

SECTION

3

LEXIS AND  
STRUCTURE

# LANGUAGE AND USAGE

## Lexis and Structure

### INTRODUCTION

All words belong to specific word groups or classes. In this section, you will study the open (major) word classes, nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. An understanding of word classes allows you to understand the function of any given word.

#### At the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Categorise nouns according to their types (e.g. proper, common, abstract, concrete, etc.)
- Classify adjectives into their types (e.g. demonstratives, quantifiers and qualifiers) and use them in sentences.
- Classify verbs into transitive, intransitive and ditransitive.
- Categorise adverbs into types (e.g. manner, place, time, degree).

#### Key Ideas

- Nouns are simply names of things in general. Nouns can be categorised as proper nouns, abstract nouns, common nouns, and concrete nouns.
- Quantifier is an adjective that provides information about nouns in terms of numbers or measurement.
- Qualifier, on the other hand, is an adjective that describes or qualifies a noun or pronoun.
- Predicate is an adjective that occurs after the nouns they modify.
- Verbs are words that express action or state of being. The three types of verbs are transitive, intransitive and ditransitive.
- Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs as well. Adverbs can be grouped into types, namely adverb of manner, adverb of place, adverb of time, adverb of frequency, adverb of purpose/ reason and adverb degree/intensity

## Nouns and their Categories

Make a list of ten objects inside and outside your classroom in small groups. Then add two more words to your list of the *feelings* you have inside and outside the classroom. Does your group have the same ideas as other groups?

## What are nouns?

A noun is a name of a person, a place, an animal, or a thing. Some nouns also refer to ideas, states or feelings.

## Categories of nouns

### Proper nouns

Proper nouns are nouns that serve as the name of a specific person, place or thing either natural or artificial. Proper nouns always begin with a capital letter no matter their position in a sentence. Some examples are:

1. People's names: Esinam, Adole, Iddrisu, Wakil, Kofi, Akuba, Yeboah, etc.
2. Place names: Afadjato, Accra, Winneba, Tamale, Nungua, etc.
3. Days of the week: Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Monday, etc.
4. Months of the year: April, May, June, August, October, December, etc.
5. Institutions: Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Jubilee House, University of Ghana, etc.
6. Names of water bodies: Pra, Volta, Densu, Ankonbra, Korle, etc.

### Common nouns

These are names of 'things' (person, thing, place, name or concept), which are not proper nouns (see above). They are not capitalized except when they are found at the beginning of a sentence. They can be combined with determiners and other adjectives. Some examples include pen, book, pencil, house, building, fish, sea, bottle, kitchen, classroom.

### Abstract nouns

These are words which denote concepts or states that we cannot see physically but are named in society. These represent ideas we do not see, smell, or touch. They usually describe emotions, ideas and feelings. Some examples are happiness, love, sadness, bitterness, truth, wisdom, etc.

### Concrete nouns

These are real objects and things we can see or touch. They exist in the physical world and can be experienced directly. They refer to something or someone that can be perceived with the five senses (touching, hearing, seeing, smelling, and tasting). Some examples of concrete nouns are stone, table, bed, water, air, soil, piano, drum, elephant, etc.

### Collective nouns

They are nouns that refer to a group. The group could be things, animals or people. Examples include fleet, team, choir, group, tribe, ream, library, etc. They are singular nouns despite referring to multiple people/things/ animals.

### Activity 3.1

Categorise the following nouns under Proper, common, abstract and concrete nouns. State why you made your decision.

1. student
2. chair
3. love
4. Akosua
5. Salis
6. sadness
7. unity
8. table
9. water
10. rock

### Activity 3.2

1. In groups identify all the nouns in the passage below
2. Group the nouns identified in the passage below into four groups of nouns
  - a. concrete nouns
  - b. common nouns
  - c. proper nouns
  - d. abstract nouns
3. Use the examples you find to form simple sentences e.g. *My **town** is small*

#### **Title: Exploring My Local Market**

*In my town, there's a bustling place called the local market. It's a lively hub where people gather to buy and sell all sorts of things. From colourful fruits and vegetables to clothes, toys, and even household items, you can find almost anything there.*

*Every weekend, my family and I visit the market to do our shopping. As we approach, I can hear the cheerful chatter of vendors calling out their prices and the buzzing energy of shoppers bustling about.*

*The first thing that catches my eye is the vibrant array of fruits and vegetables neatly displayed on the stalls. There are juicy oranges, ripe yellow bananas, and shiny green pawpaw. The scent of fresh produce fills the air, making me eager to pick out my favourites.*

*Next, we make our way through the maze of stalls selling clothes and accessories. Brightly coloured shirts, flowing skirts, and sparkly jewellery catch my attention. I*

*love browsing through the racks, searching for the perfect outfit or accessory to add to my collection.*

*As we continue our journey through the market, we come across stalls selling toys and trinkets. From colourful balloons and spinning tops to action figures and dolls, there's something for every child's imagination to explore. I can't help but smile as I see the joy on the faces of other kids as they admire the toys on display.*

*Finally, we reach the section of the market dedicated to household items. Here, we find everything from kitchen utensils and cleaning supplies to decorative items for our home. My mom carefully selects what we need while I help carry the bags.*

### Activity 3.3

Provide five additional examples of collective nouns each in pairs. Share your answers with your colleague.

Look at the sentences below and indicate which of the underlined nouns can be counted or cannot be counted.

1. The children fell asleep quickly after a busy day of fun.
2. Be careful! The water is deep.
3. The parade included fire trucks and police cars.
4. We like the large bottles of mineral water.
5. My caterer uses real butter in the cakes she bakes.
6. How many politicians does it take to pass a simple law?
7. Most kids like milk, but Joey hates it.
8. Most pottery is made of clay.
9. Akua and Akuvi can play several different musical instruments.
10. I was feeling so stressed that I ate an entire box of chocolate.

Nouns can also be grouped into two major categories, namely countable and uncountable nouns. Countable nouns refer to all objects that can be counted (e.g. pen, dress, pencil, purse, fan, umbrella, mango, orange, etc.). Uncountable nouns refer to those that cannot be counted. Some examples are oil, rice, water, information, etc. Liquids and abstract nouns are uncountable.

## Classification of Adjectives

Now you have learnt about nouns and their types or categories. Let us look at adjectives

### What is an adjective?

In groups list three words that you would use to describe these things/people.



1. Your classroom
2. Your best friend
3. Your desk/table
4. The atmosphere in your school

The concept of an adjective refers to a word that is used to modify or describe a noun. Adjectives refer to words that are used to provide information about the qualities that a person or something possesses. Some examples of adjectives are green, black, yellow, white, short, tall, beautiful, fluffy, big, small, slim, happy, sad, intelligent, true, etc. The following are examples of how some adjectives have been used in sentences.

- a. I like *old* houses
- b. The boy is *tall* and *skinny*
- c. Aku is *smarter than* her brother

In example (a) above, the word *old* is describing the kind of house that the speaker likes. In (b) the words *tall* and *skinny* describe the physical attributes of the boy. In (c), the words *smarter than* are used in comparing Aku and her brother's level of intelligence.

## Types of adjectives

There are different types of adjectives, the principal categories you'll study are:

1. Demonstrative adjectives
2. Comparative adjectives
3. Quantifiers
4. Descriptive or Qualifiers

### Demonstrative adjectives

In this case, demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those) are used as adjectives because they specify the object being referred to (therefore modifying the noun). See the examples below:

- a. *This* car is new.
- b. The woman owns *those* houses.
- c. *That* house belongs to my father.
- d. Aku is buying *these* buildings.

### Comparative adjectives

They are used to compare different persons or things to each other. These comparative adjectives include smaller, higher, bigger, smarter, more...than, less...than, etc. In the following examples, we have used these comparative adjectives.

- a. This is a *cheaper* food.
- b. Ama is *smarter* than Kofi.
- c. The white car is *faster* than the blue one.
- d. Your money is *less than* mine.

## Quantifier adjectives

These adjectives provide information about quantity. Quantifiers play the role of an adjective because they modify the noun by telling us how much or how many. See the following examples.

- a. I bought *some* rice.
- b. He cooked *two* eggs.
- c. She needs a *little* sugar.
- d. There are *many* books in my box.

## Descriptive or qualifier adjectives

Descriptive or qualifier adjectives are adjectives that describe the characteristics, traits, or qualities that a noun possesses. They are simply adjectives that modify nouns. Most examples of adjectives fall under this type. See the examples below.

- a. The car is *old*.
- b. I have a *small* book.
- c. The food is *attractive*.
- d. I saw a *big* bus.

As you can see from the examples below, qualifier adjectives can be used after the noun if they are linked with a verb (often the verb 'to be')

- a. The house is *beautiful*.
- b. The watch you are wearing is *nice*.
- c. The mangoes you are eating are *fresh*.
- d. The tree I saw is *tall*.

These qualifier adjectives can also be used directly next to the nouns they modify. In English, they usually come before the nouns they modify, but in Ghanaian languages, they come **after** the nouns they modify as you can see in the examples below:

- a. This is a *beautiful* house.
- b. I saw a *tall* tree.
- c. My mother bought me a *nice* watch.
- d. I eat *fresh* mangoes every day.

### Activity 3.4

1. Look back at the words that you identified at the beginning of this lesson. Categorise each word according to demonstrative, quantifier or qualifier. Provide additional examples for each category.

1. Read the passage below and identify the adjectives in it. Categorise the adjectives you have identified into demonstratives, quantifiers and qualifiers and be ready to present your work to the class.

*Just before the third cockcrow that morning, nearly all the people in the little village of Alata had gathered to meet the chief. The people from the royal family were dressed in white. They wore white bands around their head and walked barefoot.*

*They had met to pay tribute to their chief. Tradition has it that several years ago, the ancestor of the present chief did a marvellous act to help the people of the village. He intervened when every farm in the village was burnt one afternoon, and hunger blew its dusty wind over the village. Hunger visited every home in the village and made people weak and hopeless.*

*It was that ancestor who provided food in large quantities from his farm in the nearby village to feed the people. The people showed their gratitude by making him their chief. Every year, they paid homage to him to acknowledge his great deeds.*

## Classification of Verbs

What did you do this morning? Make a list of the activities.

What do you think about your different school subjects? Make a list of opinions.

Be ready to share your ideas for class discussion.

## What is a verb?

A verb is an action or doing word. Verbs also include words or phrases that show the state of being (for example, to feel, to grow, to smell, to own, to love, to hate, to know, to like, etc.)

Verbs can appear in sentences with or without objects. These objects which occur often after the verb in sentences are referred to as object complements. Verbs can be grouped based on their object complements. These groups are called intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive.

### Transitive verbs

Transitive verbs occur with objects after them in the sentence. Some examples are to cook, to drink, to drive, to fetch, to eat, to write, to beat, etc. Below are some examples in sentences.

1. The teacher *cooked* rice.
2. The students *fetches* water.
3. Kofi and Adwoa *eat* jollof.
4. A child *brought* fruits.
5. The passengers *boarded* the car.



The words in italics are all transitive verbs. The complements or objects occur after the verbs. For instance, in example 1, the object is *rice*, and in example (5) the object is *the car*.

### Intransitive verbs

These are verbs that do not occur with object complements – they do not require an object to form a meaningful sentence. There may be words or phrases following them, but these are usually adverbs. Examples of such verbs include to die, to fly, to yawn, to cry, to grow, etc. See some examples below.

1. The child is *yawning*.
2. The sparrow *flies* quickly.
3. The student *fainted* suddenly.

The verbs in the italics are intransitive verbs. In examples 2 & 3 the words that we see after them are called adverbs – they are not object complements. The lesson on adverbs will follow later.

### Ditransitive verbs

Ditransitive verbs take two objects as their complement. Ditransitive verbs require two objects which are the direct object and the indirect object. A direct object is a noun or pronoun that directly receives the action of the verb. On the other hand, the indirect object is the noun or pronoun that receives the direct object. Most often the indirect object is introduced with a preposition ‘to’, ‘for’ or ‘with’. Some examples of ditransitive verbs include to give, to send, to owe, to ask, etc. See the examples below;

1. The parents *gave* the child some provisions.
2. The teacher *sent* the students some presents.
3. The judge *asked* the lawyer a question.
4. The woman *bought* a gift for her friend.
5. She *gave* the ball to him.

In example 1 the indirect object is *the child*, and the direct object is *the provisions*. In this case, no preposition is used. In example 4 the indirect object is *her friend*, and the direct object is *the gift*. In this case, the indirect object is linked with the preposition ‘for’. (NB: *Ghanaian languages rather have postpositions than prepositions. Discuss as applicable*)

#### Activity 3.5

1. What is a verb? Explain in your own words.
2. Briefly define the three different types of verbs.
3. Classify the following verbs into transitive, intransitive and ditransitive by ticking the appropriate place in the table (see examples)

Verb	Transitive	Intransitive	Ditransitive
Respect	✓		
Laugh			✓
Cost			
Sing			
Read			
Dance			
Walk			
Play			
Slap			
Push			
Yawn			

### Activity 3.6

Read the text below with your partner. Identify all of the verbs, then categorise them into transitive, intransitive and ditransitive. Once you've finished, work together to form sentences with at least five of the verbs you've identified, for example, *I would have liked to study for longer.*

*The distance across the river was not more than fifty meters, but I would have liked to swim a kilometre or more, in deep, clear water. The place smelt of crocodiles.*

*As I prepared to enter the river, I held my gun between my teeth, and with a prayer, slipped into the muddy water. I swam like a beginner. The current was not strong the water was moderately warm. But I was cold with fear and seemed to move rather slowly.*

*In the middle, the river suddenly became shallow, and my chest hit against a mud bank. I thought it was a crocodile, and in my confusion, the gun dropped from my mouth.*

*I waded a few meters, then came into deep water again. Before I realised it, I had reached the opposite bank. With feverish haste, I scrambled up to the hard ground. It was all over, but I had lost my only weapon.*

## Categorising Adverbs

Look at the picture below. How are the young people moving? What time of day is it? Where is the event taking place? Why is the event taking place?



**Fig. 3.1:** A race. (Source: <https://www.athletics.africa/topics/ghana-athletics-association>)

### What is an Adverb?

Adverbs are words or phrases that give more meaning to the verb in the sentence. Adverbs can describe other adverbs as well. Think about how you walked to school today, was it, slowly, quickly, or hurriedly? You may have walked very quickly to school. The word *quickly* shows or describes the way you walked to school, so it is an adverb. Adverbs are categorised according to how they modify the verb. The categories are manner, place, time, frequency, degree, reason/ purpose.

#### Adverbs of manner

This type of adverb describes how (or the *manner* in which) an action occurred or happened. Some examples are in the sentences below.

1. The pupil walked to school *hurriedly*.
2. The players played the game *gently*.
3. The choir sang *softly*.
4. A bird sang *beautifully* in the sky.

#### Adverbs of place

Adverbs of place give information about the location of the action or activity performed. See the examples below.

1. The students are standing *outside*.
2. Kwasi and Akosua are sleeping *upstairs*.
3. The pupils litter the papers *everywhere*.

- The children live *in Kasoa*.

## Adverbs of time

Adverbs of time give information on when something occurs. Below are some examples in sentences.

- Final-year students wrote the exams *yesterday*.
- Today* we shall eat our lunch at the office
- There will be a meeting at *9 am*.

## Adverbs of frequency

This shows how often something happens. These types of adverbs usually occur at the beginning or end of the sentence but there are a few adverbs, that can occur in the middle of the sentence as well as the end or beginning. Such adverbs include annually, yearly, never, always, weekly, daily etc. See some examples below;

- Festivals are celebrated *annually*.
- We eat *daily*.
- Misbehaviour is *never* accepted in schools.
- Children are *always* encouraged to clean their teeth.
- I come here *always*.

In the above sentences, the adverbs of frequency are *annually*, *daily*, *never* and *always*. We see the adverbs *never* and *always* occurring in the middle of the sentence. In example (5) the adverb *always* is seen at the end of the sentence.

## Adverbs of purpose/reason

These adverbs explain the reasons for doing something or the reason for an event's occurrence. Examples of this type of adverb are because, so, however, therefore, unfortunately, although, etc. Some examples are written below.

- I am leaving early *so as* to avoid traffic.
- School vacated *so* the students went home.
- Although* I went to the market, I did not get fish.
- The child cried *because* she was hungry.

## Adverbs of degree/intensity

This type of adverb is words that modify verbs or other adverbs to show the degree or extent of a particular action, state or quality. They help us to intensify or downplay the words they qualify. Some examples are extremely, very, enough, quite, much, mostly, totally, absolutely, perfectly, exceedingly, etc. See the examples below:

- The food is *extremely* spicy.
- The room was *completely* cleaned.
- The performance was *utterly* amazing.
- The dish was cooked *perfectly*.

### Activity 3.7

Think back to the activity at the beginning of this lesson. You will have identified some adverbs to describe the actions that you could see taking place in the picture. Classify the adverbs that you identified using the groups that we have just studied then work together in pairs to create five sentences to describe the picture using those adverbs.

### Activity 3.8

1. Explain the relationship between adverbs and verbs and share your response in class.
2. Explain the types of adverbs and give three examples under each type.
3. Use two examples under each type to form sentences.
4. Categorise these adverbs under the types you have learned and state why you put the adverbs under the categories.
  - a. hastily
  - b. smoothly
  - c. quietly
  - d. tomorrow
  - e. never
  - f. monthly
  - g. precisely
  - h. last month

### Activity 3.9

Go through the given sentences and identify the type of adverb used in each sentence. Then use at least five of the adverbs that you've identified to form your sentences to present to the class.

1. The students practised their speech regularly.
2. The phone kept ringing constantly.
3. The people have gone out.
4. I have heard this story before.
5. Are you quite sure?
6. You are driving too carelessly.

7. I always try my best.
8. You are quite right.
9. We solved the problem quickly.
10. I have heard enough.
11. The children often play.
12. Why are you still here?
13. I could hardly recognise him.
14. The little kid is too shy to sing.
15. The horse galloped away.



## Review Questions 3.1

1. Explain in your own words what a noun is.
2. Provide five examples of the following from the passage below.
  - a. Name of a person
  - b. Name of a Day of the week
  - c. Name of a specific place
  - d. Countable nouns

*Kofi travelled to a city near his village. He went on Tuesday and the town name is Accra.*

*Accra is a beautiful place made of tall buildings and nice houses. Kofi's happiness knew no bounds. This was the first time in this city for Kofi. He visited a big shop and bought some items such as bags, shoes, wristwatches, belts, shirts etc. He was unhappy about the high cost of living in Accra and vowed not to stay in the city.*

3. In your own words, define the following types of nouns and give two examples of each. Use the examples to form three simple sentences to share with your peers.
  - a. concrete nouns
  - b. abstract nouns
  - c. uncountable nouns
  - d. collective nouns

## Review Questions 3.2

1. Classify the adjectives below according to their types and present your responses. Groups should explain the reason for their classification.
  - a. handsome
  - b. long
  - c. sweet
  - d. attractive
  - e. half
  - f. red
  - g. wicked
  - h. black
  - i. rainy
  - j. those
  - k. that
  - l. some
  - m. three

2. Read the passage below carefully and answer questions (a) to (c) below.

*John travelled for the first time to visit his elder brother in a big city. As soon as he alighted from his commercial bus, he was amazed by the wonderful sight of the city. He started staring at the tall buildings, neat streets, and how people were moving about. The sight made John forget that he had to call his brother to pick him up from the lorry station. Immediately, he remembered, John pulled his old phone from his black bag and began to call his brother. Before the phone ended ringing, a white car arrived and parked a few meters away from where John was standing. With his smiley face, John quickly opened the front door and entered the car. Since his elder brother's house was fifteen minutes away from where John was standing, it did not take much time for the two to reach home. After John had a much-needed rest, he was served some delicious food to quench his hunger.*

### Questions:

- a. Identify all the adjectives used in the passage.
- b. Classify all the identified adjectives according to their type.
- c. Use five examples of each type of adjective identified in the passage to form sentences.

## Review Questions 3.3

1. How are verbs of action different to verbs of states of being?
2. Find all the verbs in the following passage and compare your answers with a colleague

*As I rushed to the beach, I ran, jumped, and danced in the waves. The sun shone brightly, warming my skin and I felt alive. I swam, splashed, and played in the water, laughing, and smiling with joy. The seagulls flew overhead, crying, and flapping their wings. I built, moulded, and shaped a sandcastle, decorating it with shells and pebbles. As the day wore on, I strolled, wandered, and explored the shoreline, discovering hidden treasures and making memories that would last a lifetime.*

3. Classify the verbs that you identified in the above passage into the three types of verbs you studied.
4. List some activities that you usually perform daily and describe to a friend how, when where and why you do them.
5. List all the adverbs used by your friend in their description and classify them.
6. Write a passage of about (50) words on the weather and the people where you live. The passage should include at least 10 adverbs.

## Extended Reading

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