Grammar 101:
Adjectives, Adverbs, Articles, Prepositions, oh my!

For Planners

Adjectives

- Adjectives modify nouns:
  - "I ate a meal." *Meal* is a noun. We don't know what kind of meal; all we know is that someone ate a meal.
  - "I ate an enormous lunch." *Lunch* is the noun, and *enormous* is an adjective that modifies it. It tells us WHAT KIND OF meal the person ate.

Adjectives

- Adjectives usually answer one of a few different questions:
  - What kind?
  - Which?
  - How many?
  - Examples:
    - "The *tall* girl is riding a *new* bike"
    - *"Fifteen* students passed the *midterm* exam; *twelve* students passed the *final* exam"

Adjectives

- Most of the time, adjectives come before nouns. However, when they come after the nouns they modify, they usually follow a verb like: be, feel, taste, smell, sound, look, appear, seem
- Examples:
  - "The dog is black" [black = adjective, is = form of verb 'to be']
  - "Brian seems sad" [sad = adjective, seem = verb]
  - "The speaker sounds hoarse" [hoarse = adjective, sound = verb]

Adverbs

- Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs (sometimes they are easily recognizable because many of them are formed by adding –ly to an adjective)
- Adverbs answer the question HOW
- Examples:
  - "She sang *beautifully*"
  - "The cellist played *carelessly*"
  - "That woman is *extremely* nice"
  - "It was a *terribly* hot afternoon"

Adverbs: Common errors

- Bad vs. Badly:
  - “I feel bad” = describing the way you feel
  - “I feel badly” = you are unable to feel, hands are numb (similar to saying “I play football badly”)
  - “The dog smells badly” = The dog cannot smell very well
  - “The dog smells bad” = The dog needs a bath

Adverbs: Common errors

- Good vs. Well: Good is an adjective, so you do NOT ‘live good’ you ‘live well’
  - “My mother looks good” = she appears healthy
  - “I feel really good today” = I do not touch things successfully, I am happy or healthy

Adverbs: Common errors

Sure vs. Surely: Sure is an adjective, surely is an adverb.

"He is *sure* about his answer" = *sure* describes HE

"The Senator spoke out *surely*" = *surely* describes HOW S. spoke

Near vs. Nearly: Near can be a verb, adverb, adjective or preposition, nearly is used as an adverb to mean "in a close manner," or "almost but not quite"

"I'll be seeing you in the *near* future"

"The cat crept *near*"

"Don't worry, we're *nearly* there"

Articles

- Articles MODIFY nouns (just like adjectives)
- English has two articles:
  - THE = *definite* article: used to refer to specific or particular nouns
  - A/AN = *indefinite* article: used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns

Definite and Indefinite Articles

- ***The*** is used to refer to a *specific* or *particular* member of a group.
  - "Let's read ***the*** book" = Let's read a *specific* book
  - "I just saw ***the*** most popular movie of the year" = There are many movies, but only one particular movie is the most popular
- ***A/an*** is used to refer to a *non-specific* or *non-particular* member of the group.
  - "Let's read *a* book" = Let's read *any* book
  - "I would like to go see *a* movie" = Not talking about a *specific* movie, talking about *any* movie, don't have have a specific one in mind
- However, there are ALWAYS EXCEPTIONS!

Definite Articles: Exercise

- ____ dog that bit me ran away
- I was happy to see ____ policeman who saved my cat!
- I saw ____ elephant at the zoo
- He spilled ____ milk all over the floor
- I love to sail over ____ water

Indefinite Articles: Usage Rules

- Choice of indefinite article is based on the phonetic (sound) quality of the first letter in the word following it, not the orthographic (written) representation of the letter.
- If the first letter makes a vowel-type sound, you use “an”; if the first letter would make a consonant-type sound, you use “a.”
- However, there are ALWAYS EXCEPTIONS!

Indefinite Articles: Examples

- "A" goes before words that begin with consonants:
  - A cat
  - A dog
  - A purple onion
  - A buffalo
  - A big apple
- "An" goes before words that begin with vowels:
  - An apricot
  - An egg
  - An orbit
  - An uprising
  - An office

Indefinite Articles: Exceptions

- Use "**an**" before any unsounded "h." Because the "h" hasn't any phonetic representation and has no audible sound, the sound that follows the article is a vowel; thus, "an" is used.
  - **An** honorable peace
  - **An** honest error
  - **An** hour

Indefinite Articles: Exceptions

- When “u” makes the same sound as the “y” in “you,” or “o” makes the same sound as “w” in “won,” then **a** is used. The initial word sound “y” (“unicorn”) is actually a phonetic *glide* that has consonantal properties; thus, it is treated as a consonant—**a** is used.
  - A union
  - A united front
  - A used napkin
  - A U.S. ship
  - A one-legged man
  - A useful tool

Indefinite Articles: Exercise

- ____ broken egg
- ____ unusual problem
- ____ European country
- I am ____ teacher
- Brian is ____ Irishman
- Seiko is ____ practicing Buddhist

Prepositions: Definition

- Prepositions are used for **Time**, **Place**, and **Introducing Objects**
  - I will see you **on** Monday
  - I'm going to Paris **for** two weeks
  - There is a wasp **in** the room
  - Hang that picture **above** the couch
  - She glanced **at** her reflection
  - I'm looking **for** my keys

Prepositions: Time

- One point in time:
  - **On** is used with days:
    - I will see you **on** Friday for our PWE lunch session
    - The week begins **on** Sunday
  - **At** is used with noon, night, midnight, and with the time of day:
    - My plane leaves **at** noon
    - The movie starts **at** 6:00 p.m.
  - **In** is used with other parts of the day, months, years, seasons:
    - He likes to read **in** the afternoon
    - The days are long **in** August
    - The book was published **in** 1999

Prepositions: Time (cont'd)

- Extended time:
  To express extended time, English uses the prepositions since, for, by, from-to, from-until, during, (with)in:
  - She has been gone since yesterday
  - I'm going to Paris for two weeks
  - The movie showed from August to October
  - The decorations were up from spring until fall
  - We must finish the project within the semester

Prepositions: Place

- To express notions of location:
  - To talk about the point itself: IN
  - To express something contained: INSIDE
  - To talk about the surface: ON
  - To talk about a general vicinity: AT

- There was a wasp **in** the room
- Put the present **inside** the box
- She was waiting **at** the corner
- I left your keys **on** the table

Prepositions: Place (cont'd)

- Higher than a point: "over" "above"
  - He threw the ball **over** the roof
  - Hang that picture **above** the couch
- Lower than a point: "under" "underneath" "beneath" "below"
  - The rabbit burrowed **under** the ground
  - The valley is **below** sea level
- Close to a point: "near" "by" "next to" "between" "among" "opposite"
  - She lives **near** the school
  - I found my pen lying **among** the books

Prepositions: Introducing Objects

- **At:** glance, laugh, look, rejoice, smile, stare
- **Of:** approve, consist, smell
- **Of (or about):** dream, think
- **For:** call, hope, look, wait, watch, wish

Prepositions: Introducing Objects (cont'd)

- She glanced ____ her reflection
- I'm looking ____ the computer monitor
- Stop staring ____ me
- I don't approve ____ his speech
- My contribution to the article consists ____ many pages
- I dream ____ finishing college in four years
- I am thinking ____ this problem
- Did someone call ____ a taxi
- He hopes ____ a raise in salary
- I you wish ___ an "A" in this class, you must work hard

Final Grammar Review:

- Adjectives modify nouns; answer questions of what kind, which, how many
- Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs (sometimes they are easily recognizable because many of them are formed by adding –ly to an adjective); answer question of how
- Articles modify nouns, there are two different types: definite (the) and indefinite (a/an)
- Prepositions are used for time, place, and introducing objects: on, at, in, inside, since, for, by, from-to, from-until, during, (with)in, over, above, under, underneath, beneath, below, near, by, next to, between, among, opposite, of

Sources:

- **ALL MATERIAL used in this presentation was from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website, which has an AMAZING collection of writing resources, very logically and clearly organized:** https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
- Info on Adjectives: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/536/01/; https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/537/1/
- Info on Adverbs: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/536/02/
- Info on Articles: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/591/1/; https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/540/1/
- Info on Prepositions: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/1/; https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/02/; https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/03/; https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/04/
- All exercises can be found here: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/

Looking Ahead: More PWE Lunch Sessions!

- Writing effectively with statistics
- Using pronouns correctly
- How to compose transitions between paragraphs
- Strategies for sentence variety: adding complexity to your writing
- How to use outlining effectively to organize a paper
- Essay writing: different styles for different assignments (e.g. argumentative, expository, descriptive, narrative)
- Using the "active" voice