

The Adventures of Genius Boy and Grammar Girl

A Grammar Textbook
FREE PREVIEW SAMPLE
CHAPTERS 1- 5
www.grammarnation.com

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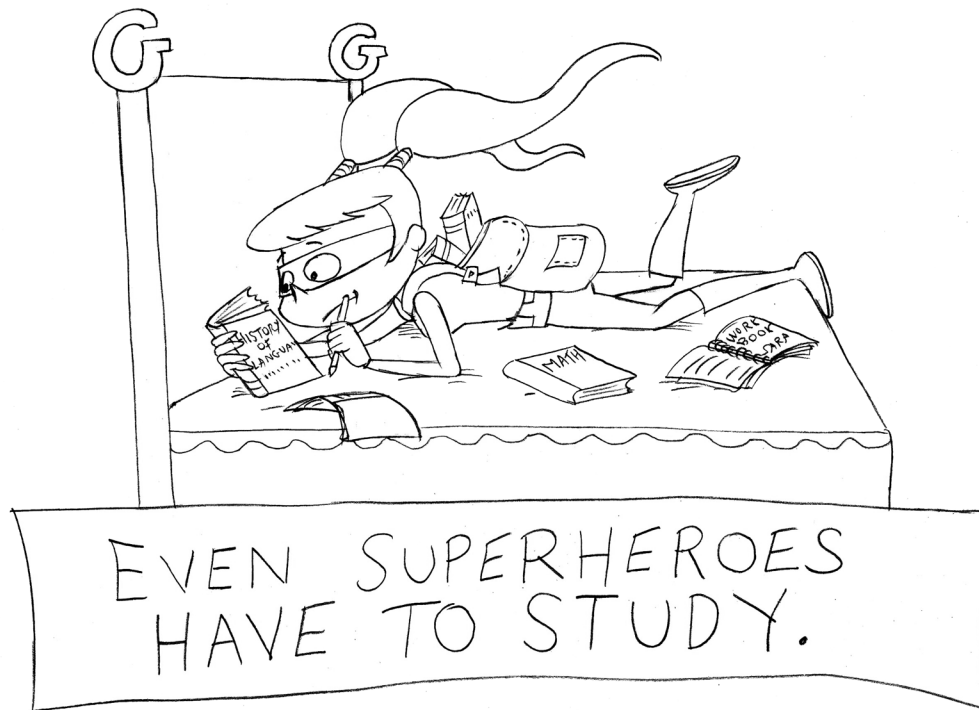
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NOTE: *The Adventures of Genius Boy and Grammar Girl* presents a comprehensive grammar curriculum for both middle school and high school students. The diagnostic pretest (which immediately follows) is an indication of the type of material that will be covered in this textbook.

The textbook consists of story chapters and grammar sections that alternate throughout the book (story/grammar). Students begin each story section by choosing characters and reading the dialogue aloud as they would a script or play. The story takes students through colorful, humorous, and crazy situations that involve Grammar Girl and Genius Boy fighting evil "Anti-Grammarians" who seek to destroy proper grammar as we know it. The story provides content material for the grammar section that follows, in which Grammar Girl presents instruction and exercises that prepare students for quizzes and tests. We recommend that, like the story section, the grammar section be read aloud.

I wish to thank our team: Rachel Heussenstamm, Yvette Kaplan, Dan Marcus, Jenna Newman, and Deena Roth. Rachel, I can't believe all the soul and energy you gave us. Your fingerprints are on every inch of this book. Yvette, you breathed life into this project in ways you can't even imagine. Dan, you're a great editor (with no Anti-Grammarians tendencies) and a real friend. Deena, the real life Grammar Girl—to think how far we've come since the Statue of Liberty. Jenna, your sketches and laughter helped give me the sparks of energy to get this project off the ground.

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Tim Mathews

Additional resources at
www.grammarnation.com

To the students at Currey Ingram Academy

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DIAGNOSTIC PRETEST

Material To Be Covered In This Book

Each correct answer is worth five points:

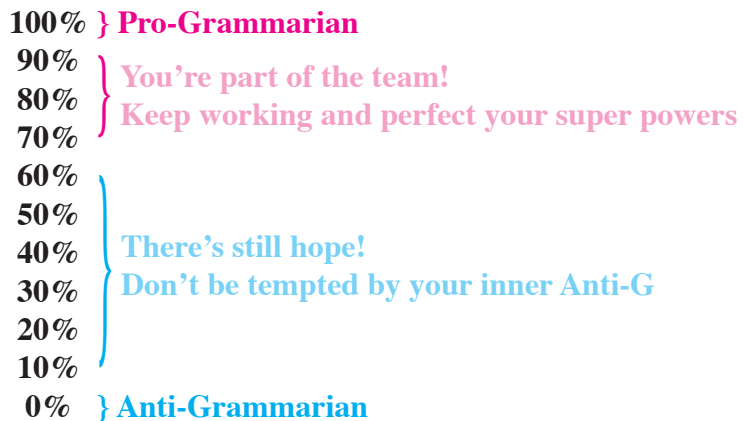
1. Each weekday morning after breakfast, I go to school.
What is the subject of this sentence?
A. morning B. breakfast C. I D. school
2. I just bought a brand new bike with the money I saved from my summer job.
Which word should be followed by a comma?
A. brand B. bike C. money D. no comma is required
3. i didn't know aunt martha taught high school geometry.
Which words require capital letters?
A. i, aunt, martha C. i, martha, geometry
B. i, aunt, martha, high school D. i, martha, high school, geometry
4. Because I am a good student.
This is an example of
A. a run-on sentence C. a complete sentence
B. a sentence fragment D. a comma splice
5. _____ have the same middle name.
A. Her and me C. She and myself
B. She and I D. Her and I
6. My sister is taller than _____.
A. me C. I am
B. myself D. none of these is correct
7. I hope you do _____ on your quiz today.
A. real well C. real good
B. really well D. really good
8. ____ important that _____ parents attend the meeting.
A. It's, their C. It's, there
B. Its, their D. Its, they're
9. You _____ said that. It sounded ____ harsh.
A. shouldn't of, too C. shouldn't have, to
B. shouldn't of, to D. shouldn't have, too

10. I will _____ the job _____ it pays well or not.
A. accept, weather C. except, weather
B. accept, whether D. except, whether
11. My _____ names are John and Peter.
A. brothers C. brother's
B. brothers' D. none of these is correct.
12. *Indicate which of the following is correct:*
A. My teacher asked me if I was ready for my exam.
B. My teacher asked me "if I was ready for my exam."
C. My teacher asked me, if I was ready for my exam.
D. My teacher asked me, "If I was ready for my exam."
13. *Indicate which of the following is correct:*
A. I told my teacher yes I am ready.
B. I told my teacher, "Yes, I am ready."
C. I told my teacher, "yes, I am ready."
D. I told my teacher "yes I was ready."
14. The _____ toys are all over the house.
A. childrens' C. children's
B. childrens D. children
15. *Indicate the best choice:*
A. My homework and doing chores will take up most of the weekend.
B. My homework and doing my chores will take up most of the weekend.
C. Doing my homework and my chores will take up most of the weekend.
D. To do my homework and doing my chores will take up most of the weekend.
16. _____ not going to eat that _____ cake, are you?
A. Your, hole C. You're, whole
B. You're, hole D. Your, whole
17. My aunt was born _____.
A. on October 25, 1980, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
B. on October 25, 1980 in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.
C. on October 25 1980, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
D. on October 25 1980 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

18. *Indicate the best choice:*
- A. I wonder if she will show up at the dance?
 - B. I wonder if she will show up at the dance.
 - C. I wonder if she will show up at the dance!!
 - D. I wonder, if she will show up at the dance?
19. He spoke _____ than the other speakers.
- A. slower
 - B. more slow
 - C. more slower
 - D. more slowly
20. I have no time for _____.
- A. this nor I have the patience.
 - B. this, nor do I have the patience?
 - C. this nor do I have the patience.
 - D. this, nor do I have the patience.

How do you rate?

Scale:



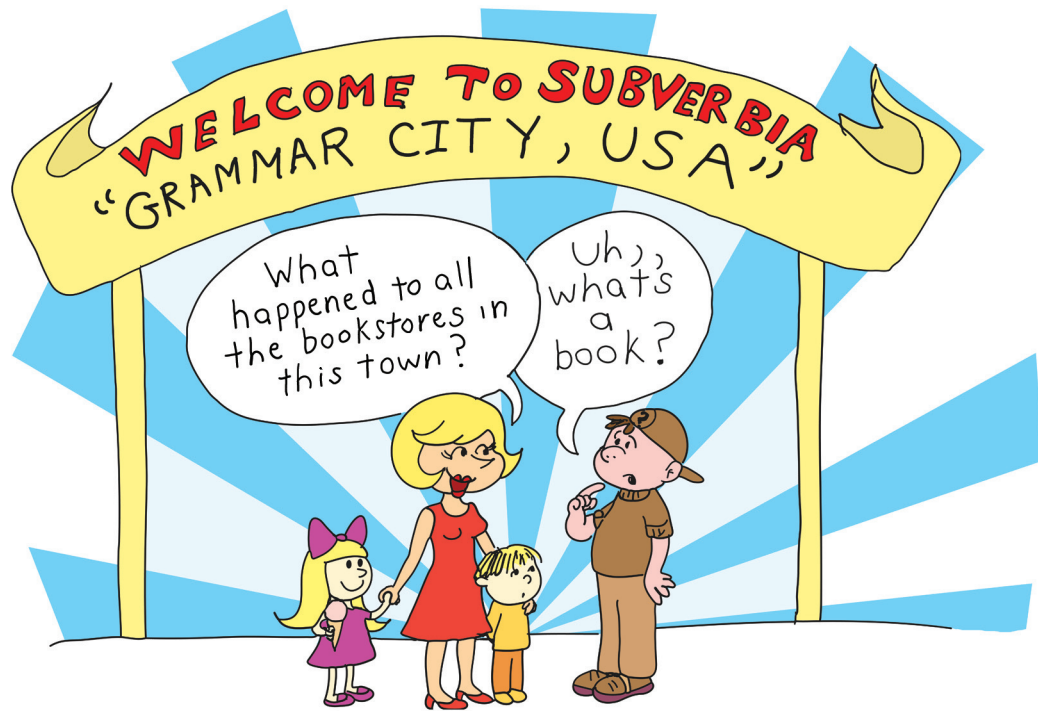
PART I

- 1. Pep Talk**
- 2. Capital Letters**
- 3. Subjects and Verbs**
- 4. Adjectives and Adverbs**
- 5. Comparative Adjectives and Adverbs**

CHAPTER 1: GRAMMAR IS EVERYTHING

DIRECTIONS: PICK A CHARACTER AND READ THE BOOK OUT LOUD.

Characters: Narrator (reading parts in blue), Sarah, Alice, Miss Mustardseed, Hank, Charley.



Narrator In the old days, Subverbia was more than just another rugged pioneer town. What set Subverbia apart? It was the town founder, John Wordsmith, and his great passion for words. Thanks to Wordsmith's efforts, libraries and schools were popping up everywhere. It wasn't long before all the residents knew the difference between *who* and *whom*, and Subverbia became known far and wide as Grammar City, USA.

Times have changed, however, and Wordsmith is now just a bronze statue in the park. Nowadays, young Subverbians never go near a library unless it's to use the grounds as a skating rink. And without any new customers, bookstores are slowly going out of business.

Are the glory days over for Grammar City, USA? To find the answer, let's turn to John Wordsmith's great-great-great-great-granddaughter, young Sarah Wordsmith.

We find Sarah in her English class at Hyphen High, a public school that lacks funding. Several of Sarah's classmates are snoozing at their desks as the teacher writes on the board: "A noun is a person, place, thing or idea." Sarah seems to be in great distress. Her classmate, Alice, notices this and raises her hand.

Alice Miss Mustardseed, Sarah is hyperventilating again.

Miss Mustardseed Did I forget to dot an *i* again, Sarah?

Sarah Com . . . com . . . comma.

Sarah takes out a paper bag and breathes deeply into it several times. The teacher seems bored with this routine.

Miss Mustardseed Go to your happy place, Sarah. Count to three and you'll see rainbows.

Alice I think she's upset that there's a comma missing on the board. Actually, it's the optional comma before the last item on your list, but Sarah insists on using it. Can she?

Miss Mustardseed Whatever.

Sarah goes to the board, adds the comma, and sighs in great relief. Now the sentence on the board reads: "A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea."

Miss Mustardseed Would someone please close the door?

Charley tosses the end of his abnormally long tie around the doorknob and yanks the door closed.

Miss Mustardseed Charley, how many times have I told you not to use your tie?

Miss Mustardseed reaches for a dusty, crusty book.

Hank Ahhh—grammar, no!

Miss Mustardseed Well, I don't like it any more than you do, but we have to prepare for today's quiz.

Charley But the grammar book is old and boring! We need a newer, gooder one.¹

Miss Mustardseed What can we do? The school just doesn't have the budget. Now then, let's look at the example on page three:

In the future, television will be in color.
noun

Miss Mustardseed Let's review. What's a noun?

Alice A person or place?

Sarah Oh! You forgot thing or idea.

Miss Mustardseed That's right. A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea. Let's talk about prepositions. What are they?

Alice Prepositions—

Sarah —are often used to show location. Here's a trick: We can use prepositions before "the tunnel"—*in* the tunnel, *through* the tunnel, *around* the tunnel, *from* the tunnel, *by* the tunnel, *to* the tunnel.

As you can see, Sarah Wordsmith loves grammar more than anything. Next to grammar, she loves her cat Pirate and her fancy red pen. These are what Sarah loves, but you may wonder who loves Sarah. Well, Sarah has a few friends, but some would argue that she isn't entirely popular.





Charley Bookworm!

Hank Grammar freak!

Miss Mustardseed Class, I have to leave the room for a moment. Start your quiz. Please keep your eyes on your own papers.

Miss Mustardseed steps out.

Charley Pssst. Hi, Sarah. You look nice. What's the answer to number four?

Sarah Get a life.

Charley stares at his blank quiz, confused.

Charley Pssst. Hey, Hank, what'd you get for name?

Hank Who cares? I say, let's go on strike. Let's have a portest.² Death to grammar!

Charley Yes, death to crammar!³ Freedom of speech—like it says in the Bill of Declarations.⁴

Hank and Charley rip out pages from the grammar book and use them to make paper airplanes.

Miss Mustardseed Class! Settle down. Oh, what's the use? Every time I try to teach grammar, something like this happens. I should probably just give up.

Sarah You mustn't give up. We mustn't! Grammar is everything!



Later, Sarah stands by the window and looks down at the street, where Hank and Charley carry protest signs. Other students join in the strike.

Sarah Someone needs to put a full stop to this madness.

Miss Mustardseed But whom?

Sarah Shouldn't it be "but *who*?"

GG

MAKING SENSE OF ANTI-GRAMMARIANS

¹ gooder one = better one

² portest = protest

³ crammer = grammar

⁴ Bill of Declarations = Bill of Rights



Pep Talk

GRAMMAR Unit 1

GRAMMAR GIRL SAYS: Hey, it's me, Sarah. I'm going to help you understand grammar, but first here's a little pep talk. Before I begin, let me divide everyone into two categories:



1. PRO-GRAMMARIANS:

OK, Pro-G's, let's face it: We are an endangered species. But I pledge here and now to keep us from going extinct. Now, I'm not trying to turn you into a grammar superhero or anything. I just want to help you build on what you already know. If the first chapters seem easy, don't worry. The lessons will get more challenging as we go. For those of you already familiar with grammar and mechanics, think of this book as an important refresher—and congratulate yourselves. What comes easily to you takes lots of hard work and practice for others. Help your classmates and be patient with them. Remember, we all have our own strengths and weaknesses.

2. ANTI-GRAMMARIANS:

You probably hate grammar, and you can't wait to join Hank and Charley in the strike. You might be trying to convince yourselves that grammar skills will never help you succeed in real life. Trust me, you're wrong. Good grammar will help you in and out of school. Someday you'll look back, and believe it or not, you'll be grateful that you used this book. Let's face it: It's not only writers who benefit from language skills—pretty much everyone does. Have you noticed which professional athletes get picked for TV interviews? It's the well-spoken ones, right? And these same well-spoken athletes often go on to become TV announcers. Sorry to break the news,

Anti-G's, but even if you're planning to be a movie star, there's no getting around the rules in this book. Actors need to understand punctuation so they will know when to breathe while reading a script. And what about rock stars? The best of them often write their own lyrics. And guess what? Even if they use slang expressions such as *ain't*, they still rely on grammar to get their ideas across. No matter who you are or what you do, language is everywhere, in every walk of life, and knowing the rules will help. It may not be the story you want to hear, but it's the truth.

WHY HERE? WHY NOW? WHY ME?

Like it or not, grammar is a part of who we are and how we express ourselves. If we improve our grammar, we can benefit in more ways than we know. After all, every time we speak or write, our abilities are there for the world to see, and people will judge us accordingly. For example, someday you will probably have to go on a job interview, and speaking correct English could be the difference between getting hired or not. Writing counts, too. When employers sort through piles of resumes, their trash bins are soon full of otherwise capable applicants who were grammatically challenged. All of us can improve ourselves by developing better language skills, so why not you, right here and right now?

CHAPTER 2: THE DREAM TUNNEL

Characters: Narrator, Charley, Hank, Wordsmith/Wordsmith's Statue, Miss Mustardseed, Sarah, Man on the Street.



The Anti-Grammarians continue their protest in front of the school.

Charley Hey, Hank. Grammar usn't¹ worth the pepper² it's writed³ on. Let's talk any way we feel like it.

Hank Yeah—rebels rule! Grammar stinks!

Charley Yeah! I amn't⁴ learning no pepositions.⁵

Sarah drifts off into a daydream. John Wordsmith enters her mind through a misty dream tunnel. He arrives in the form of his bronze statue, exactly as it appears in the city park, caked with dirt and bubble gum.

Wordsmith Sarah my dear, Subverbians have lost sight of what's truly important. But they are a great people, capable of great things, so you must show them the way. Teach them, Sarah. Teach them . . .

As Wordsmith's voice trails off, a pigeon lands on his nose. He jerks back and accidentally bangs his head on the dream tunnel.

Wordsmith Ouch!

A car comes speeding down the street and screeches to a halt. A man in a green suit gets out and shakes hands with the strikers. Sarah and Miss Mustardseed watch the scene unfold through the window.

Miss Mustardseed Who is that guy? He's handing something out.

Sarah Are they business cards?

Miss Mustardseed (*sarcastic*) Great, just what we need—help from an outsider.



The strike is a big success, and in a matter of weeks, more and more schools stop teaching grammar. What does all of this mean to the man on the street?

Man on the Street Good riddance to good grammar! Now I don't have to worry about fancy people making me feel stupid.

In front of a closed bookstore, a kid walks by wearing headphones. On the curb, a hobo stays warm by burning books. Sarah walks toward the park, carrying a bucket of soapy water. When she reaches the statue of John Wordsmith, she stops, glances up at her bronze hero, and smiles. She climbs up on his knee with soapy sponge in hand and begins scrubbing off the dirt and bubble gum.

Wordsmith's Statue It's very sad. Where will we be without grammar?

Sarah And what will become of red pens?



GG MAKING SENSE OF ANTI-GRAMMARIANS

- ¹ usn't = is not
- ² pepper = paper
- ³ writed = written
- ⁴ amn't = am not
- ⁵ pepositions = prepositions



Capital Letters

GRAMMAR UNIT 2

GRAMMAR GIRL SAYS: OK, I know what you're probably thinking: capital letters? I learned those in first grade! Well, I'm sure you learned the basics and still remember to capitalize the first word of a sentence, the names of countries and cities, and the pronoun *I*. However, there are many more dos and don'ts to examine:

1. THE NAME RULE



DO capitalize

a person's name or a word used as a name. *Hi, Mom. Hey, Granny.* Also, capitalize words that go before names if they function as parts of the names (including a person's title). *Aunt Zelda, Uncle Rob, Mayor Muttonchops McGee.*



DON'T capitalize

words like *mom* and *aunt* and *mayor* when you are not using them as names or as parts of names. *My mom is a good cook. I have an aunt in Michigan. A mayor has an important job.*

2. THE TITLE RULE



DO capitalize

the titles of books, movies, stories, and school papers (including your own work). *Have you read Treasure Island? My paper is titled Friendly Adjectives.*



DON'T capitalize

a little, unimportant word (*the, to, in, etc.*) unless it's the first word of a title. *I am reading The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Have you read War and Peace?*

3. DAYS, MONTHS, AND SEASONS RULE



DO capitalize

the days of the week and the names of the months. *Monday, Tuesday, etc. January, February, etc.*



DON'T capitalize

the seasons. *Apple blossoms bloom in the spring. Families build snowmen in the winter.*

4. THE SCHOOL RULE

**DO capitalize**

the titles of specific school courses (these often contain numbers). *I'm taking Grammar 1. I'm enjoying Algebra 2. I like History 101.* Also, capitalize the names of languages. *Hank is failing English. I passed French.*

**DON'T capitalize**

the names of general school subjects that are NOT the names of languages. *I don't do so well in algebra or science, but I'm getting A's in Spanish.*

5. THE PLANET RULE

**DO capitalize**

earth, sun, and moon if you are being scientific. *Planet Earth orbits the Sun.* Also, always capitalize planets other than Earth. *I want to learn more about Jupiter.*

**DON'T capitalize**

earth, moon, or sun if you are using these terms in an everyday, unscientific way. *The moon is beautiful tonight. The sun is shining and the birds are singing—a perfect day to diagram sentences!*

6. THE WATER RULE

**DO capitalize**

lake, river and ocean when they are attached to a name. *I went walking around Lake Coochicomma. The Run-on River runs to the Pacific Ocean.*

**DON'T capitalize**

lake, river, or ocean when they are NOT attached to a name. *Let's jump in the lake. How far is the ocean from here?*

7. THE QUOTATION RULE

**DO capitalize**

the first word in a quoted sentence. *Charley said, "The grammar book is boring."*

**DON'T capitalize**

the first word of a very short quotation (one or two words). *Miss Mustardseed said "good morning" to the class.*

8. THE RULE ON THE STREET



DO capitalize

the words *street*, *boulevard*, *drive*, *place*, and so on, when they are attached to a name. *English teachers don't get stars on Hollywood Boulevard. My address is 4365 Spell-check Place.*



DON'T capitalize

street, *boulevard*, *drive*, *place*, and so on, when they are NOT attached to a name. *This is the main boulevard. Why is a family of ducks walking down the street?*

9. THE COMPASS RULE



DO capitalize

north, *south*, *east*, and *west* when they refer to regions. *The Civil War was fought between the North and the South. Saudi Arabia is in the Middle East.*



DON'T capitalize

north, *south*, *east*, and *west* when they refer to directions. *Drive north till you get to a fork in the road. It's just south of the Anti-Grammarians restaurant, My Favoritist Food (by the way, I prefer eating at the Grammar Grill).*

10. THE SACRED RULE



DO Capitalize

holidays, important religious terms, and *God* as a religious reference. *On Thanksgiving, people thank God for their blessings. All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth. Tomorrow is Passover, a Jewish holiday.*



DON'T capitalize

god when there is more than one (as in Greek mythology). *He is so muscular that he looks almost like a god. I wish that Greek mythology included Grammarius, the grammar god.*

11. THE HISTORICAL RULE



DO capitalize

major historical events. *The Civil War took place in the nineteenth century. Charlie thinks the Valentine's Day Massacre occurred because gangster Al Capone didn't get any valentines.*



DON'T capitalize

important personal events. *This is the best day of my life.*

2.1 Exercise Your Super Powers

Capitalize where necessary.

1. i think i'll dress up as a librarian for halloween.
2. i'm afraid there may be a grammar war taking place.
3. students are on the street, holding protest signs.
4. students are on apostrophe street, holding protest signs.
5. the grammar strike began one thursday afternoon in the fall semester.
6. hey, mom, what's for dinner?
7. my mom made dinner for me.
8. president lincoln was killed after the civil war.
9. they say "y'all" in the south.

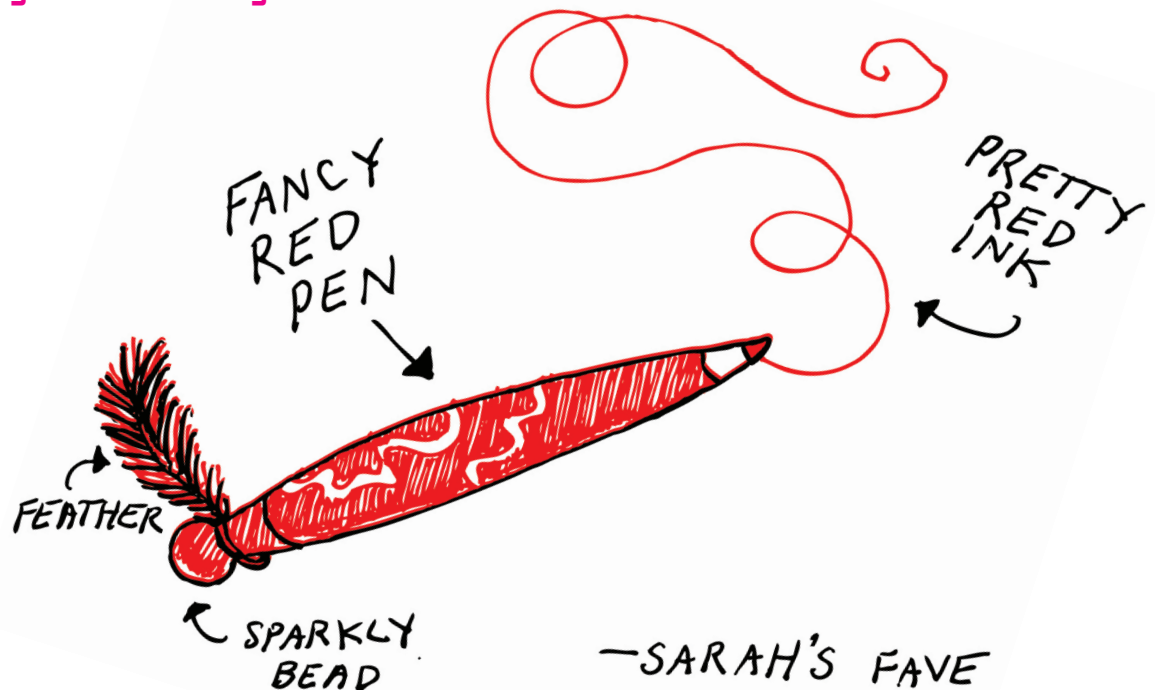
2.2 Exercise Your Super Powers

Underline any unnecessary capital letters.

1. Yesterday, I was walking North along the Street when I saw my Mom driving by.
2. Nothing under the Sun is as cool as Education.
3. I wish I had better Math skills so I could pass Algebra 2.
4. I wrote a letter to my Granny, thanking her for my Christmas gift.
5. On a cold Winter Sunday, my idea of fun is to proofread essays.
6. I like fantasy novels such as *Return Of The Unicorn*.
7. Anti-Grammarians want to toss their Grammar books into the Atlantic Ocean.
8. I'm afraid that Mabel, my Great Aunt, is pretty weird.
9. After dinner, Aunt Mabel once served a cake made entirely of frosting.

CHAPTER 3: GRAMMAR GIZMOS

Characters: Narrator, Mr. M, Sarah, Male Reporter (Walter), Female Reporter (Rose), Young Man/Genius Boy.



On this fine morning, Sarah pays her usual Saturday visit to the Mysterious Mr. M's stationery store. She is so completely mesmerized by the latest shipment of red pens and spiral notebooks that she doesn't notice a young man appear from the storage room. He yawns, stretches, and leaves the store.

Sarah How much is this notebook?

Mr. M How much do you think it is?

Sarah You're mysterious, Mr. M.

Mr. M Really? I think of myself as quiet, withdrawn, and unpredictable. But *mysterious*? I just don't see why people keep calling me that. Hey, do you want to try something?

Mr. M makes a paper airplane and hands it to Sarah. When she tosses it into the air, he fires a staple that intercepts the airplane and fastens it to the wall.

Sarah That's amazing.

Mr. M Fire a staple right at my head. Go on.

Reluctantly, Sarah obeys. The staple arcs downward and attaches to his pocket protector.

Sarah How did you do that?

Mr. M This pocket protector is a magnetic shield. Here's something else I invented. They look like common paper clips, but they're communiclips.

Mr. M hands her a clip, walks to the far end of the room, and talks into his own clip.

Sarah Wow! I can hear you loud and clear.

Mr. M Now check this out. It's an ordinary math compass, right? It's good for drawing circles and right angles. But if you aim it straight up, it always points due north.

Sarah So it's a compass disguised as, uh, a compass—very clever.

Mr. M Here's something else you'll like.

Sarah It's a red pen! What does it do?

Mr. M I'll let you find out for yourself.

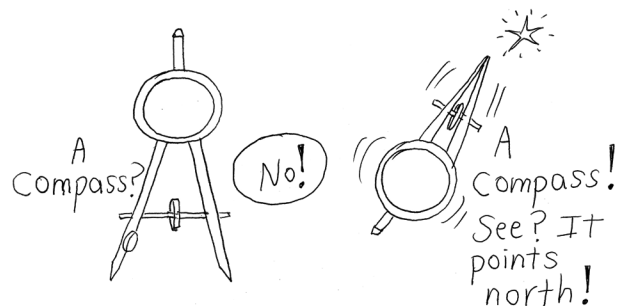
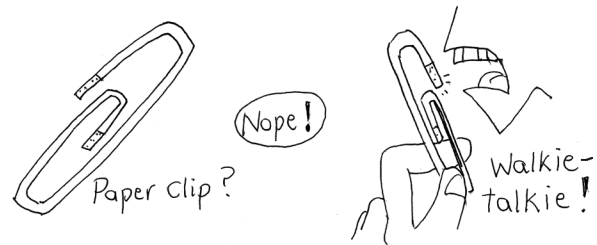
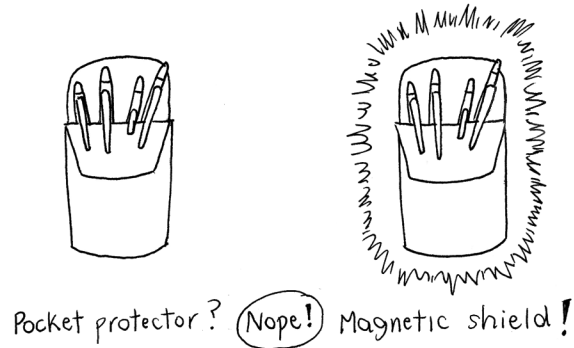
Sarah Why do you say such mysterious things, Mysterious Mr. M? Oh, your *name*. I see. Thanks so much. I don't know what to say.

Mr. M Don't mention it. These gadgets are all yours. If you're the girl I think you are, you'll put this stuff to good use. But be careful with the compass or you can poke your eye out. Oh, I almost forgot the best thing of all. It's a jet-propelled utility belt, about thirty years ahead of its time.

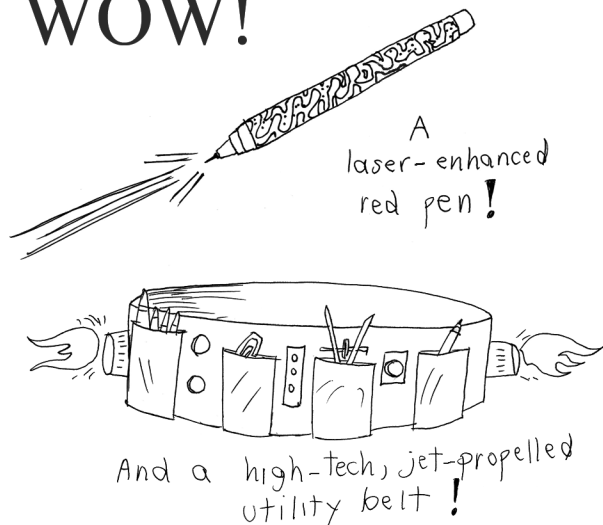


Later that day, Sarah is at home on the sofa with her cat Pirate. She is wearing the utility belt, which is now packed with all of Mr. M's gadgets. On TV, a news reporter interviews the same young man whom Sarah hadn't noticed earlier in Mr. M's stationery store.

Male Reporter Late last night, a fire broke out in Preposition Park. It turns out that students were burning the kind of books most of us would like to burn—grammar books. To address the situation, we found an expert on matters of intelligence. What do you have to say, young man?



WOW!



Young Man Learning is knowledge, and we need to know knowledge. It's not ethical to incinerate manuscripts of a didactic nature.

Sarah Did the dictionary just throw up or something?

Female Reporter Young man, you're brilliant!

Male Reporter I agree.

Sarah I could've said what he said in five words.

Female Reporter You may be young, but irregardless,¹ you certainly know a lot.

Sarah Irregardless? That isn't even a word.

Female Reporter You're a genius, boy.

Male Reporter What did you call him? Is that his name?

The TV caption reads "Genius Boy."

Male Reporter Tell me, Genius Boy, how does it feel to be the leader of the Pro-Grammar Movement?

Genius Boy The *what*?

Sarah How could he be the leader of anything? He just strings a bunch of long words together. I like big words, too, but I don't use them just to show off. If he's supposed to save the world from bad grammar, who's going to save the world from him?



GG

**MAKING SENSE OF
ANTI-GRAMMARIANS**

¹ irregardless = regardless



Subjects and Verbs

GRAMMAR GIRL SAYS: Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs—as you probably know, these are some of *the parts of speech*. When grammar books have a chapter on the parts of speech, nouns are usually at the top of the list. Why? Maybe it's because they are so basic to the language. After all, nouns are the names of everything on earth.

What exactly is a noun? It's a person, place, thing, or idea.

Examples of nouns:***Person:***

John Wordsmith
Hank
Granny
Alice

Place:

Subverbia
school
attic
classroom

Thing:

statue
notebook
TV
compass

Idea:

grammar
cheating
freedom
friendship

Pronouns are words that substitute for nouns. For example, I can substitute the pronoun *he* for the noun *Hank*.

Hank is my classmate. He hates grammar.
noun pronoun

He means *Hank*.

Examples of pronouns:

I, me, mine

you, yours

he, him, his

it

she, her, hers

we, us, ours

they, them, theirs

3.1 Exercise Your Super Powers

Underline each noun (person, place, thing, idea) and pronoun (I, you, he, she, they, it, etc.) in the following paragraph. Beneath the noun or pronoun, indicate *person (P)*, *place (PL)*, *thing (T)*, or *idea (I)*. I've done the first sentence for you.

Yesterday after class, I asked Miss Mustardseed if there was any way
 T P P I

I could get some extra credit. I suggested that I could correct
 P I

papers for her. She said that a student usually doesn't do the work of

a teacher, but she would consider the offer. I said, "If you let me help,

you will enjoy more free time."

Now let's focus on verbs. Most verbs are action words (*jump*, *run*, *dance*, and so forth). In other words, they are ideas that you can perform with a movement, a gesture, or a sound. Action verbs express what is (or isn't) happening in a sentence:

Pirate sneezed. Or the negative: Pirate didn't sneeze.
 verb verb

Like *sneeze*, most verbs are actions.

Examples of verbs:

go	eat
jump	munch
run	crunch
sing	chew
talk	devour
throw	bite
win	pig out (slang)
write	drink



3.2 Exercise Your Super Powers

Let's put **V** under the verbs. I've done the first sentence for you.

Yesterday after class, I asked Miss Mustardseed if there was any way I
V **V**
could get some extra credit. I suggested that I could correct
V
papers for her. She said that a student usually doesn't do the work of
a teacher, but she would consider the offer. I said, "If you let me help,
you will enjoy more free time."

Do you know what we call the most important noun? It's the *subject*. The subject is what an entire sentence is about. A subject is often the first noun (or pronoun) in the sentence, but not always. Let's look at the subjects of the sentences below:

Yesterday after class, I asked Miss Mustardseed if there was any way I
S
could get some extra credit. I suggested that I could correct
S
papers for her. She said that a student usually doesn't do the work of
S
a teacher, but she would consider the offer. I said, "If you let me help,
S
you will enjoy more free time."

So how do we find a subject? First, we must find the verb. For example:

Pirate sneezed.
V

Next, we simply put the word *who* in front of the verb:

Who sneezed?

The answer, *Pirate*, is the subject.

How do you find the subject of this sentence?

Charley closes the door with his tie.

First, find the verb by asking yourself *what's the action word of the sentence?* It's *closes*, right? Next, put *who* before *closes* and ask this question: *Who* closes the door with his tie? The answer is *Charley*, the subject.

3.3 Exercise Your Super Powers

Underline the subject of each sentence.

1. Bullies tease me. (HINT: Find the verb (tease) and then ask *who teases me?* The answer is the subject.)
2. Pirate chases his tail.
3. Workers sometimes go on strike.
4. Every day, Miss Mustardseed gives out gold stars.
5. In class, I can't control the urge to correct other students' mistakes.

Remember: Don't think that the first noun in the sentence must be the subject. For example, in sentence five above, *class* is the first noun, but it's not the subject.

What is the subject of this sentence? Grammar rules my life.

First, take the verb (rules). Now ask, "*Who* rules my life?" The answer is *grammar*. Oops! Wait! *Grammar* is not a person. That's not a problem, though. When there isn't a person in the sentence, simply take out *who* and put in *what*. *What* rules my life? *Grammar*. *Grammar* is the subject. Let's try another one.

What's the subject of this sentence? Books bore Hank and Charley.

What bores Hank and Charley? Books, right? *Books* is the subject.

3.4 Exercise Your Super Powers

Underline the subject of each sentence. Verbs are in italics.

1. Books *rock* my world. (HINT: Ask *what* rocks my world?)
2. Grammar *is not* my teacher's favorite subject.
3. Out in the street, a strike *is taking place*.
4. The sky *has* rainbows.
5. Airplanes *were flying*.

To find subjects, as you know, we must find verbs. And the verb BE shows up more than any other verb in English, so we have to pay attention to it. BE has these forms: *be, am, is, are, was, were, been, being*. The next exercise will contain five uses of the verb BE. Make sure you recognize BE verbs.

3.5 Exercise Your Super Powers

Here's a letter from Meg, my twelve-year-old cousin, who is away at anger management camp. Put **V** under all of her verbs (including forms of the verb BE). I've done the first two sentences for you.

Dear Sarah,

I don't know why my parents sent me to this stupid camp.

Instead of doing archery, we sit around in circles and talk about

our feelings. My feeling is this: I want to do archery. I told my

counselor I was mad at the camp. The counselor said I should

pretend my pillow was the camp, and I should punch my

pillow. That sounds stupid. I am not mad at my pillow, just the

camp. In two weeks, I am going home.

From, Meg

P.S. Yesterday for lunch we ate old beans.

CHAPTER 4: NEITHER FOWL NOR AIRCRAFT

Characters: Narrator, Sarah, Genius Boy, Spectator 1, Spectator 2, Spectator 3, Random Speller.



Now wearing her utility belt, Sarah is out for a walk on a bright, sunny day. She sees a billboard that reads, “Sylvia’s Flowers brings you and I together.”

Sarah That sign is incorrect, but Sylvia probably doesn’t care. No one cares about grammar anymore.

Sarah aims her red pen at the billboard. It fires a laser beam at the sign.

Sarah What in the world!

The sentence now reads “Sylvia’s Flowers brings you and *me* together.”

Sarah The grammar’s fixed! Hey, I wonder if this belt works, too. Maybe if I press this button . . .

Suddenly, Sarah is lifted off the ground.

Sarah Whoa. I can fly! This gives me an idea.

Sarah spends the next two days creating a complete Grammar Girl superhero outfit. In her glory, she flies around the city, doing spins and loops in the air. Below, a large crowd has gathered at the public library where Genius Boy is giving a speech. Sarah lands on the library rooftop and listens.

Genius Boy My fellow Grammarians, we now face the dark forces of ungrammatical structure . . .

Sarah I want to like him, but it's taking some effort.

Spectator 1 Hey, everybody, look at the library sign!

The "Public Library" sign now reads "Public Libary." A masked man in the crowd breaks into an evil laugh. It's the same man who was handing out business cards at the Anti-Grammarians' protest. He speaks:

Random Speller Hear me and tremble, timid fools. How do you spell *believe*?

Spectator 2 B-E-L-I-E-V-E?

Random Speller Wrong! There are new rules! Learn them or die! Rule number one: i before e except when you don't feel like it. Bwah, hah, hah, hah!

Spectator 1 Hey, look!

The sign once again reads "Public Libary."

Random Speller Curses. Don't tell me they've got spell-check for public buildings.

Spectator 1 Look, up in the sky.

Spectator 2 It's a fowl.

Spectator 3 It's an aircraft.

Spectator 1 Make up your minds, will you? A fowl or an aircraft?

Sarah Behold, I am neither fowl nor aircraft, and you just used a sentence fragment. Have no fear, fellow citizens. Your words are safe with me. It is I, Grammar Girl!



Random Speller Join forces with me, Grammar Girl.

Sarah I'll spell it out for you, Speller. N-O. Do you know what that spells? I mean do you K-N-O-W what that spells?

With a POOF, the Random Speller is gone.



Adjectives and Adverbs

GRAMMAR GIRL SAYS: We've learned that a noun is a person, place, thing, or idea.

Here's an example:

I saw a car.
noun

Now I'll add an adjective to describe the noun:

I saw a green car.
adj. noun

As you can see, the adjective *green* makes the sentence more specific and descriptive.

Being specific and descriptive can be useful. For example, let's imagine that one sunny day, you're walking down the street when you see a robber sprint out of a bank, jump into a green car, and drive away. Later, a policeman questions you:

Policeman: What do you recall about the getaway car?

You: It was a shiny, green Oldsmobile.
adj. adj.

Policeman: Did you get a look at the suspect?

You: Sure. He was a tall, thin, middle-aged man.
adj. adj. adj.

Policeman: Did you happen to notice any distinguishing features?

You: He had a scar on his face.

Policeman: I want adjectives, bub.

You: OK. He had a curved, jagged scar just to the left of his upper lip.
adj. adj. adj.

Policeman: That's more like it.

Adjectives provide more than just physical description. For example, adjectives can describe the following:

SOUNDS: *loud, soft, moderate, faint, quiet, harsh, grating*

TASTES: *sweet, delicious, tasty, salty, spicy, bitter, tangy*

TEXTURES AND SHAPES: *silky, smooth, rough, coarse, bumpy, jagged*

These are just a few categories and examples. Adjectives can describe anything

and everything.

Let's sharpen our adjective-spotting skills.

4.1 Exercise Your Super Powers

If the underlined word is a noun, mark **N**. If it's an adjective, mark **A**.
I've done the first sentence for you.

Mr. M gave me some cool devices. First, he gave me a small
 N A N

paper clip that's actually a secret walkie-talkie. Then, he gave me a
 shiny, sharp metal compass that not only shows me which way to
 fly, but helps me draw angles for my geometry homework. Finally,
 and best of all, he gave me a fabulous, beautiful pen that corrects
 grammar all by itself.

We often use the word *geometry* as a noun, as in "I study *geometry*." However, in the exercise we've just completed, *geometry* functions as an adjective that describes the noun *homework*.

As you can see, words are sometimes tricky. A noun in one sentence may be an adjective in another. Take the word *grammar*. It looks like a noun, right?

I love grammar.
 noun

But take a look now:

I bought a new *grammar* book.

By describing the word *book*, *grammar* is now functioning as an adjective. The point is this: We have to examine what a word is doing in a sentence before labeling it a noun, verb, or adjective.

Let's discuss how to punctuate adjectives. When we string two or more adjectives together, we normally use a comma between them:

He gave me a fabulous, beautiful pen.
adj. adj.

But look here: He gave me a new grammar book.
adj. adj.

We don't use a comma between *new* and *grammar*. Why not?

Here's the rule: If we can use the word *and* between adjectives, we should use a comma between adjectives. If we can't use the word *and*, we should not use a comma. Does *and* work in this example?

He gave me a fabulous *and* beautiful pen.

And works, so we use a comma:

He gave me a fabulous, beautiful pen.

Now let's try *and* with our earlier example:

He gave me a new *and* grammar book.

And doesn't work here, so we don't use a comma:

He gave me a new grammar book.

Look at this pair. Which is correct?

- A) I took a long refreshing quiz.
- B) I took a long, refreshing quiz.

The answer is B.

Which is correct here?

- A) The Random Speller uses green dummy dust.
- B) The Random Speller uses green, dummy dust.

The answer is A.

4.2 Exercise Your Super Powers

Add a comma between the adjectives in italics if needed.

1. I like to read about unicorns. Unicorns are *wonderful mystical* creatures.
(HINT: Are they wonderful *and* mystical?)
2. Do you like to read *strange fantasy* stories?
3. Do you like to read *strange fantastic* stories?
4. I wrote a *long book* report on unicorns.
5. I wrote a *long detailed* book report on unicorns.

Let's talk about the adjective's first cousin, the adverb. Whereas adjectives describe nouns, adverbs describe verbs:

The pen writes perfectly.
verb adverb

As you can see, the adverb *perfectly* describes the verb *writes*.

Adverbs often end in *-ly*, which makes them easy to spot. Here's another example of an *-ly* adverb:

Pirate runs quickly.
adverb

Quickly describes an action. It tells *how* Pirate runs.

Remember, adjectives describe nouns (or pronouns), and adverbs describe verbs. So with this rule in mind, which of the following is correct?

I flew (happy / happily).
adj. adv.

Since I'm describing the verb *flew*, I need the adverb: I flew happily.
adv.

Which of the following is correct?

Pirate's paws move (quick / quickly).
adj. adv.

Here I'm describing the verb *move*, so I must use the adverb *quickly*. I should avoid this mistake: Pirate's paws move *quick*.

Again, if I'm describing a verb, I should use an adverb.

Which is correct here?

Pirate is (quick / quickly).
adj. adv.

Since I'm describing the noun *Pirate*, *quick* is correct.

4.3 Exercise Your Super Powers

Underline the correct choice.

EXAMPLE: I want to do my class assignments (perfect / perfectly).

1. I am very (careful / carefully) when it comes to homework.
2. I always do my homework very (careful / carefully).
3. Many students want very (bad / badly) to be popular.
4. When I do my homework, I need to think (clear / clearly).
5. My homework is always (neat / neatly), so I often get gold stars.

As you may have noticed, you can create an adverb by adding *-ly* to an adjective. Here are a few examples:

<i>Adjective:</i>	<i>Adverb:</i>
careful	carefully
nice	nicely
neat	neatly
quick	quickly

Not all adverbs end in *-ly*. Look at these examples:

I studied hard.
adverb

I run fast.
adverb

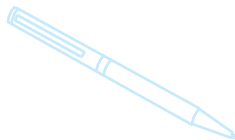
Alice spells well.
adverb

Well is a much-neglected adverb. Anti-Grammarians never use it. For example, I overheard Hank say this after a football game: “We played *good*, didn’t we?”

Since Hank is describing the verb *played*, he should have said, “We played *well*, didn’t we?”

Good is an adjective, so it describes a noun:

We have a *good* team.



Did you know that adverbs can describe adjectives? Let’s add an adverb to explain *how* good:

We have a really good team.
adv. adj.

Be careful to avoid this common mistake: Alice’s handwriting is real good.
adj. adj.

We can’t use an adjective to describe another adjective.

Of course, we can use the old, standard adverb *very*:

Alice’s handwriting is *very* good.

But wait. There’s more! Adverbs can also describe other adverbs.

Here are some examples:

I wanted more homework really badly.
adv. adv.

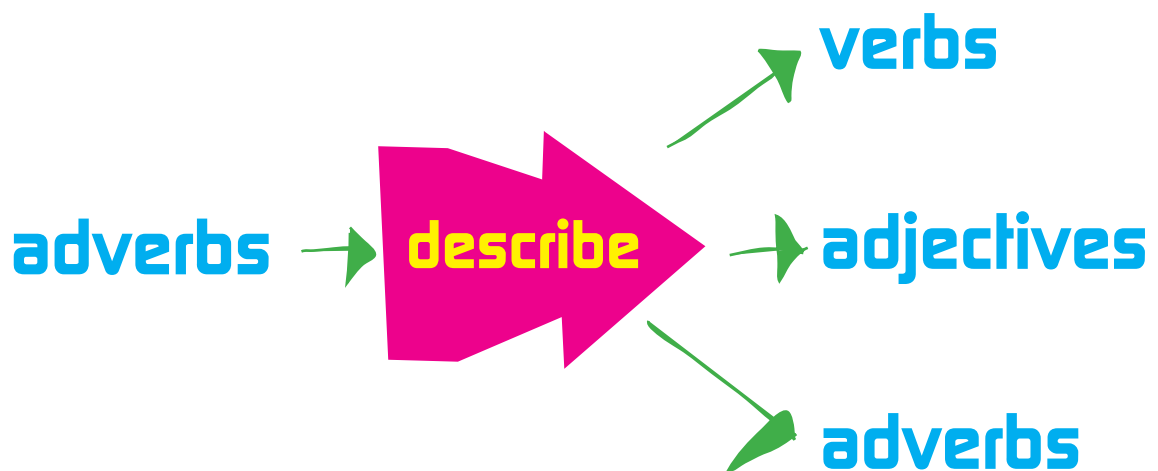
OR: I finished my quiz incredibly quickly.
adv. adv.

Clearly, adverbs have many useful functions. So far, we’ve seen that they can describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

4.4 Exercise Your Super Powers

Underline the correct choice.

1. My spelling test scores are (real / really) good. (HINT: You are describing the adjective *good*.)
2. Alice spells (real / really) well.
3. Hank's grammar isn't (real / really) proper.
4. I had a (real / really) great time at the library.
5. I sometimes speak (real / really) quickly.
6. That spelling bee was a (real / really) beauty.



CHAPTER 5: FOOLPROOF FOOL

Characters: Narrator, Genius Boy, Random Speller, Hank, Charley, Sarah, Male Reporter (Walter), Librarian.



A crowd stares up at a skywriting message. Genius Boy stares as well. A reporter runs over to Sarah.

Male Reporter Did you just write that message in the sky?

Sarah Yes, it was *I*, Grammar Girl—as opposed to it was *me*, Grammar Girl. Hey, where are you going?

Male Reporter No offense, but your grammar rules are boring, and that genius kid across the street has star quality. I’m going to interview him instead.

As the reporter runs toward Genius Boy, Sarah clenches her fists in frustration.



Across town, hundreds of Anti-Grammarians have gathered with their leader, the Random Speller, in an old, abandoned subway station. A sign on the wall reads “Downtown Underground Headquarters.” The first letter of each word, D-U-H, is lit up. Another sign reads “Grammar-Free Zone.”

Random Speller Fellow Anti-Grammarians, I’ve just sent our top lieutenant, Hank, to steal Grammar Girl’s pen. Bwah, hah, hah, hah! My plan is foolproof.

Meanwhile, across town at the library, Sarah is busy reading.

Hank Hey, Grammar Girl, can you borrow me your pen?

Sarah The word is *lend* and the answer is no. Did you really think I'd fall for that?



Back at DUH, Hank stands beside the Random Speller, who paces the floor.

Random Speller Curses! It's time for a better foolproof plan. I'll call this next one "Foolproof Plan B."



An hour later, Sarah is still reading at the library. Charley creeps out from behind the book stacks, turns his tie into a lasso, and tosses it, capturing the pen.

Charley Yoink!

Sarah Hey! Stop him! My pen!

Librarian Shhh! Young lady . . .

Sarah runs after him but trips over a wastebasket.



Later, Genius Boy is walking down the street. From an alley, the tongue of a giant tie flies out and wraps around him.

Genius Boy Help!



Later, at DUH, the Anti-Grammarians celebrate.

Random Speller Thanks to Charley, I've captured not only the magic pen, but the only person whose brain power is equal to mine. Charley, from now on, you're my top lieutenant.

Hank But I'm twice as better than him!¹

Random Speller Quiet, Hank. You're my new secretary. Take a letter.

Hank Where?

Random Speller No, fool! Write this down:

deer noos papers

anti-grammarians hav a vary grate caws we want the world 2 no thet grammur is evil techers hav alwayz 4st us 2 lern wurds and sentencez weev had enuf of thoz kine dove things this contree was founded on freedum grammer is un amarican why must we fallo so many rules we h8 red pens and punkshuashun punk shuashun is agrivashun teachers must stop teaching grammur or genius boy will die!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

ps from now on vowels R opshunal

ps2 wheel deliver ham only if U meat R demanz no baloney



*** The correct spelling: EVIL GENIUS**

GG MAKING SENSE OF ANTI-GRAMMARIANS

¹ twice as better than him = twice as good as he is



Comparative Adjectives and Adverbs

GRAMMAR GIRL SAYS: Take a look at this:

My temper is hot. Meg's temper is hotter.
noun adj. noun adj.

As you can see, adjectives that draw a comparison can end in *-er* (*hotter*). Here are some more examples:

Alice's score was better than mine.
adj.

Genius Boy is smarter than Hank.
adj.

The sun is brighter today than yesterday.
adj.

When we make comparisons with *-ly* adverbs, we use *more*:

Meg loses her temper more quickly than I do.
verb adverb

Avoid this mistake:

Meg loses her temper quicker than I do.

Again, adverbs (*-ly*) describe verbs and adjectives (*-er*) describe nouns.

So which of the following is correct?

A) I'll get to school quicker if I fly.
adj.

B) I'll get to school more quickly if I fly.
adverb

The answer is B.

Which of these is correct?

Alice writes (neater / more neatly) than Meg does.

The answer is *more neatly*.

How about this?

I think (more clearly / clearer) after a good night's sleep.

More clearly is correct. We are describing a verb (*think*).

5.1 Exercise Your Super Powers

Fun with adverbs! Underline the correct choice. (DON'T FORGET: Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.)

1. As a member of the student council, I'm working (tireless / tirelessly) to make improvements at our school.
2. I'm trying to work (more cooperative / more cooperatively) with the other council members.
3. I wish we could get our new policies passed (easier / more easily). However, the school administrators don't always accept our recommendations.
4. The truth is, our student council is disorganized, so how can we expect the school administrators to take us (serious / seriously)?
5. The student council needs to work (more effective / more effectively) as a unit.
6. Today, the tone of our discussion was (harsher / more harshly) than usual. We discussed whether or not to remove Tater Tot Tuesdays from our cafeteria lunch schedule.
7. Some of the council members aren't crazy about tater tots. They think (higher / more highly) of smiley fries. This rebel group is in favor of replacing Tater Tot Tuesdays with Smiley Fridays.
8. I'm a (real / really) big fan of smiley fries. Even though tater tots have been around a lot longer and are practically an institution, smiley fries deserve a chance, too.
9. Maybe the council would be (clearer / more clearly) on the issue if we had an organized debate.
10. The debate might go (smoother / more smoothly) if the speaking points were followed by a taste test.

PART I GRAMMAR JOURNAL

Write one to two pages (double-spaced) on the following topic:

If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
Consider *invisibility*, *super strength*, *shapeshifting*, *telekinesis*, *flying*, and *time travel*.

When you've finished, check to make sure you've used proper capitalization.
Next, go back and underline all of the verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.
Beneath each of these items, write **V**, **N**, **ADJ.**, or **ADV.**

END OF
FREE PREVIEW SAMPLE
CHAPTERS 1- 5

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