



# GrammarForge

## *Meet the Cast*

STANDARD EDITION

# Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 13 chapter books from the GrammarForge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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*For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.*

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gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:\d+|A-Z+|A-Z+|[.,;:?!])\$'

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# Introduction

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The GrammarForge cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 13 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

# Agreement Ada

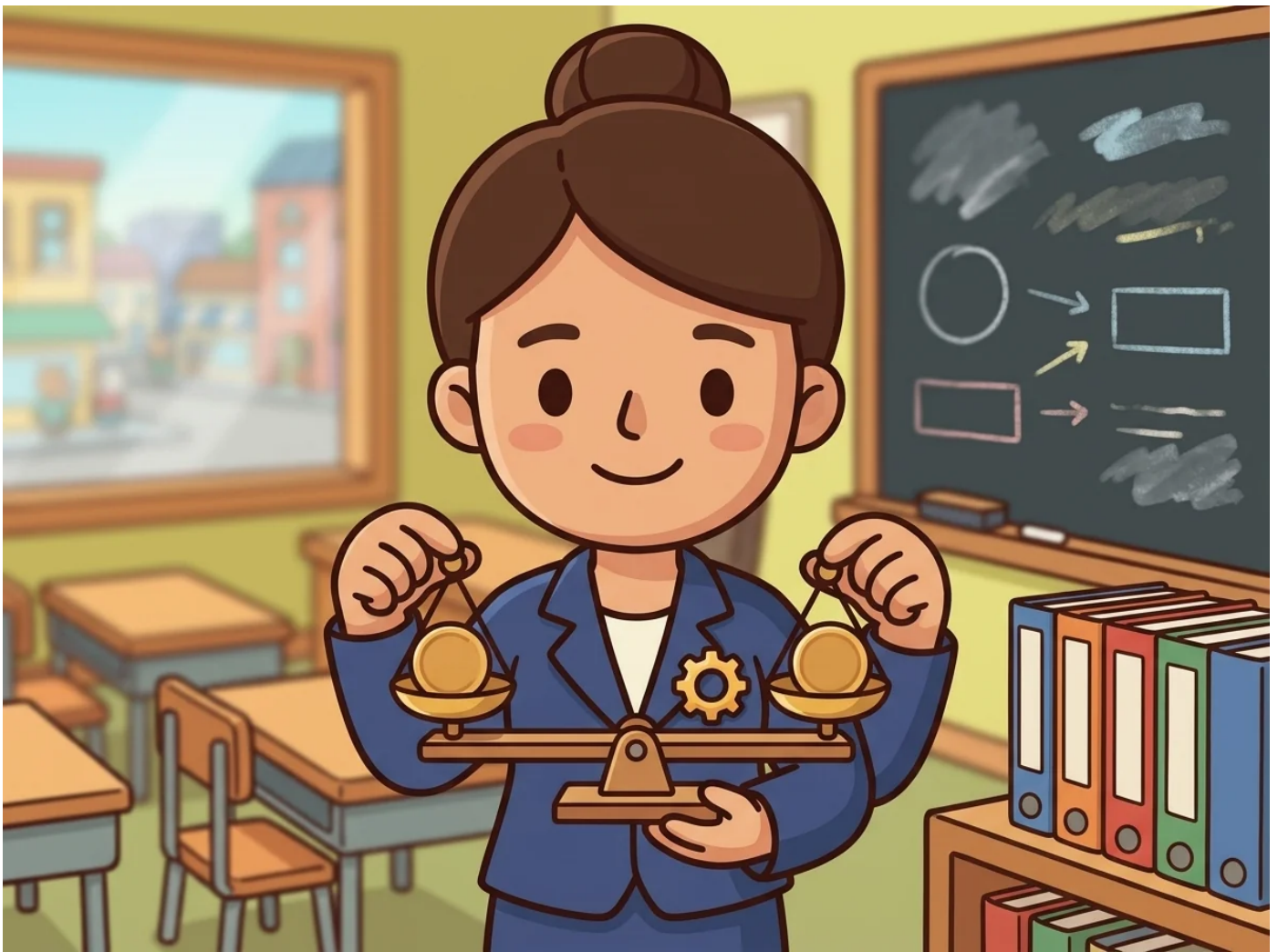
\*SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT — singular subject takes singular verb; plural subject takes plural verb. *The dog barks. The dogs bark.* Tricky cases: collective nouns, *either/or*, indefinite pronouns, intervening phrases.\*



- "BARKS"
  - "BARKING"
  - "BARKED"
  - "DOG"
  - "DOGS"
  - "RUN"
  - "RUNS"

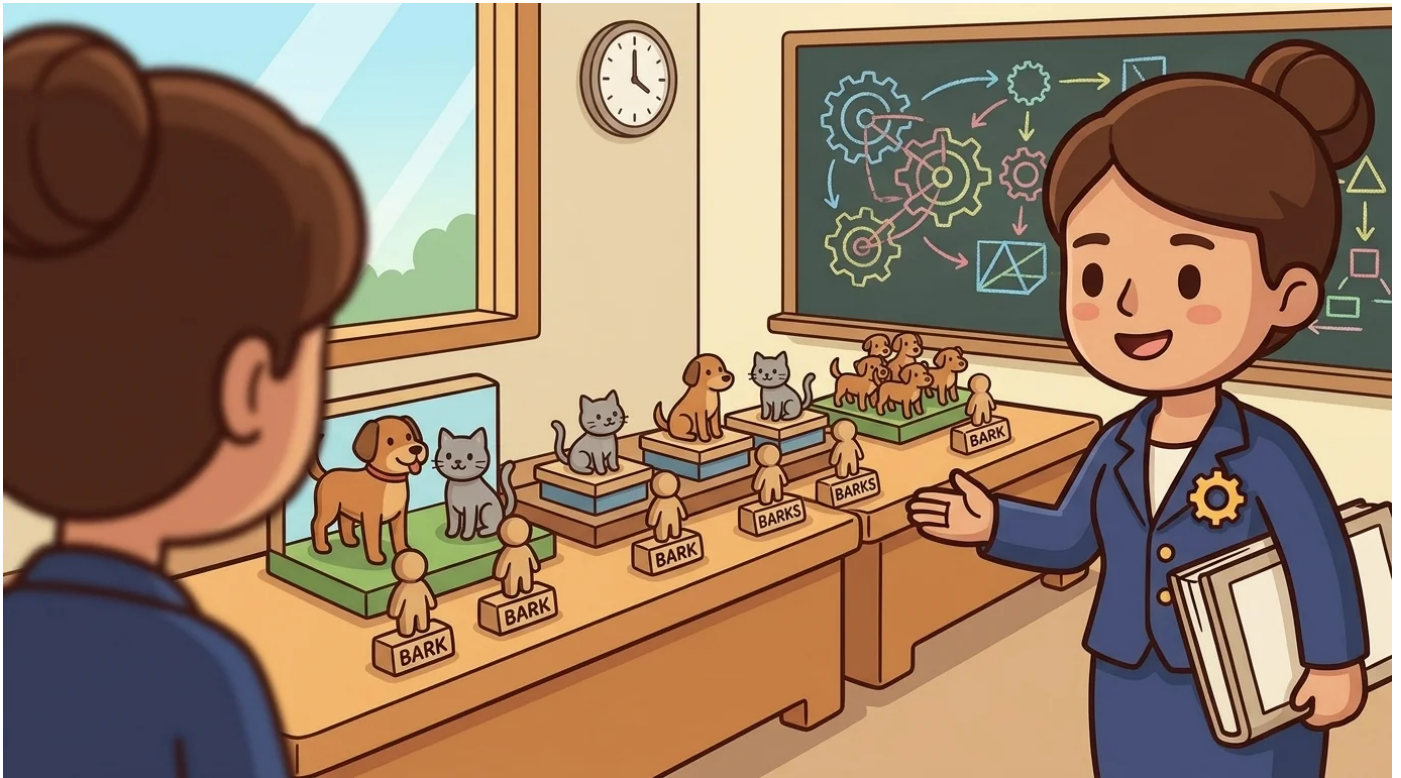


- "IS"
    - "ARE"
    - "WAS"
    - "WERE"
    - "HAS"
    - "HAVE"
- gate-allow-text-pattern: "[A-Z]+\$"



Agreement Ada is *Sentence-Town's* protocol officer.

This is the *quietly-essential* role that *makes sure the mayor and the chief of operations are matched in form*. Singular subject + singular verb. Plural subject + plural verb. The rule sounds simple. In practice, it has *many tricky cases* — and Ada handles them all.



Ada grew up in a *diplomatic family*. Her parents had both been *protocol officers* in the kingdom's foreign-ministry — civil servants who specialized in the *correct forms of address* for various diplomatic interactions. The kingdom had had a particularly elaborate protocol tradition, and Ada's parents had been responsible for *making sure every diplomatic letter, every formal meeting, every ceremonial occasion used the correct titles, forms, and sequences*.

Ada had grown up learning, viscerally, that *form-matching mattered*. A letter addressed *To His Royal Highness Prince X* was *different from* a letter addressed *To Prince X*. The form *had to match the relationship*. If the form was wrong, the diplomatic relationship was damaged.

She recognized, by fourteen, that *English subject-verb agreement worked the same way*. The form of the verb had to *match* the form of the subject. Mismatched forms damaged the sentence — they sounded *wrong* to a careful reader and signaled either *carelessness* or *ignorance*. A protocol officer's job, in either domain, was to *enforce the matching*.



In her classroom, she begins every first-day lesson the same way. She holds up *a small balance scale* (a teaching prop — two small pans on either side of a fulcrum). On the left pan she places a small token labeled *Subject*. On the right pan she places a small token labeled *Verb*. She turns to the class. She says: "*My job is to make sure these two are balanced. Subject form on one side. Verb form on the other side. They must match. If they do not match, the sentence does not balance.*"

She demonstrates. She writes on the board: *the dog barks*. She points at *the dog*. She says: "*Singular subject.*" She points at *barks*. She says: "*Singular verb (barks\* is the third-person singular present form). Matched. Balanced.*"\*

She writes: *the dogs bark*. She says: "*Plural subject. Plural verb (bark\* is the plural form). Matched. Balanced.*"\*

Then she demonstrates *tricky cases*.

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/agreement-ada>

# Article Anne

\*ARTICLE — *a, an, the* (definite vs. indefinite). Signals whether a noun is new to the conversation (indefinite *a/an*) or already known (definite *the*).\*



- AN
  - THE
  - a
  - an
  - the



- NEW

- ABI
- ANI
- ADAN
- ABANI
- '000'
- "AB'AN"



## Chapter 8 — Article Anne and the Front Desk

Article Anne is *Sentence-Town's* receptionist.

She sits at *a small front desk* in the Town Hall's main entryway. Her job is to *greet nouns as they arrive in a sentence* and *decide whether they are new to the conversation* (indefinite article *a* or *an*) or *already known to the conversation* (definite article *the*). The distinction is small but consequential. *A dog* introduces a dog. *The dog* refers to a dog that has already been introduced (or is otherwise specifically identifiable).



Anne — whose given name is *Anne*, unchanged from her birth name — is *brisk and efficient*. Her work is *quick* (she greets every noun in every sentence at the start of the sentence) and *consequential* (the article choice changes the *type of reference* the noun is making).

Anne grew up in *a hotel*. Her parents had owned and operated a small *inn* in the kingdom's western provinces. The inn had had a *front desk* and Anne had grown up sitting *behind it* — even as a small child, helping her parents check guests in and out. She had learned, by six, that *every guest who arrived was either a new guest (greeted with full introduction) or a returning guest (greeted with familiarity)*. The two greetings *required different language and different actions*. A new guest needed *registration, key, room-tour*. A returning guest needed *welcome-back, key only, no tour*.

This was — although Anne did not yet have the grammatical vocabulary — *the article distinction*. New guests were *indefinite* (any guest, not yet specified). Returning guests were *definite* (this specific guest, already known).

Anne formalized this connection when she was fourteen and encountered articles in school. She raised her hand and said: *"Articles are the way English greets nouns. A greets a new noun. The greets a familiar noun. It is exactly like checking guests into an inn."*\*



The teacher had been delighted.

When Anne was nineteen, she went to the GrammarForge academy. She has been Article Anne for eleven years.

In her classroom (a small reception-style office), she begins every first-day lesson the same way. She sits at the small front desk. She has, on the desk, *a small bell* (the kind hotels keep at front desks for guests to ring) and *a small registration book*. She rings the bell. She turns to the class. She says: *"I greet every noun that arrives in a sentence. If the noun is new — never mentioned before — I use a or an. If the noun is already known — mentioned before, or specifically identifiable — I use the. The article tells the reader: is this noun new or familiar?"*\*

She demonstrates. She writes on the board:

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/article-anne>

# Clause-Chief Carla

CLAUSE TYPES — independent clauses (can stand alone), dependent / subordinate clauses (cannot stand alone; needs an independent clause to attach to), and relative clauses (modify a noun).



- 'Because the dog barked,'
  - 'the cat woke up.'
  - 'The dog that barked woke the cat.'
  - COCO
  - CUL
  - MAIN
  - SUB
  - IND
  - DEP



- 'zZz...'
    - '11'
    - '12'
- gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:\d+|[A-Za-z][A-Za-z-"]{0,60}[.,!]?|z[Zz]+.{0,3})\$'

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## Chapter 10 — Clause-Chief Carla and the Zoning Office

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Clause-Chief Carla is *Sentence-Town's zoning commissioner*. Her job is to sort out **clauses**. She puts them into groups. This helps sentences make sense.



Carla's real name is just Carla. She is very patient. She loves drawing diagrams. Especially ones with boxes inside other boxes. Carla thinks sentences are like puzzles. You just need to find the main piece. Then you see how all the other pieces connect. Big sentences aren't messy. They have a clear order. Like a family tree, but for words. Once you see the order, any sentence makes sense.

Carla grew up in a city-planning family. Her mom and dad worked for the kingdom's central city-planning bureau. They planned how the city would grow. They spent their whole careers sorting land. "This spot is for houses," her dad would say. "That spot is for shops." "This one is for a park!" Every piece of land needed a label. This helped the city grow in a good way. Carla watched them draw maps. They colored parts of the city. Green for houses. Blue for shops. Each color meant something different.

When Carla was fifteen, she saw something. Sentences were just like cities. They had the same kind of problems. Each **clause** was like a piece of land. Each piece had a job. Independent. Dependent. Relative. Cities worked best when all the pieces fit. Sentences worked best that way too. Wrongly zoned land caused trouble. Wrongly used clauses made sentences messy. They caused *sentence errors*.

Carla walked to GrammarForge Academy when she was twenty. She has been Clause-Chief Carla for twelve years now. A long time!



She shows them how. She writes on the board:

*"The dog barked."*

She draws a big green box around it. "This is an **independent clause**," she explains. "It has a subject, *the dog*. It has a verb, *barked*. It's a complete thought. It can stand all by itself. So, green-zoned for standalone use!"

Next, she writes:



She marks it yellow. "This is a **dependent clause**," she says. "It has a subject and a verb. But it can't stand alone. The word *Because* tells us it's not finished. It's yellow-zoned for attached use. It needs a green clause to connect to."

A student named Leo raises his hand. "So it's like a garage?" he asks. "A garage needs a house to be useful."

Carla smiles. "Exactly, Leo! A great way to think about it." She writes a longer sentence:

*"Because the dog barked, the cat woke up."*

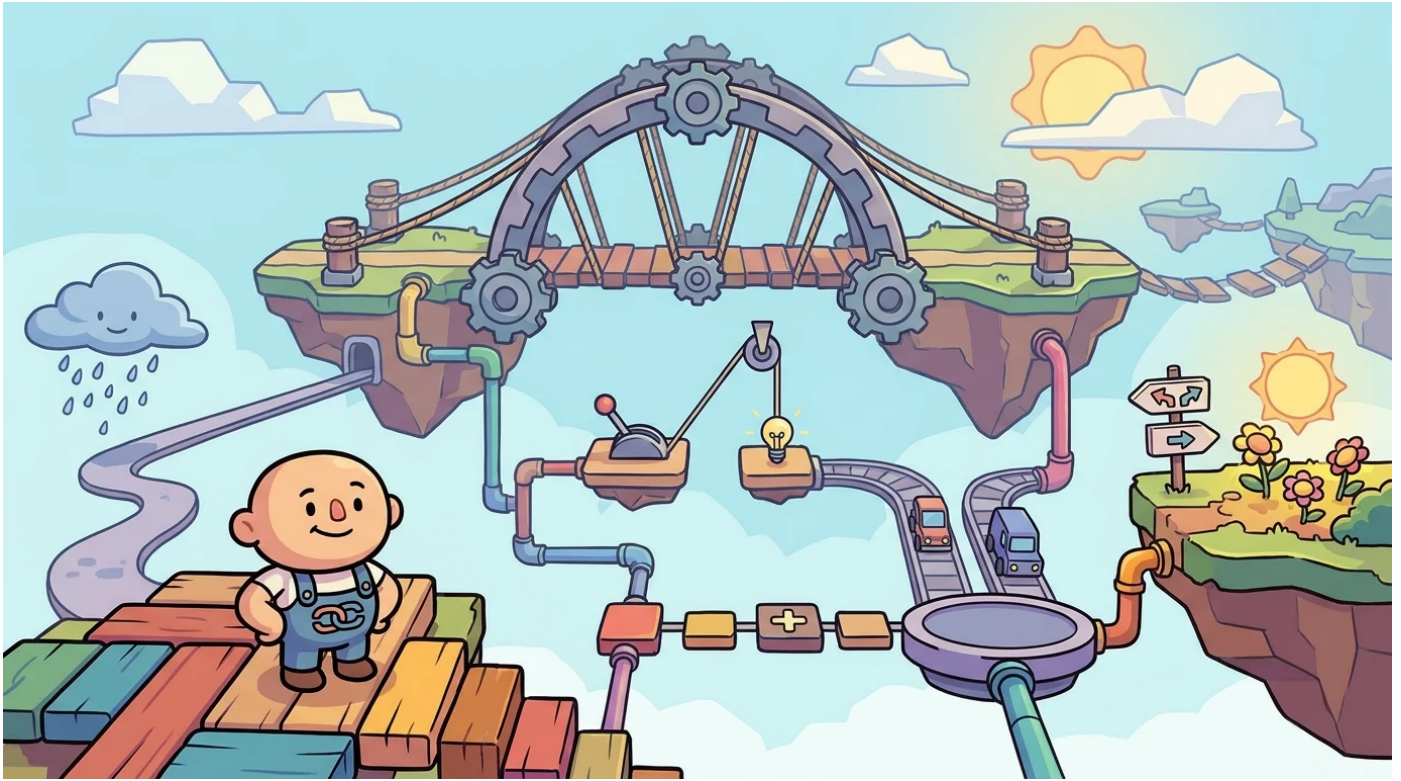
**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



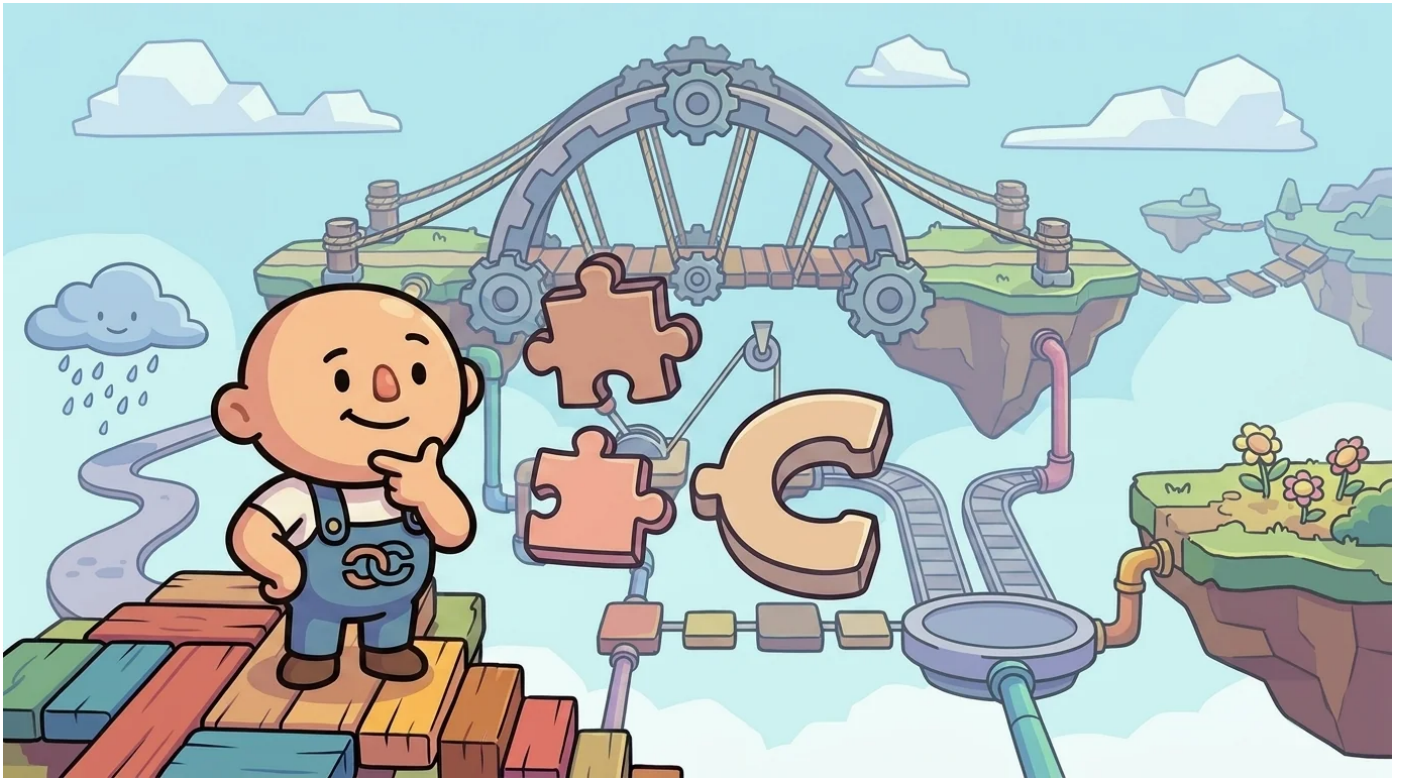
<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/clause-chief-carla>

# Connector Chen

\*CONJUNCTION — a word that joins words, phrases, or clauses. *and, but, because, although, while, if, or*. Coordinating (joining equals) vs. subordinating (joining unequals).\*



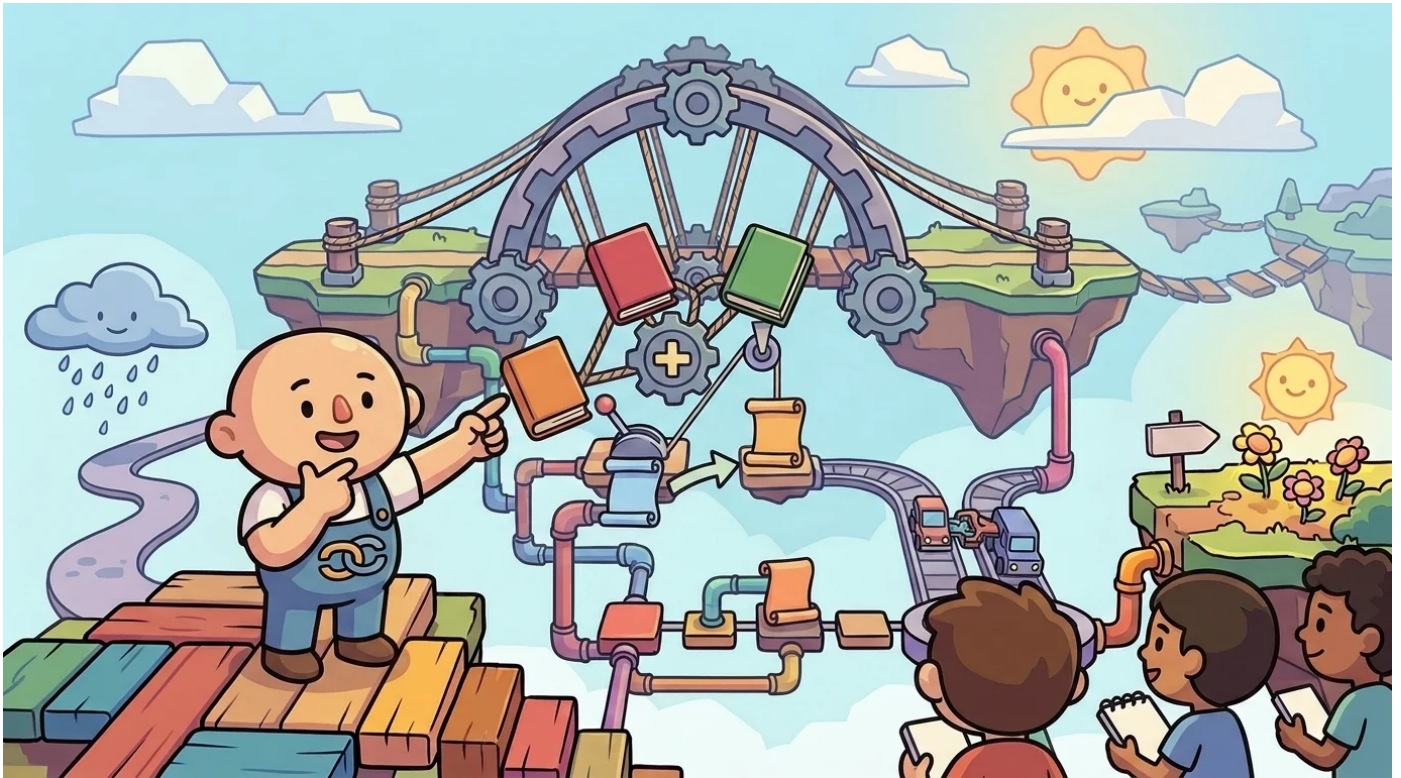
- WHILE
  - BECAUSE
  - IF
  - BUT
  - AND



- ALTHOUGH
  - while
  - because
  - if
  - but



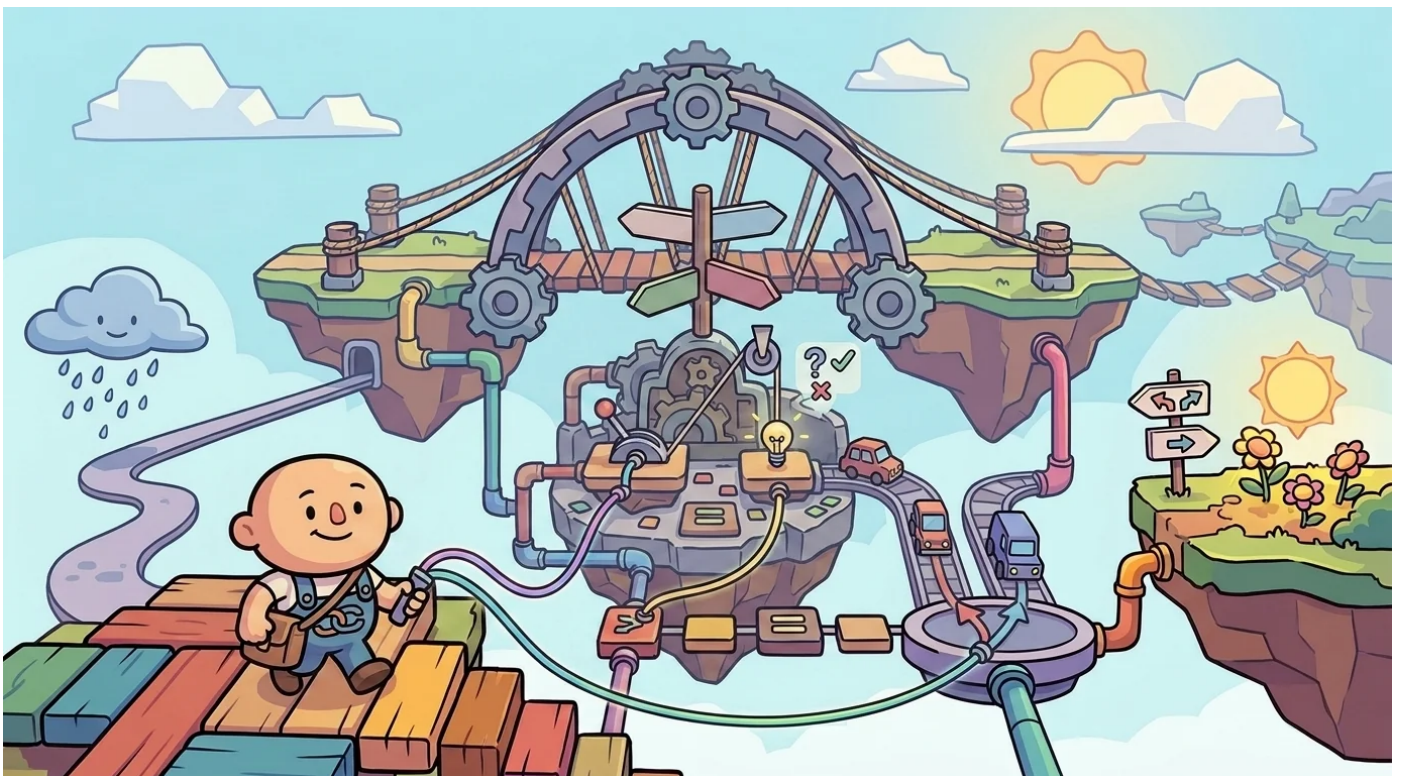
- or
  - although
  - B
  - G
  - Y
  - X
  - A



- 2025
    - 2026
- gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:[A-Z]|\vd+|[A-Z][a-z]+|[+!=?])->\$'

## Chapter 6 — Connector Chen and the Diplomatic Corps

Connector Chen is *Sentence-Town's* diplomat.



The diplomat's job is to connect. Imagine the Mayor needs to decide something. The Chief of Operations needs to do something. Sometimes, they need to work together. Or maybe they need to talk to other parts of town. Connector Chen helps them do that. He joins ideas. He connects words. He shows how things fit together.

Chen's full name was Chen-Lao. Most people just called him Chen. He grew up in a house full of negotiators. His parents were special helpers in the big city. They helped people sort out fights. Merchants argued over prices. Neighbors bickered about fences. Guilds had problems with new rules. Landowners and tenants disagreed about rent. Chen's parents helped them all find a way to agree. Or at least, a way to live together.

Chen watched his parents work. He learned a big secret. To connect two people, you had to know *how* they needed to connect. Sometimes people needed to agree. They needed to join up with one idea. Sometimes they disagreed. They knew they were different. But they still needed to get along. Sometimes one person would act only *if* something else happened. Or *because* something was true. Or *while* something else was going on.

These were exactly like the connections that *conjunctions* made. Conjunctions are special words. *And* joined people who agreed. *But* showed differences. *Because* showed why something happened. *If* showed a condition. *While* showed two things happening at the same time. *Although* showed a surprise or a "but still" idea.

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/connector-chen>



Mayor Subject and Otto looked at each other.

"That," the Mayor said, "is a sentence that won't sit still."

Otto picked up the note carefully, the way you'd pick up a small frog. He read it. His brow scrunched.

*Ada baked Otto a pie.*

He read it again. The brow scrunched harder.

"Hmm," he said.

"What," the Mayor said.

"It's about me."

"I know."

"That's never happened before."



Otto held the note out. The note jumped a little in his hand. The Mayor took it. She tapped her desk twice, the way she always did before a case. "Then let's diagram it," she said. "You and me. The proper way. Slowly."

The Mayor laid the note flat on her desk. She pulled a fresh sheet of grid paper from her drawer. The grid paper had three columns. One column was wide. The middle column was narrow. The right column was wide. Above the columns, she had printed three small letters, in her tidy handwriting: **S — V — O**.

"First step," she said. "We find the actor. That's me. Who is doing the doing in this sentence?"

Otto squinted at the wiggly note. "Ada."

"Yes." The Mayor wrote *Ada* in the left column under the **S**. The note stopped wiggling for one second, as if it appreciated being named. Then it started up again.

"The subject isn't *the most important word*," the Mayor went on. "It's the one *doing the verb*. People sometimes mix that up. They look for the biggest noun, or the prettiest noun, or the noun they like best. But that's not how a subject works. A subject is the one acting. *Who bakes? Ada bakes*. So Ada is the subject."

Otto nodded, taking notes on his clipboard. "Subjects do."



She tapped the **S** column once, with one finger, decisively. "Step one done."

Otto reached for the gridpaper. The Mayor handed it over with a small ceremonial nod. They had a routine. The Mayor named the subject. Then she passed the paper. Then Otto named the receiver. That was the rhythm.

"Step two," Otto said. "Find the verb."

"That's Verity's domain," the Mayor said.

"Yes, but we can name it for the diagram. Verity won't mind."

The Mayor smiled. "Verity will hear about it and bring you a pie of her own, in return."

Otto laughed. He wrote *baked* in the narrow middle column under the **V**. The note on the desk made a tiny happy sound, like a small bell.

"Step three," Otto said. "Find the receiver. That's me."

He held up the wiggly note. Read it slowly. *Ada baked Otto a pie*. He sat very still for a moment. The two receivers in the sentence were *Otto* and *a pie*. Both of them got something. He got the pie. The pie got the baking.

"This sentence has two of me," Otto said. "It has *me* and it has *a pie*. They're both on the receiving side. One of them is the direct receiver. One of them is the indirect."

The Mayor leaned forward. She liked when Otto did the slow work. "Which is which?"

Otto closed his eyes. "The pie is what got *baked*. The verb went straight into the pie. So the pie is the direct object." He opened his eyes. "And I got the pie. I'm the indirect object. The pie passed through the action and arrived at me."

He wrote in the right column. He wrote *pie* first, with a small **DO** label. Below it, a little to the side, he wrote *Otto* with a small **IO** label. He drew a thin arrow from the verb *baked* into *pie*. He drew a softer arrow from *pie* over to *Otto*.

"There," he said. "The pie was baked. Then the pie came to me. Two receivers. Different jobs."



Otto's ears went a little pink.

The note on the desk had stopped wiggling. It sat flat and calm, the way a sorted sentence should. Mayor Subject and Otto looked down at the grid paper. **S** → **V** → **O**. Ada — baked — pie (direct) — Otto (indirect). Every part was in its place.

"This," the Mayor said quietly, "is why we work together."

She tapped the **S** column. "I name the actor. That's my job. The town has to know who's doing the doing. Otherwise nothing gets done. A sentence without a subject is a town meeting with no one at the front. People stand around. Nothing starts."

Otto tapped the **O** column. "And I name the receiver. That's my job. The town has to know who's getting the doing. Otherwise the verb has nowhere to land. A sentence with no object — when the verb needs one — is a delivery truck that drives out of the parking lot and into a field. The cargo gets nowhere."

He paused. "Some verbs don't need objects. *The dog sleeps* — sleep doesn't need a receiver. Mayor handles that one alone. Some verbs need objects. *The dog chased* — *chased what?* — has to have something Otto can name. And some verbs, like *give* and *bake* and *send*, take *two* of me. The direct one and the indirect one. The thing and the recipient."



She wrote at the bottom of the grid paper, in small letters: **S** → **V** → **O**. *Every sentence is a small journey across a small bridge.*

---

Otto carefully picked up the note. He folded it. He put it in the *processed* tray. The note didn't wiggle anymore. It was a calm, named, organized sentence. *Ada baked Otto a pie.* Subject: Ada. Verb: baked. Direct object: a pie. Indirect object: Otto.

A second note appeared in the inbox. The Mayor reached for it. She slid the gridpaper back to the middle of the desk, ready for another diagram.

"Next?" she said.

Otto picked up his clipboard. He flipped to a fresh page. The cap on his head was a little crooked from leaning over the desk. He didn't fix it. He liked it crooked.

"Next," he said.

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/mayor-subject-and-object-otto>

# Mayor Subject

\*SUBJECT — the noun or pronoun performing the action of the sentence. In *the dog barked*, the dog is the subject. Every sentence needs one (or implies one).\*



- S

- V
- SUBJ
- VERB
- MAIN
- 'SUBJ.'
- 'VERB.'

gate-allow-text-pattern: '^[A-Z]{1,4}?.?\$',



Mayor Subject is, as her name suggests, *the mayor of a town*.

The town is called *Sentence-Town* — a small but well-organized town that exists, in the GrammarForge academy's curriculum, *inside every sentence*. Every English sentence is, by Mayor Subject's reckoning, *a small town with named civic roles*. There is a *subject* (the central political figure — the mayor herself). There is a *verb* (the action the town takes, performed by Verb Verity, the town's chief of operations). There is, often, an *object* (the recipient of the action, managed by Object Otto, the public-affairs liaison). There are *modifiers* (adjectives and adverbs, the town's decorators, Modifier Madge and Modifier Mike). There are *connectors* (conjunctions, the town's diplomats, Connector Chen). And so on.

Sentence-Town has *twelve named civic officials*. They each have a role. The roles are *the grammatical parts of speech and sentence-structures*.

Mayor Subject is, of all twelve, *the most-essential*.

This is, she will tell you patiently, *not vanity*. It is *fact*. Every English sentence needs a subject. *Some* sentences have no object. *Some* sentences have no adjectives. *Some* sentences have no conjunctions. But *every* sentence has a subject — whether stated explicitly ("*The dog barked*") or implied ("*Eat your dinner*" — the subject *you* is implied by the imperative form). Without a subject, there is *no sentence*.



Mayor Subject — whose given name is *Sara*, though she has gone by Mayor Subject for as long as anyone at the academy can remember — was elected to her position when she was twenty-six. She has been the mayor of Sentence-Town for nineteen years. The election was, by Sentence-Town tradition, *uncontested* — the role of mayor is given to whichever academy faculty member best embodies *the centrality of the subject in English grammar* — and Sara had been the obvious choice from the time she joined the faculty at twenty.

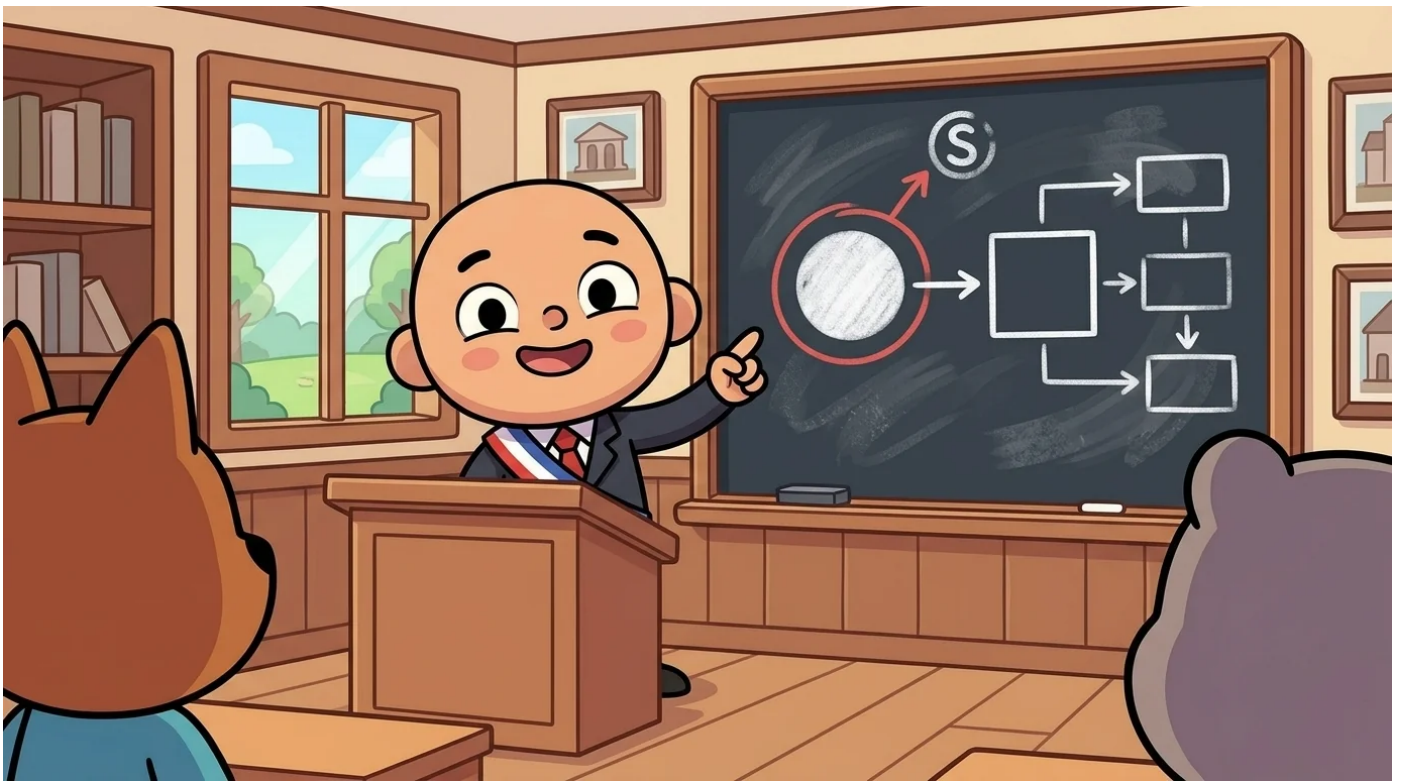
She grew up in the real-world village of *Subjectia*, in the kingdom's central provinces. (The name *Subjectia* is, the village historians confirm, a coincidence; the village had been called *Sub* in early documents and the *-jectia* was added later by a calligraphic clerk who liked the sound. Sara has, all her life, *enjoyed the coincidence* but has never tried to attribute meaning to it.) The village had been a market town with the usual market-town civic structure: a mayor, a town clerk, a tax-collector, a constable. Sara had watched the village's civic operations with great interest as a small child.

What she had noticed — and this is the essential fact of the chapter — was that *every village decision had a single named decision-maker*.

The market-day was *the mayor's* responsibility. The accounts were *the clerk's*. The taxes were *the tax-collector's*. The peace was *the constable's*. Each task had *exactly one civic official who did the task*. Without that named official, the task did not get done. The village's structure was, Sara realized when she was nine, *a structure of named-subjects-doing-named-actions*.

This was — although Sara did not yet have the grammatical vocabulary for it — *the subject-verb relationship at the heart of English grammar*.

A sentence is *a statement that someone (the subject) does something (the verb)*. The subject is *the named doer*. Without a named doer, the action *does not have an actor* and the sentence *does not function as a sentence*. English requires *subject-and-verb* the way the village required *mayor-and-decision*.



Sara understood this viscerally by age twelve. When she encountered formal grammar instruction at the village school, she immediately recognized that *the subject was the mayor* and *the verb was the mayoral decision*. She made the analogy explicitly to her schoolteacher. The schoolteacher had been *delighted*.

When Sara was nineteen, she walked to the GrammarForge academy. She arrived with a notebook in which she had identified the subject of *one thousand sentences* from various books she had read. (Her tracking system was meticulous: each sentence numbered, with its subject circled in red ink and a small notation indicating whether the subject was a noun, a pronoun, or an implied subject.) The academy master at the time — a thoughtful man named *Clause* — had read her notebook for an hour. He had then said: "*You are appointed to teach the subject. Take a year to settle in. We will hold the mayoral election after your first year so you understand the academy's traditions before standing for the role.*"

Sara had accepted. She had taught for a year. She had stood for election. She had been elected unanimously. She has been Mayor Subject for nineteen years.

In her classroom (a small wood-panelled office in the academy's *Town Hall* building, which is the academy's official Sentence-Town setting), she begins every first-day lesson the same way. She wears a *small silver mayor's chain* (a teaching prop; the academy commissioned it for her when she was elected). She sits at her desk. She turns to the class. She says: *"Every sentence needs a mayor. The mayor is the subject. The mayor is who does the action. Without a mayor, the action has no one to do it. The sentence does not work."*

She demonstrates. She writes on the board:

*"The dog barked."*



She points at *the dog*. She says: \*"*This is the subject. The dog is doing the barking. The dog is the mayor of this sentence.*"\*

She then writes:

*"Barked."*

She turns to the class. She says: \*"*This is not a sentence. Barked is a verb. The verb has no actor. No mayor. No one to do the barking. We do not know who barked, what barked, or whether anything barked. The sentence is incomplete.*"\*

She then writes:

*"Eat your dinner."*

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/mayor-subject>

# Modifier Madge

\*ADJECTIVE — a word that modifies a noun or pronoun. Tells *which*, *what kind*, *how many*. *The red ball*. (Red modifies ball.)\*



Modifier Madge is Sentence-Town's noun-decorator. She loves making things clear. Madge works with Modifier Mike. He decorates verbs. She decorates nouns. Together, they decorate everything. They are a great team.

Madge's real name is Margaret. But everyone calls her Madge. She is always cheerful. She loves bright colors. Her classroom walls are painted a sunny yellow. Madge thinks the right adjective makes a sentence sparkle. "The ball" just tells you about a ball. "The red ball" tells you its color. It also tells you *which* ball. "The big red ball" tells you its size and color. "The big bouncy red ball that the dog chased" tells you even more. It tells you size, how it feels, color, and what happened to it. Adjectives add details. They make the noun clearer. But the ball is still a ball.



Madge finds this very satisfying. She really likes adjectives. They don't shout, but they are strong. They don't change the noun. A ball is still a ball. But they make it special. Knowing details is important. It helps you picture things better.

Madge grew up like Mike. Her family decorated houses too. They lived in the same city. Their families even owned rival shops. Mike's parents sold chairs and curtains. Madge's parents sold paint and wallpaper. Their shops were only two blocks apart. Mike and Madge knew each other a little as kids. But they were not close friends.

Both Mike and Madge learned something important. Decoration was all about details. A wall was just a wall. A *red wall* was a certain wall. A *velvety red wall* was even more special. A *velvety red wall in a fancy old room* told you a lot. Each new layer of decoration made things clearer. It gave things more character.



Mike and Madge both came to GrammarForge academy. They were both twenty-one. The head of the academy, Master Clause, saw how similar they were. He put them together. He gave them offices next to each other. He told them to teach lessons together. "You two grew up the same way," he said. "You will understand each other. Students will learn about decorating words from both of you."

At first, Mike and Madge were shy. They kept to themselves. But by the end of that first year, they were friends. Really good friends. Not boyfriend-girlfriend friends, just good work friends. They have been friends for seventeen years. They share an office. They eat lunch together. They visit each other's families on holidays. Even Madge's parents and Mike's parents became friends! After years of rival shops, they now eat dinner together every few months. No more rivalry. Just real friendship.

Madge starts every first lesson the same way. She has a small wooden ball on her desk. It is painted plain white. It is about the size of a tennis ball. She puts it down carefully. "This is a ball," she says. Her voice is warm. "It is just a ball. It does what a ball does." The children watch her.



Then she pulls out a red paint-pen. She carefully adds a small red dot to the ball. The children lean forward. "Now it is a ball with red," she says. "Or, we can say, a *red ball*. The word *red* is an adjective. It describes the ball. It tells you the ball's color. The ball is still a ball. But now it has a detail." She holds it up. The red dot shines.

She writes on the board: *The ball*. Then she adds: *The red ball*. "Red answers 'what color?'" she explains. "It is an adjective."

She keeps going. *The big red ball*. "Big answers 'what size?'" she says. *The big bouncy red ball*. "Bouncy answers 'how does it feel?'" she adds. She bounces the ball gently. It makes a soft thud. *The big bouncy red ball that the dog chased*. "That the dog chased" tells us *which* ball. She makes a playful barking sound. (Clause-Chief Carla will teach you more about these later. Madge just mentions them now.) The ball gets more and more details. But it is still the same ball. It just has more information.



Madge has a trick to help kids remember. "Adjectives answer three questions," she says. She holds up three fingers. "They tell you *which* one. They tell you *what kind* of thing. They tell you *how many* of them. If a word answers one of these questions about a noun, it's an adjective!" A boy in the front row nods slowly.

Kids often ask if adjectives are hard to find. Madge always gives the same answer. "They are not hard at all," she says. "They just answer 'which,' 'what kind,' or 'how many.' Find the noun. Ask one of those questions. If a word answers, it's an adjective!" A girl who looked confused now smiles.

Madge still keeps that little white-and-red ball. It sits on her desk. Kids often ask to add their own marks. She keeps a pot of paints just for that. Madge always lets them. Now, after seventeen years, the ball is covered in marks. It has every color. There's a tiny blue star. A green squiggle. A purple lightning bolt. The children have all helped decorate it.

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/modifier-madge>

# Modifier Mike

\*ADVERB — a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Tells *how*, *when*, *where*, or *why* an action is performed. *He ran quickly.* (Quickly modifies ran.)\*



- "B"
    - "C"
    - "D"
    - "E"
- gate-allow-text-pattern: "^(?:[A-Z]|[0-9]{1,2})\$"

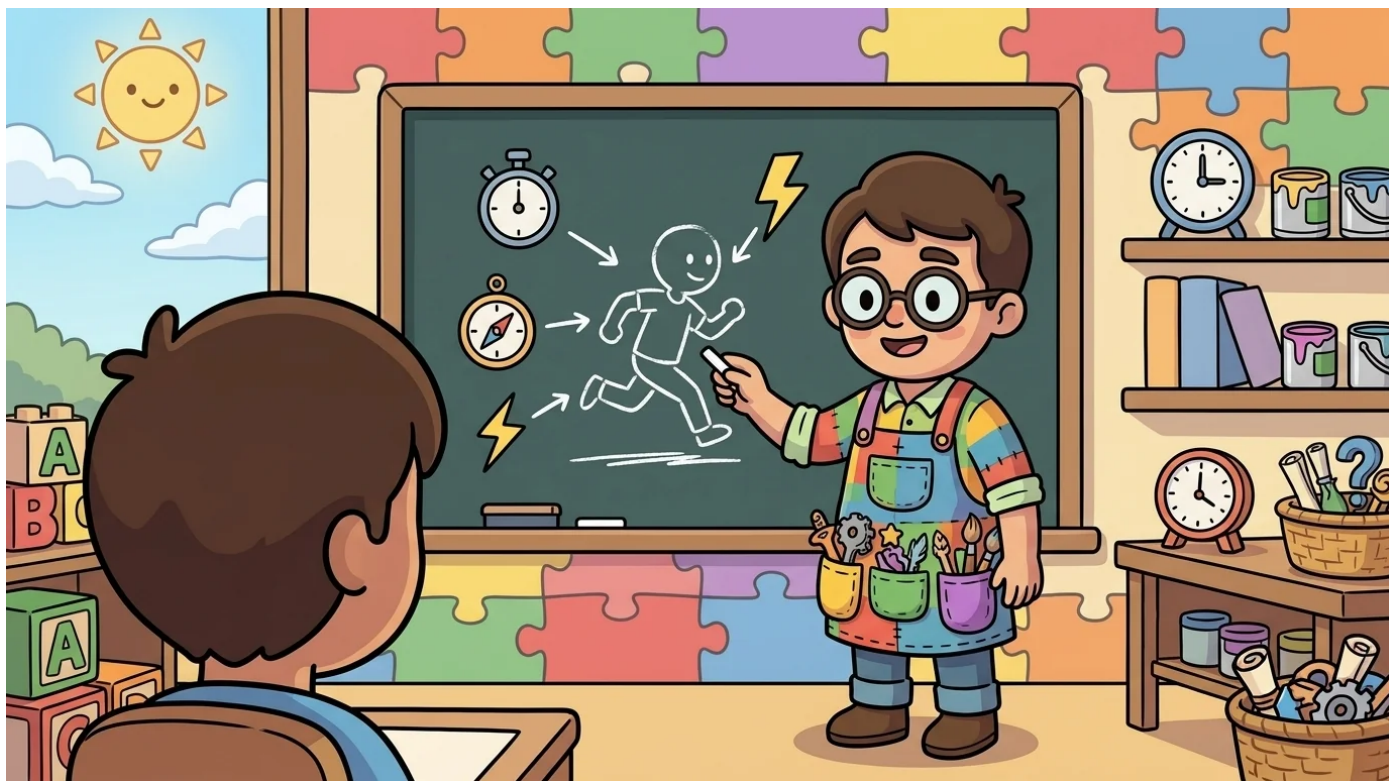


Modifier Mike is *Sentence-Town's* verb-decorator.



Mike — whose given name is *Michael*, though everyone calls him Mike — is *cheerful and fussy*. He attends, he says, *to the small specific details*. He believes that *the same verb performed differently is a different sentence*. *He ran* tells you only that an action happened. *He ran quickly* tells you the *speed*. *He ran yesterday* tells you the *time*. *He ran home* tells you the *destination*. *He ran because he was late* tells you the *reason*. Each adverb adds a layer of *specificity* without changing the underlying verb-action.

Mike grew up in an *interior-decoration* family. His parents had run a small *furniture-and-soft-furnishings* shop in the kingdom's central capital. The shop sold *chairs, tables, throws, cushions, curtains, and small ornamental objects*. Mike had grown up understanding that *furniture by itself was just structure* — and that *furniture made into a room was structure-plus-decoration*. A chair was a chair. A chair with a green cushion in a parlor by the window was a *specific chair in a specific situation*. Each decoration-layer added *character* without changing the underlying *chair-ness*.



When he joined the GrammarForge academy at twenty-one, he was paired immediately with Modifier Madge — the noun-decorator — who had joined the same year. They have, in the seventeen years since, been *the academy's joint-decorators*. They share an office. They co-teach when adverb-and-adjective patterns intersect. They are *good friends* and *good colleagues*. (They are not married — children sometimes ask, with great curiosity. They are not. They are, simply, *the decorator pair*.)

In his classroom, Mike begins every first-day lesson the same way. He has, on his desk, *a small chair* — about the size of a doll's chair, made of polished pine. He places it on the desk. He says: "*This is a chair. It is a chair. It does what a chair does.*"



He then writes on the board: *He ran*. He says: "*This is a sentence. He performed the action of running.*"

He adds: *He ran quickly*. He says: *"Now we have a specified sentence. Quickly is an adverb. It modifies ran. We know how he ran. The verb has acquired specificity."*\*

He demonstrates more: *He ran yesterday* (when). *He ran home* (where). *He ran because he was late* (why). *He ran very quickly* (the *very* modifies the adverb *quickly* — adverbs can modify other adverbs). He says: *"Adverbs answer four kinds of questions about a verb: how, when, where, why. They can also intensify adjectives (very tall) or other adverbs (very quickly). The job is always the same: add specificity to something else."*\*

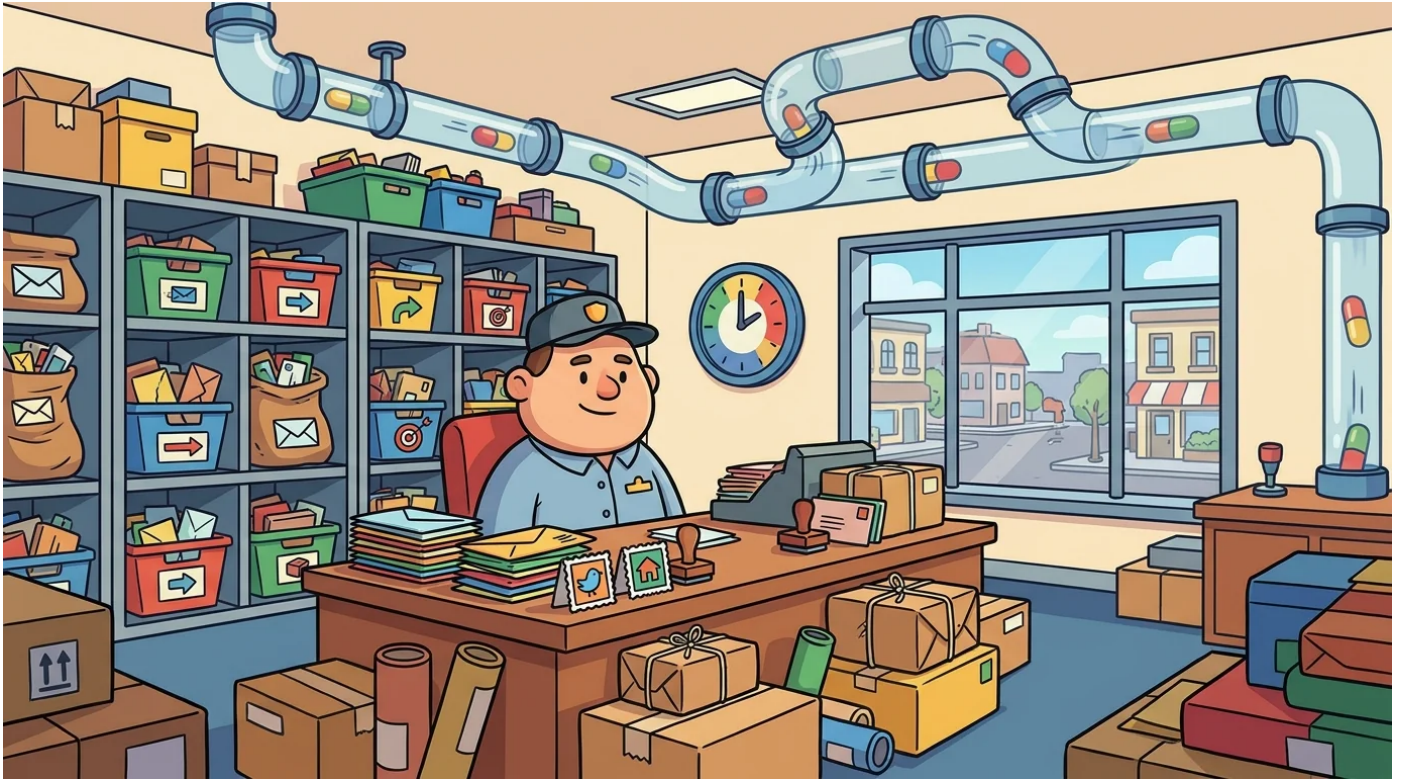
**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/modifier-mike>

# Object Otto

**OBJECT** — the receiver of the verb's action. *Direct object* (the dog chased the ball: *ball receives the chase*). *Indirect object* (she gave him a book: *him is the indirect receiver, book is the direct*).



Object Otto is *Sentence-Town's public-affairs liaison*. He's the town's official receiver.

He has a very important job in Sentence-Town. The Mayor (that's the subject) decides things. The Chief of Operations (that's the verb) makes them happen. Otto's job is to make sure someone or something *gets* what's happening.

If the Mayor decides to *send* something, Otto handles what gets sent. That's the direct object. He also handles who gets it. That's the indirect object. If the Chief of Operations *makes* something, Otto manages what was made. Otto is like the town's official receiver. He makes sure things land where they should.

His name is Otto. It's always been Otto. Even the GrammarForge academy didn't change it. It just fit him perfectly. Otto grew up in a family of postal clerks. His mom and dad worked at the post office. It was in a town called Receiving Hollow. Yes, that's its real name! Mail carriers used to drop their bags there. The name just stuck. Otto watched mail come and go every day.

What he noticed, from age four, was simple. Every letter had a sender and a receiver. The sender wrote the letter. The post office *delivered* it. The receiver got it. Three main parts were always there. The sender (that's like the subject). The delivering (that's the verb). And the receiver (that's the **object**).



No receiver? The letter had nowhere to go. No sender? No letter at all. No delivering? The letter just sat there. All three parts were needed.

Otto saw this pattern everywhere. He thought about it for years. Every gift had a giver and a receiver. Every talk had a speaker and a listener. Every choice had someone who decided. And someone who was affected. The world was full of receiving parties. By the time he was a teenager, Otto really paid attention. He always looked at the receiving side of things.

When Otto was eighteen, he went to school. He learned about formal grammar there. His teacher explained something. "The direct object is the noun that gets the verb's action," she said. "Like in *The dog chased the ball*. Ball is the direct object. It's what the dog chased."

Otto raised his hand. He said: "Like a letter and its recipient."

The teacher smiled. "Yes, exactly!" she said. "The verb is the action. The direct object gets that action. They go together."

Otto asked another question. "What if an action has a *second* receiver?" he wondered. "Someone the action goes *through*? But isn't the main receiver?"



The teacher said: "What do you mean?"

Otto gave an example. "*The postman gave Mrs. Hudd a letter;*" he said. "The letter is the direct object. It's what was given. But Mrs. Hudd gets something too. She's the *indirect receiver.*"

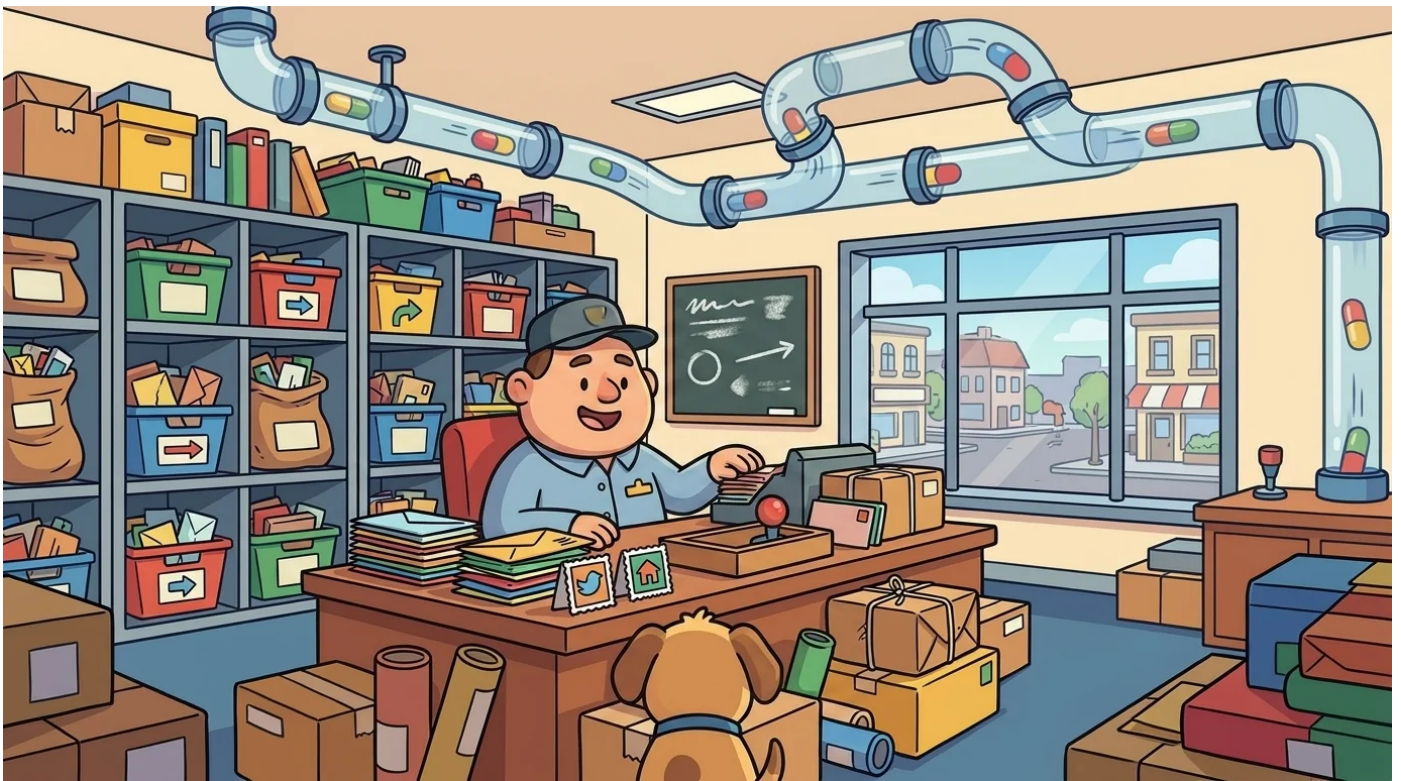
The teacher's eyes widened. "Yes, that's totally right!" she said. "Mrs. Hudd is the *indirect object.* English has direct objects. That's the thing acted on. It also has indirect objects. That's the person who gets the action. Like when you give or send something. You figured out indirect objects. All from watching the mail!"

Otto felt so happy. He never knew this was a "concept." He just thought it was how letters worked. His teacher showed him something. Grammar was just a fancy way to explain the mail system.

When Otto was twenty-one, he went to GrammarForge academy. He carried a big notebook. In it, he had sorted a thousand sentences. He grouped them by their **object** structure. Some had direct objects. These were transitive. Some had no objects. These were intransitive. Some had two objects. Those were ditransitive. A direct and an indirect **object.**

The academy master, Clause, was used to smart students. They often brought huge notebooks. Clause read Otto's notebook. He read it for thirty minutes. Then he gave Otto the public-affairs job. Right away!

Otto has been Object Otto for seventeen years.



Otto has his own office. It's in the Town Hall building. He has a small front desk there. This is where he greets **objects**. Direct and indirect **objects** "arrive" at his desk. He starts every first lesson the same way.

He sits at his desk. On it is a small wooden mail-tray. "I am Object Otto," he says. "I handle the receiving side of every sentence. The Mayor decides. The Chief of Operations acts. Then someone or something *receives* it. I make sure that receiver is all set."

He shows them how it works. He writes on the board:

*"The dog chased the ball."*

He points at *the ball*. "This is the direct **object**," he explains. "*The ball* is what gets chased. The direct **object** *receives* the action. If there was no direct **object**, 'chased' would be confusing. 'The dog chased' wouldn't make sense."

Next, he writes:

*"She gave him a book."*



"This sentence has *two objects*," he says. "*A book* is the direct **object**. It's what was given. *Him* is the indirect **object**. He's the one who *got* the book. We use indirect **objects** for actions like giving. Or sending, telling, showing. The direct **object** is the *thing*. The indirect **object** is the *person* who gets it. They work as a team."

Then he writes:

"*The dog slept.*"

"This sentence has *no object*," he says. "*Slept* is an *intransitive verb*. It doesn't need an **object**. The dog is just sleeping. No one receives anything. Not all verbs need an **object**. Some verbs are fine with just a subject and verb. For these sentences, my desk is quietly empty."

The kids always get it after this. They used to think every sentence needed all three parts. Subject, verb, and **object**. Otto explains that some verbs need **objects**. These are *transitive* verbs. Some verbs don't need **objects**. These are *intransitive* verbs. And some verbs take two **objects**. Those are *ditransitive* verbs. Whether a verb has an **object** or not is just how that verb works.

Kids often ask if **objects** are hard to find. Otto always gives the same answer. "They are not hard," he says. "They are *the receiver*. Just ask: *Who or what gets the verb's action?* If you get an answer, that's the direct **object**. If someone *also* gets the action, that's the indirect **object**. If no one gets anything, the verb is intransitive. My job is always clear. I manage the receiving side."

He still keeps that small wooden mail-tray. It sits right on his desk. Kids sometimes ask to put a token in it. He has a basket of tokens nearby. They put one in when they find an **object**. He always lets them. The tray is very full of tokens. It shows how many **objects** they've found!

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/object-otto>

# Preposition Pat

\*PREPOSITION — a word showing spatial or temporal relation: *on, under, between, before, after, during, with, in, at*.\*



• ON

- TO
- IN
- AT
- BY



- OF
  - FROM
  - WITH
  - on
  - to



- at
  - by
  - for
  - of
  - from



• 'POST OFFICE'

- POST
- OFFICE
- morning
- meal
- bell
- supper



- breakfast
    - lunch
- gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:\d+(?:\d+)?|\d+[°/]\d+|[A-Z]{1,4}|[a-z]+)\$'
- 

## Chapter 9 — Preposition Pat and the Cartographer's Desk

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Preposition Pat is *Sentence-Town's* cartographer.

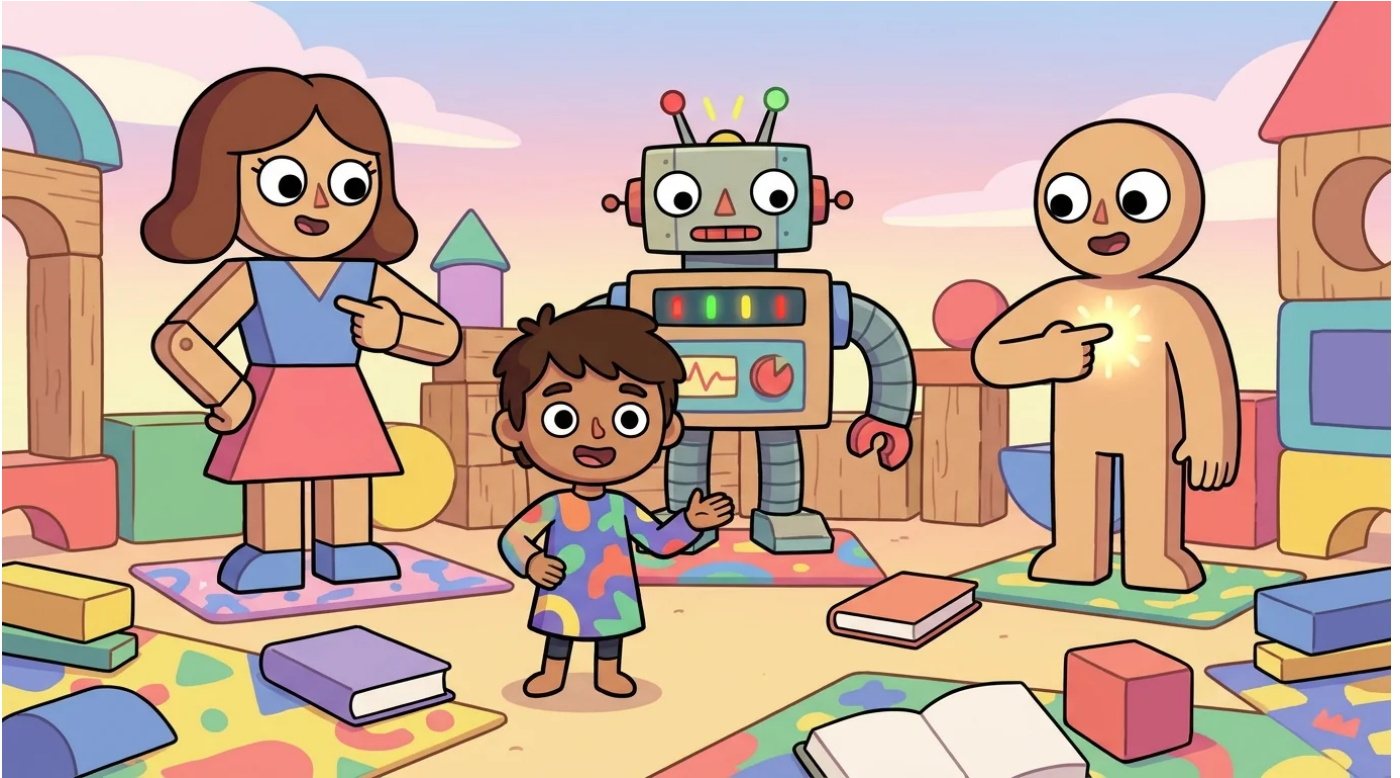
Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/preposition-pat>

# Pronoun Perry

\*PRONOUN — a word that substitutes for a noun previously mentioned. *He, she, it, they, who, that.* Reduces repetition.\*



- "SHE"
  - "IT"
  - "I"

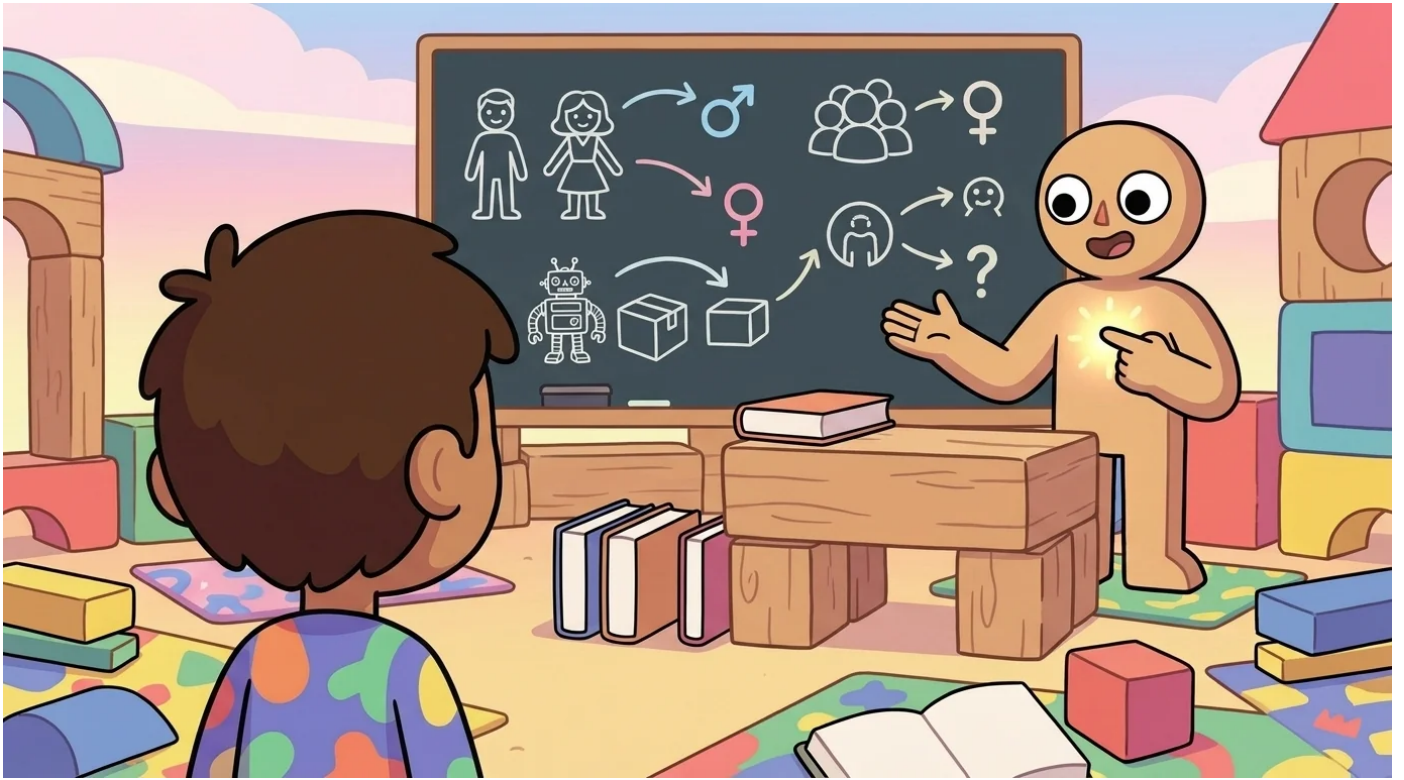


- "YOU"

- "THEY"
- "he"
- "she"
- "it"



- "we"
  - "you"
  - "they"
  - "HIM"
  - "HER"



- "THEM"
  - "him"
  - "her"
  - "us"
  - "them"



- "YOUR"
  - "HIS"

- "HER"
- "OUR"
- "THEIR"

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/pronoun-perry>

# Punctuator Polly

*PUNCTUATION — commas, periods, semicolons, colons, apostrophes, quotation marks, dashes, exclamation marks, question marks. The marks that regulate the flow of meaning.*



- 'OWNERSHIP APOSTROPHES'
  - 'CONTRACTION APOSTROPHES'
  - 'QUOTATION MARKS'
  - DASHES
  - COMMAS
  - PERIODS
  - OWNERSHIP
  - CONTRACTION
  - APOSTROPHE



- QUOTATION

- DASH
- COMMA
- PERIOD
- ' '
- ' ; '
- ' ! '
- ' ? '
- ' ! ' !'



gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:\d+ | [A-Z][A-Z ]+ | [A-Z][a-z]+ | [.,,:?!])\$'

## Chapter 11 — Punctuator Polly and the Traffic Lights

Punctuator Polly is *Sentence-Town's* traffic-light operator. Her job might seem small. But it's super important. The mayor does her job. The chief of operations does his. Even the person who answers the phone helps out. Everyone has a part to play. But all those parts need to flow smoothly. Like traffic.

When does a sentence end? When does it take a breath? When does someone else start talking? When do you list things? Polly makes sure all of this happens just right. She handles all the *flow-control* tasks.

Polly's real name is just Polly. She moves fast. She loves tiny, perfect marks. She thinks **punctuation** builds meaning. It makes sentences make sense.



Without **punctuation**, a sentence is just a big jumble. Like this: *the dog barked the cat ran the children laughed it was a busy afternoon*. Polly would say, "That's a mess! You can't even read it!"

But add the marks: *The dog barked. The cat ran. The children laughed. It was a busy afternoon*. See? Now it has a beat. You can breathe. It makes sense. Readers can keep up.

Polly grew up in a family of traffic cops. Her mom and dad were both constables. They worked in the kingdom's capital city. They stood at busy corners. They directed horses and carts.

Back then, the city was super busy. So directing traffic was a real job. Constables stood in the middle of big crossings. They used hand-signals. They blew their whistles. They made sure carts and people moved along.

Polly watched her parents all the time. By age ten, she knew a big secret. Traffic moved well when someone guided it. It got stuck when no one did.



A hand up meant STOP. A hand to the side meant GO. A whistle meant "Look here!" These signals were tiny. But they were super powerful.

Over the years, Polly figured something out. **Punctuation** marks did the same thing. But for words.

A period was a STOP sign. A comma was a quick PAUSE. A semicolon meant STOP, but KEEP THINKING. A colon meant "Get ready, something's coming!" Each mark guided the meaning. Just like her parents guided traffic.

When Polly turned eighteen, she went to GrammarForge academy. She has been Punctuator Polly for fifteen years now.

In her classroom, she always starts the first day the same way. On her desk are six small wooden signs. Each sign has a **punctuation** mark painted on it. There's a period (.), a comma (,), a semicolon (;), a colon (:), a question mark (?), and an exclamation mark (!). She holds them up. One by one. She shows what each mark means.

For the period, she says: "This is a full stop. End of sentence. The reader takes a breath. Then they start a new sentence."

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/punctuator-polly>

# Verb Verity

\*VERB — the word or words expressing the action or state of being of the subject. *The dog barks.* (action verb) *The dog is brown.* (state-of-being verb)\*



- PAST
  - PRESENT
  - FUTURE
  - past
  - present
  - future
  - TENSE
  - VERB
  - V



- Verity
  - 'Verb Verity'  
gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:\d+|V|Verb|Verity|Verb Verity)\$'

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## Chapter 2 — Verb Verity and the Chief of Operations

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Verb Verity is *Sentence-Town's chief of operations*.

This is the second most important job in Sentence-Town. Mayor Subject is the boss. She is *who* the sentence is about. The chief of operations is *what happens*. It's *the action* the boss takes. Together they make a sentence. Without either, you have a fragment.



Verb Verity's real name is Vera. She is Sara's best friend at the academy. The two of them have worked together for nineteen years. They share an office in the academy's Town Hall building. They drink tea together every morning before lessons. They have never had a real fight. Not in nineteen years! Sara says that's like good grammar. Subjects and verbs always agree. Sara and Vera are like a living subject and verb. So they *have* to agree.

Vera grew up in a village of glass-blowers. It was the same kind of village as Stretch's from FractionForge. Glass-blowing was a common job in the kingdom. Vera's family workshop always worked. It ran exactly on time. The forge was lit at the same hour every morning. Smoke curled up to the sky. The first piece of glass was at the rod within fifteen minutes. It glowed orange and hot. The day's quota was *always met*. No one ever left early.

Vera watched her mother. She understood something important. *Operations were verbs.*

*Lighting the forge* was a verb. *Heating the glass* was a verb. *Shaping the molten glass* was a verb. *Cooling the finished piece* was a verb. *Wrapping it for shipment* was a verb. Each operation was an action. Someone did it. Something got done to. The worker was the actor. That's the subject. The action was the operation. That's the verb. The glass was the recipient. That's the object. The workshop ran on *subject-verb-object* rules. Every step was like a tiny sentence.

By age fifteen, Vera figured it out. The workshop's daily work was like a long story. A story made of English sentences. Each operation was a sentence. Each operation needed its named actor and its named verb. No actor meant no one to do the verb. No verb meant the actor did nothing.



When Vera was twenty-one, she walked to the GrammarForge academy. She carried a notebook. Inside were two thousand action verbs. And five hundred *state-of-being* verbs. All from her family's workshop. State-of-being verbs were less common. Like: *the glass is hot*. Or: *The forge is lit*. Or: *The shipment is ready*. But they were *still verbs*. They still needed a subject.

The academy master, Clause, interviewed Vera. Sara had already been there for two years. The interview went like this:

Clause said: "*What is a verb?*"

Vera said: *"A verb is what the subject does. Or what the subject is. It's the operation in a sentence. The dog barks. 'Barks' is the verb. It's what the dog does. The dog is brown. 'Is' is the verb. It's what the dog is. Verbs are actions or states. They are the main thing the subject does or is."*

Clause said: "*What if a sentence has more than one verb?*"



Vera said: \*"Then it has *compound verbs*. Like: *The dog barked and chased the ball*. Or it has *multiple clauses*. Like: *The dog barked while the cat slept*. Each verb still has its own subject. Sentences get bigger by *adding more subject-verb pairs*. Not by breaking them apart."\*

Clause said: *"Are you closer with the current Mayor Subject?"*

Vera said: *"I have not met her. But I expect we will be."*

They were. Sara and Vera became best friends. It happened in their first week. They have been friends ever since.

Vera shares her classroom with Sara. Subjects and verbs are always taught together. Vera starts every first lesson the same way. She stands beside Sara at the Town Hall desk. She wears a small silver chain. It's like Sara's. But Vera's has an anvil-charm. The anvil shows that verbs are all about *doing*.

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/grammarforge/verb-verity>

# About Spark & Anvil

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Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. GrammarForge is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

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- **ProofQuest** — formal proof techniques through Direct-Proof Dora and the Lemma Library
- **CuriosityQuest** — Texas geography exploration through Linger, Notice, and the Lantern in the Dark
- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

## Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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