appear alone after the head noun. Examples: *money necessary*, *resources available*, *court martial*, *God Almighty*, *time immemorial*, *consul general*, *sum due*.