

Manual
Structure of Modern English
Tim Morris
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Many concepts here are adapted from *Oxford English Grammar* by Sidney Greenbaum (Oxford: OUP, 1996). Every statement in this *Manual* is a generalization, open to exceptions and to criticism.

Introduction: Languages

Structure of Modern English is an introductory course on some basic elements of English grammar. The purpose of this course is not to train you to speak or write Standard English more "correctly," but to observe rules that Standard speakers and writers consciously and unconsciously follow to produce Standard sentences. We will look at a "corpus" of Standard sentences and, using our own internal knowledge of the dialect and whatever other examples we can find or produce, we will make explicit a few of the most basic rules of modern Standard English.

A lot of the course involves learning terms for things you already know, much as a course in physiology might involve learning the terms for bodily processes you experience more or less without thinking, and analyzing these processes in detail. Language is as natural as breathing or walking. All developmentally-normal humans acquire a native language in early childhood, spontaneously. They do not have to be taught.

Children don't spontaneously produce any given language, of course; English is not innate and neither is any other

language. When children hear people speaking a specific language (or sometimes two or three; or when deaf children see signers), they acquire that language without much conscious thought or effort.

This basic human fact is still something of a mystery. The dominant view, represented by linguist Noam Chomsky, continues to be that there is a special cognitive function in the brain devoted to language; but some critics of Chomsky (like Daniel and Caleb Everett) see language as an application of more general cognitive functions to the problem of communication.

Whatever the answer to that mystery, the common presence of language in all of us is one of the great measures of equality among all human beings. We all share language, and individual differences in linguistic gift are minor in the big picture. Moreover, whatever your linguistic gifts, everybody finds it very difficult to learn a new language after childhood. All of us are utterly lost in almost all the world's languages. This is another mystery: why does a universal ability to acquire language in childhood give way to great difficulty in learning new languages, shortly after childhood?

Spoken language precedes written language, both historically and developmentally in individuals' lives. Spoken language is organic; written language is a technology that must be consciously learned. Only some writing systems attempt to represent sounds. Written language is not more correct or authoritative than spoken

language; it's just different. This is a profound difference and often the cause of great confusion. We want to see the written language as the most official version of a language, and for some legal and technical purposes it is. But ultimately a word is not pronounced a certain way because it is spelled a certain way, and a word does not mean something because a dictionary authorizes that meaning. Both spelling and dictionaries (key elements of written language) follow and represent usages that originate in spoken language - originate there both historically (all languages have a pre-literate era and some are still in it), and in a speaker's life (all children speak before they learn to write).

Unit 1: Rules, Prescription, Description, Corpus Linguistics

Languages are not mutually intelligible - but that definition is something of a tautology. If two ways of speaking/writing are not mutually intelligible, we call them different languages. If two ways of speaking/writing are mutually intelligible, but strike their speakers as significantly different in sound, syntax, or vocabulary, we call them different dialects of the same language.

Dialects often characterize regional or ethnic communities. Like languages themselves, dialects can be either acquired (early) or consciously learned (later in life). National languages have standard written and spoken dialects, which can be acquired or learned like other dialects, but have more prestige. Standard dialects are the ones taught in schools.

Non-standard dialects are not decayed, ignorant, or incorrect forms of standard dialects. They are natural to language and can have their own great literary traditions (African-American English, Irish English, Scots English).

But at the same time, standard dialects really are dialects, too; they are not just constructs designed to oppress people. Some speakers acquire standard dialects from infancy, and others speak them with near-native fluency, unselfconsciously.

Native and near-native speakers know the rules of their dialect and language without thinking. Most of our work in *Structure of Modern English* involves bringing into consciousness what we unconsciously know about the dialect “Standard English.”

Rules that we follow unconsciously are different from rules that must be learned. As a kid I learned not to “split an infinitive,” thus not to say “to boldly go where no man has gone before.”

But people do say that. No-one, unless suffering from aphasia, would never say “before go no man boldly where has to gone.”

Rules, then, are of two kinds: those generated by describing a dialect, and those generated by prescribing what the dialect should consist of. These rules, as Steven Pinker observed, are analogous to the rules of physics and the rules of the road. Your car cannot fly. It can turn right on red without stopping. But both are against the rules.

You don’t have to think about stopping your car from flying or from burrowing toward the center of the earth. Physics prevents it; we can describe the laws of physics that govern those motions of the car, but we can’t repeal or amend them.

But we can prescribe that people drive on the right, stop at certain signs, turn (or not) when traffic lights are certain colors; and we can do so quite arbitrarily, because traffic

violations are entirely within the laws of physics. It takes a lot of enforcement to get prescriptive rules to work. You have to literally write tickets, sometimes - and a teacher's grammar corrections, enforced by grading, are a kind of linguistic traffic ticket.

We will sometimes note prescriptive rules this semester, but our main focus is on description. Linguists often describe languages by drawing their data from a "corpus" or body of language recorded in some format. This helps simplify and focus the descriptive effort.

Our corpus will be the short story "Big Two-Hearted River" (1925) by Ernest Hemingway – which, despite being published almost a century ago, shows a form of English that has changed very little since (possibly because Hemingway has become such a model for English prose style). The sentences in "Big Two-Hearted River" tend to be declarative (they just state facts and actions). They tend to be in the past tense, because it's a literary story. There is little or no direct dialogue, so they don't try to represent how characters speak; they are just a narrator telling you information.

Unit 2: Word Classes

Words are the basic units of language. They blend together in speech but we separate them in writing because we mix and match them by predictable rules to form sentences, so we conceptualize them as separate units.

Nouns (N) mean the classic “person, place, or thing,” or more abstract concepts. They function as objects, subjects, complements, and modifiers; they form the core of noun phrases, which also serve as objects, subjects, complements, and modifiers. Nouns inflect for number (singular/plural) and possessive. “The grey **cat** caught the white **bird**.”

In English, nouns can be “proper” - specific, named individuals - or “common” - generic, or at least unnamed persons, places, and things. Nouns can be singular or plural (representing one thing, or several of a thing). Usually in written English the plural is made by adding some form of “s” to the singular, but there are many exceptions (the plural of “trout” is “trout”). Nouns can also be possessive, also formed by adding “s” but in writing, with an added apostrophe: “the trout’s fins.”

Pronouns (PRO), classically, “stand for” nouns. Their function is similar to that of nouns, though they can serve as determiners, as in the NP “their function.” Many pronouns inflect for number, possessive, and object case. Pronouns are of several types, including “personal

pronouns" like "I, you, he, she, it, we, they"; we will return to pronouns in more detail later on (Unit 8).

Verbs (V and variations) convey action or states of being. They function as the core of sentence predicates, and of verb phrases in predicates. They have a wide range of uses as modifiers and adverbials, and even as nominals (noun-like phrases). Verbs have a bare form, and inflect for third-person singular, past, -ed participle, and -ing participle ("write, writes, wrote, written, writing"). All English verbs have a regular -ing participle, and most verbs (including all newly-added verbs) have a regular -ed participle; but many irregular verbs have odd -ed participle forms like "been," "sung," and "drawn." "The grey cat **caught** the white bird."

Sometimes, a two-word unit functions as a single verb, called a "phrasal verb."

The match **went out**.

"Go out" is a verb that means more than the sum of its parts (the match is neither gone nor "out" in a spatial sense). Phrasal verbs are idiomatic and can be very hard for language learners. But they have the same five forms as single-word verbs: "go out, goes out, went out, gone out, going out."

Some other phrasal verbs from our Hemingway corpus:

Nick **lay down** again under the blanket.

He **curled up** under the blanket.

Nick **got out** a bottle of tomato catchup

Adjectives (ADJ) tell something about nouns or nominals. They function as modifiers and complements; also sometimes as nominals. Adjectives inflect for degree (positive, comparative, superlative), though the longer the adjective, the more likely it is to indicate degree by a premodifier ("more, most"). "The **grey** cat caught the **white** bird."

Adverbs (ADV) tell something about entire sentences. They function as adverbials, and sometimes as modifiers in verb phrases. Adverbs can sometimes inflect for comparative and superlative, but more often need a modifier ("more, most, less, least") to show degree. Frequently, adverbs end in "-ly"; I just used one. According to talkenglish.com, the seven most common English adverbs are "not, also, very, often, however, too, usually"; such lists abound, but no list can exhaust all English adverbs.

Prepositions (P) introduce additional phrases to the rest of the sentence. Prepositions do not inflect. The nine most common prepositions in English, according to englishclub.com, are "of, in, to, for, with, on, at, from, by"; you can find lists of prepositions on lots of websites - they are substantial lists, but finite.

Conjunctions (C) link and/or introduce clauses. The linking or coordinating conjunctions are very common: typically "and, but, or." Subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate clauses: "because" and "although"

are the most common, but many others are used (some, like “as” and “since,” doubling as prepositions).

Determiners (D or Det) introduce noun phrases. Simple determiners (by far the most common are “a, an, the”) do not inflect; more elaborate ones (“this/these”) inflect for number.

Numerals (NUM) share features of determiners, adjectives, and sometimes nouns too, but fall into their own specialized class of word. Numerals inflect for cardinal and ordinal (“one, two/first, second”).

A given word that you look up in the dictionary may prove to belong to several different word classes, depending on how it's used. Words are not strictly assigned, each one to a fixed class.

Think of the word “down.” You might first think of it as an adverb: “I fell down.” But it can be a preposition (“down the street”) and an adjective, especially as a complement (“I feel down”). And of course a verb (you can “down” an airplane or a bird), and it can be a noun (as in “fourth down” in football, apart even from “down” in the sense of light feathers, which seems a different word). It's not that “down” is essentially any class of word, but that when used in various ways, it belongs to all of those classes.

Nouns, verbs, adjectives are open word classes. We add new ones all the time. It's harder to add basic adverbs, but

quite possible to enlist existing words as adverbs (usually by adding "-ly").

The other classes are closed. It is very difficult to introduce a new pronoun, preposition, conjunction, or determiner. Numerals are, logically speaking, an infinite class, but they are highly formulaic; you can't just invent a new number between "twelve" and "thirteen."

These are the large classes of words; we may encounter some very small and specialized classes of words that don't really fit any of them, but we will make a note of their oddity when we get to them.

Unit 3: Cores and Adverbials

Sentences are units which feel complete to a listener or reader fluent in a given language. In writing they conventionally begin with a capital letter and end with a period; in speech they can't be as formally marked, and are often much messier. Yet in both speech and writing, we traditionally define a sentence as "a complete thought" - we aren't left waiting for some other element to fill it out.

Elements of sentences that contain verbs are called clauses. Complete sentences (independent clauses) need verbs, but not all constructions with verbs are complete sentences: "incomplete thoughts" that contain verbs are called "dependent" or "subordinate" clauses.

Sentences can be analyzed into cores ... and everything else. Often we call those "everything else" units "adverbials." The core of a sentence consists of its subject, its verb, and (if present) objects and complements.

Here is complete sentence from our corpus:

He smoothed the uprooted earth.

We call this a "transitive" sentence, and we will get to transitive sentences soon; basically, in a transitive sentence a subject (usually a noun, pronoun, or some sort of "nominal"; here, "He") does something (by means of a

verb; here "smoothed") to a direct object (usually some other sort of nominal; here, "the uprooted earth"). Let's label our sentence with word classes above and grammatical units below:

PRO	V	DET	-ed PART	N
<u>He</u>	<u>smoothed</u>	<u>the</u>	<u>uprooted</u>	<u>earth.</u>
SUBJ	TV	DO		

(I.e. pronoun, verb, determiner, -ed participle, noun on top; subject, transitive verb, direct object below. You will get used to these abbreviations.)

The core of the sentence can be reduced to "he smoothed earth." Sentences which are far more complex can also be reduced to cores just as simple:

While he watched the coffee on the fire, he drank the juice syrup of the apricots, carefully at first to keep from spilling, then meditatively, sucking the apricots down.

What is the core here? Start by asking what part of the sentence could stand alone as a smaller, independent sentence, and still feel complete. "While he watched the coffee on the fire" can't; we want to know what's happening while he watches. "Carefully at first to keep from spilling" is not complete, nor "then meditatively," nor "sucking the apricots down" - in each case we learn not what happened but what was happening while the main action was taking place. We call such items "adverbials."

What was centrally taking place? The "independent clause" of the sentence is "He drank the juice syrup of the apricots," which "feels" complete - we don't seem to need any other items to round out the thought; it could stand on its own. And we can take that core and analyze it as we did the one about smoothing the earth:

PRO	V	DET	N	N	P	DET	N
<u>he</u>	<u>drank</u>	<u>the</u>	<u>juice</u>	<u>syrup</u>	<u>of</u>	<u>the</u>	<u>apricots</u>
SUBJ	TV	DO					

Or, most essentially, "he drank syrup": the subject does something to the direct object.

We will defer discussion of transitive constructions till we look at two simpler types of non-transitive construction first, in the next unit.

As we've seen, many sentences consist of much more than their cores. There are several ways of making a sentence longer: later we will discuss coordinated (or "compound") sentences (several cores strung together) and subordinate clauses (clauses embedded within cores and other parts of sentences).

One very common way of elaborating a sentence (making it longer and more meaningful) is to surround a core with *adverbial* elements (ADV).

Here's a sentence with a transitive core and a simple adverbial:

<u>He</u>	<u>took</u>	<u>a full spoonful</u>	<u>from the plate.</u>
SUBJ	TV	DO	ADV

Note that the core of the sentence ("He took a full spoonful") is complete on its own. Take away the adverbial, and the sentence still parses as complete. But the adverbial ("from the plate") says something more about the action or meaning of the sentence.

Adverbials are not the same thing as adverbs. Adverbials can be adverbs, but not all adverbs are adverbial, and not all adverbials are adverbs. Replace "from the plate" with "eagerly" and you get an adverb which is also an adverbial. But "from the plate" is a prepositional phrase (more on them later); it is adverbial but contain no adverbs.

Adverbials can move around their sentences. They may "sound" better or worse at different points in a sentence, or convey different "shades" of meaning; but they are free to move (unlike, say, a subject and a direct object, which are locked into their sequence). So we could say:

From the plate, he took a full spoonful.

He, from the plate, took a full spoonful.

Unit 4: Intransitives and Subject-Complements

Intransitive clauses obey the rule S-IV (Subject-Intransitive Verb). A subject acts, and that action is expressed in a verb. The subject doesn't act on anything else or do anything to anything; the subject just does something.

<u>Nick</u>	<u>laughed.</u>
SUBJ	IV

<u>Nick</u>	<u>stood up.</u>
SUBJ	IV

<u>The fire</u>	<u>flared up.</u>
SUBJ	IV

<u>The beans and spaghetti</u>	<u>warmed.</u>
SUBJ	IV

<u>The match</u>	<u>went out.</u>
SUBJ	IV

Subject-complement clauses obey the rule S-LV-SC (Subject-Linking Verb-Subject Complement). A subject is, or becomes, some thing or other. The being or becoming is conveyed by a linking verb – usually, but not always, a form of the verb “be.” You can think of the linking verb as an equal sign: The coffee = bitter.

<u>The coffee</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>bitter.</u>
SUBJ	LV	SC

<u>The grasshopper</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>black.</u>
SUBJ	LV	SC

<u>Nick</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>hungry.</u>
SUBJ	LV	SC

<u>He</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>hungrier.</u>
SUBJ	LV	SC

<u>The river</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>there.</u>
SUBJ	LV	SC

Note that subject complements are often (though not nearly always) adjectives: the subject is equated to some quality expressed by the adjective (black, bitter, hungry).

Unit 5: Transitives; Active & Passive

Hop deserved that.
SUBJ TV DO

He had played polo.
SUBJ TV DO

It broke up the trip.
SUBJ TV DO

He smoothed the uprooted earth.
SUBJ TV DO

In transitive clauses, as we've already seen briefly, the subject exerts some sort of action on a direct object. Transitive clauses obey the rule S-TV-DO (Subject-Intransitive Verb).

Transitive clauses have two forms, active and passive - a feature that distinguishes transitives absolutely from non-transitive clauses (intransitives and subject-complements). Here is an actual passive sentence from our corpus.

The stone was split by the fire.

Imagine an "original" active (transitive) sentence:

<u>The fire</u>	<u>split</u>	<u>the stone.</u>
S	TV	DO

A passive transformation produces the sentence that Hemingway actually wrote. The rule is Subject - Passive Verb - Agent. The direct object of the "original" sentence (the stone) becomes the subject of the passive sentence. The subject of the original sentence (the fire) becomes the "agent" of the passive sentence.

The passive verb phrase consists of the "be" auxiliary verb (more on auxiliaries later) plus the -ed participle. The typical agent phrase begins with the preposition "by."

<u>The stone</u>	<u>was split</u>	<u>by the fire.</u>
SUBJ	PV	A

The stone is acted upon, either way; nothing in the meaning changes.

You can always test an active sentence to see if it's transitive by imagining a passive version. "That was deserved by Hop; Polo had been played by him; The trip was broken up by it; The uprooted earth was smoothed by him." Often these passive versions sound terrible, but they are intelligible and grammatical.

By contrast you cannot make a non-transitive sentence passive: "Nick stood up." "The coffee was bitter." There is no object in either case to turn into a new subject.

Unit 6: Coordination and compounds

Coordinating conjunctions like "and, but, or" put the elements that they connect on an equal level. The simplest, "and," is like a plus sign; the others perform other operations on the elements they connect ("but" and "or," like "and," are used as "logical operators" in programming and mathematics).

Coordinating conjunctions can work at various levels of a sentence. They can connect whole clauses

the chafing crushed it and he smelled it
he would get a yacht and they would all cruise

or they can connect individual words

the beans and spaghetti were still too hot
the grass was wet and cold
its surface pushing and swelling

or phrases

Nick put the frying pan and a can of spaghetti on the grill

Coordinated phrases can be linked together in long strings, and you can coordinate coordinations (a type of "recursion"):

yellow and black or red and black wings

Once you snap two units together with a coordinating conjunction, you get one larger unit that functions as a single unit in the same way that its smaller elements did:

the spaghetti warmed
 the beans warmed
 the spaghetti and beans warmed

Theoretically, sentences can go on forever if they're spliced together with "and," but usually prose style and the readers' patience works against this. If you forget the "and" you have what stylists call a "run-on sentence." Thus the following sentence is good usage:

He was very hungry and he wanted to make his camp before he cooked.

But it is considered bad usage to write this:

He was very hungry, he wanted to make his camp before he cooked.

This is very much a "rule of the road." Note that the difference is barely noticeable, if at all, in spoken English, where a listener would parse the two "spliced" clauses as independent sentences anyway. And in writing, if you use a semi-colon at the "splice" instead of a comma, you're good to go:

He was very hungry; he wanted to make his camp before he cooked.

Unit 7: Noun Phrases, Determiners

Phrases are groups of words locked together that carry out a role in syntax. The first type of phrase we'll look at is the Noun Phrase (NP), the most basic and common form of what are called "nominals," units that serve as subjects, objects, complements, and other functions.

Noun phrases are constructed on the rule
NP -> determiner - premodifier - head - postmodifier

which is almost tautological. Modifiers tell more about the head of a NP, changing ("modifying") its meaning. If they go before the head they're pre- and if after they are post-, by definition.

But only the head of a NP is obligatory. Hemingway uses quite a few noun phrases that consist of bare nouns: Here are some common kinds of nominals, shown by examples from our Hemingway corpus.

Nick
Texas
Hopkins

polo
pine
coffee
cans
trout

nouns preceded by a determiner

The basic ***determiners*** in English are "a" and "the," sometimes called the "indefinite article" (a) and the "definite article" (the). When the determiner is indefinite, the following noun is just a generic or newly-encountered thing. When the determiner is definite, it's a specific item that has been introduced to the reader/listener before.

the flame

the boil

the beans

a mist

a mosquito

a kingfisher

Dependent possessive pronoun forms (see Unit 8)
like "his" and "their" can be determiners.

his camera

his legs

their positions

So can ***numerals*** ("two," "four," "two hundred") and the word "no" (which is sometimes a kind of anti-article or anti-numeral). "Some" is frequently used as a plural indefinite article or indeterminate numeral.

two roots

four slices

two hundred yards

no town

no underbrush

some chunks

Demonstrative determiners show a relative location of the head - whether it's here or there - and they can inflect for number:

this extension

[that extension

these extensions

those extensions]

Determiners must go first in their noun phrase, if they occur (they are optional). They are typically alone, at least in our corpus.

Unit 8: Pronouns

Pronouns substitute for previously introduced nouns, noun phrases, or other nominals (their "antecedents").

Pronouns constantly shift in meaning (some linguists call them "shifters"). If I talk to you, I am Tim and you are you; but if you talk to me, "I" is you and "you" is Tim.

personal pronouns

The most elaborate of the pronouns stand for people, and have five inflectional forms or "cases": subject, object, dependent possessive, independent possessive, and reflexive. They also inflect for number (singular or plural):

first person

singular: I, me, my, mine, myself

plural: we, us, our, ours, ourselves

second person

you, you, your, yours, yourself (*singular*) / yourselves (*plural*)

third person

masculine singular: he, him, his, his, himself

feminine singular: she, her, her, hers, herself

neuter singular: it, it, its, its, itself

plural: they, them, their, theirs, themselves

Dependent possessives are typically determiners and (as their name suggests) must accompany a following noun or NP or other nominal.

Independent possessives occur on their own, often as subject-complements:

This tent is mine.

That coffee is hers.

Except in the reflexive, English doesn't have separate singular and plural second-person pronouns. It used to have a singular, which was also used to social inferiors and to equals that you knew well - and in prayers, where it persists in some dialects:

thou, thee, thy, thine, thyself

indefinite pronouns

These are like personal pronouns (sometimes appearing, as we've seen, as determiners), but don't have as elaborate inflections, and as their name suggests, they don't refer to specific people:

anybody, everybody, nobody, all, few, some

demonstrative pronouns

These we have seen as determiners, but they often stand alone for previously-introduced things. Hemingway much more often uses demonstratives (this, that, these, those) as stand-alone pronouns than as determiners. Here are some uses of demonstrative pronouns in context from our corpus:

This was good

This was different

That was a long time ago

That was on the Black River

Hop deserved that

These were just ordinary hoppers

As you see, demonstrative pronouns can serve as subjects or objects, in many ways like personal pronouns.

relative "that" and wh- words (which, who, what, whoever, whatever, etc.)

are sometimes called pronouns, but we will simply call relative "that" a "relativizer" and the others (which have more elaborate uses) "wh- words"; more on those below.

Unit 9: Adjectives, Attributive Nouns, and Numerals as Premodifiers

Another common type of English nominal involves nouns preceded by modifiers (which are in turn often preceded by determiners).

adjectives as premodifiers

hard work
 good places
 ordinary hoppers
 the little bubbles
 a solid shadow
 two big chips
 his woolen sock
 leathery sweet fern

Remember our rule through this part of the NP: Noun Phrase -> determiner + premodifier + head noun. These three elements really don't like to be out of sequence; if we try writing them that way, we have to add an asterisk before to show that such constructions don't occur in English:

- * little bubbles the
- * the bubbles little
- * chips big two
- * sock woolen his

The classic role of adjectives in English is to premodify nouns, though adjectives do other things too (among them, as we've seen, serving as subject-complements). But the most common premodifiers of nouns, in English, are other nouns. When nouns premodify other nouns, they are called "attributive" nouns.

How to tell an adjective from a noun? Syntactically there may not be much of a difference, but morphologically (in terms of the internal structure of words) there is an important difference that affects how we express ourselves in standard English.

Adjectives can be inflected for degree: the three degrees are positive, comparative, and superlative.

hard, harder, hardest
big, bigger, biggest
solid, solidier, solidest
little, littler, littlest

Those are regular degree inflections, but a few adjectives have irregular inflections:

good, better, best

When an adjective is longer than a syllable or two, it inflects using the quantitative premodifiers "more" and "most" (in which you can see the classic adjective endings).

ordinary, more ordinary, most ordinary
leathery, more leathery, most leathery

Sometimes we see adjectives formed from nouns by adding the inflection "-y" like "leathery," or "-ly" (and there are others). These seem to work just like other adjectives, but show that adjectives are an "open" class of words; you can invent new ones based on nouns:

the pebbly bottom

nouns as premodifiers

a canvas blanket
a ham sandwich
the shoulder straps

Nouns don't inflect for comparative or superlative.

canvas, * canvaser, * canvasest
ham, * hammer, * hammest
shoulder, * more shoulder, * most shoulder

Note that when a noun premodifies another noun (we call this the attributive use of a noun), reversing the words actually reverses the meaning, sometimes making it nonsense. This is because the syntactic rule premodifier + head noun stays in effect. The second noun is the one

we're thinking of, and the first noun is the type of item it is. So

canvas blanket

is a blanket made of canvas, but

blanket canvas

is the kind of canvas people use for making blankets.

ham sandwich

is a sandwich with ham in it, but

sandwich ham

is the kind of ham you put in sandwiches. And

* straps shoulder

doesn't seem to mean anything at all.

Nouns and adjectives can be stacked as premodifiers, often by using entire noun phrases as premodifying nouns.

the brown forest floor

the Mansion House hotel

the pine needle floor

the sweet fern swale

his .22 caliber Colt automatic

"Brown" is an Adj premodifying the (N+N) NP "forest floor."

"Mansion House" is a (N + N) NP that premodifies "hotel."

"Pine needle" is a (N + N) NP that premodifies "floor."

"Sweet fern" is an (Adj + N) NP that premodifies "swale."

".22 caliber" works like a (numeral + N) NP that premodifies the NP "Colt automatic"

"Sweet fern" is in fact the common name of a plant, and although Hemingway prints it as two words, it is on its way to becoming a single compound word like:

cheesecloth

grasshoppers

numerals as premodifiers

Cardinal numerals (the plain counting words) are sometimes determiners, but if preceded by a determiner, can be premodifiers. Numerals don't inflect for degree.

the one street

the thirteen saloons

Ordinal numerals show the order an item appears in. They are a common premodifier, also not inflected for degree.

the second plateful

Unit 10: Prepositional Phrases as Postmodifiers

Prepositional phrases have many uses (they are common adverbials, as we'll see shortly), but one main use of PPs is as postmodifiers in NPs.

the edge of the meadow
 the slant of the canvas
 the foot of a bluff
 a piece of high ground
 the pull of the heavy pack
 the little stretch of meadow
 a bright slab of pine
 the log spires of the bridge
 some sprigs of the leathery sweet fern
 the north shore of Lake Superior
 the little stretch of meadow alongside the stream
 the cinders beside the railroad track

millions of dollars
 one of the stumps
 one of the big islands of pine
 the trunk of one of the pine trees

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a nominal, often a NP (the "complement" of the preposition).

of the meadow

P NP

of a bluff
P NP

of pine
P N

of the big islands of pine
P NP

In most of the examples shown above, the preposition is "of" - Ernest Hemingway really liked the preposition "of." But once you see the pattern, you can think of lots of other prepositions that fit:

[the house] at Pooh Corner
[all the stars] in the sky
[the shop] around the corner
[a cardboard box] under an overpass
[the path] into the woods
[a ship] without a sail

Prepositional phrases have a strict order rule (P + NP) implicit in the term "preposition." Some languages have "postpositions," but they are very rare in English. So, impossible phrases might include:

- * a bluff of
- * the big islands of pine of

- * the rainbow over
- * a sail without

The most common postposition in English is "ago":

ten years ago

- * ago ten years

Though the preposition comes before its complement, prepositional phrases almost always come after the nominals they modify, following the rule Head NP + PP.

- * of the canvas the slant
- * of meadow the little stretch
- * of dollars millions

A few examples above have numerals as heads, followed by "of" PPs. These are called partitive phrases. They are not much different from other NPs, but they don't (strictly speaking) have noun heads, so they are a special kind of nominal.

millions of dollars
one of the stumps

Prepositional phrases can nest inside one another. Examples from Hemingway include

one of the big islands of pine

the trunk of one of the pine trees

Here, the postmodifying prepositional phrases have NP complements which themselves include postmodifying prepositional phrases. This kind of "recursion" can go on for a while, with no logical limit - just the practical limit that the reader's brain will get tired of parsing.

adverbials as opposed to modifiers

Some sentence elements, like prepositional phrases, can serve sometimes as adverbials (incidental to the sentence core, capable of moving) but also sometimes as modifiers (locked inside a larger element of the sentence). The following example contains two prepositional phrases: "of apricots" and "into a tin cup". One is part of a core element; the other is an adverbial.

He	emptied	the can of apricots	into a tin cup.
S	TV	DO	ADV

Note how we can easily move the adverbial:

Into a tin cup, he emptied the can of apricots.

He, into a tin cup, emptied the can of apricots.

He emptied, into a tin cup, the can of apricots.

But we can't move the phrase "of apricots."

* Of apricots, he emptied the can into a tin cup.

- * He, of apricots, emptied the can into a tin cup.
- * He emptied, of apricots, the can into a tin cup.

And the following is a good sentence, but the meaning has changed:

He emptied the can into a tin cup of apricots.

In the new sentence, the can doesn't hold apricots anymore, and the phrase "of apricots" now modifies "a tin cup"; they're already in the cup when the pouring (of something else) begins.

The distinction between postmodifiers and adverbials is at the center of some famous ambiguities. Groucho Marx once said, in *Animal Crackers*:

Last night I shot an elephant in my pajamas.
What he was doing in my pajamas, I'll never know.

If "in my pajamas" in the first sentence is an adverbial, it's an unusual story, but all in a night's work for an African Explorer. If we move the adverbial around, Captain Spaulding is more clearly wearing the pajamas:

In my pajamas, last night, I shot an elephant.
Last night, in my pajamas, I shot an elephant.

But if "in my pajamas" postmodifies "elephant," the Captain gets to deliver the punchline.

Unit 11: Verb-form Modifiers: Participials and Infinitives

verb forms as premodifiers

Both -ed and -ing participles are frequently used as premodifiers in noun phrases. (Remember that the "-ed" participle may often not end in the letters "ed.")

burnt timber

fried bananas

log-driven piles

the uprooted earth

a high, fire-scarred hill

the frying pan

a folding canvas bucket

two projecting roots

Participles look like adjectives, but they don't inflect like adjectives. You can't directly inflect them

* frieder

* burnttest

* uprooteder

and though you can sometimes use "more" and "most," sometimes hyphenating in writing to show that the modifier is a unit:

the more projecting root
 the most-burnt timber
 the more-fried bananas

sometimes you can't even do that (with some uses of participles):

* the more-frying pan

Here it is because the pan itself is not fried; it is used *for frying* and that usage doesn't have comparative or superlative senses.

participial and infinitive phrases as postmodifiers

a hillside covered with stumps
 the clear, brown water, colored from the pebbly bottom
 the tent unpacked
 the trout rising
 a mist rising
 the current unresisting
 one of the big islands of pine standing out

Just as -ed and -ing participles can be premodifiers in NPs, they can also serve as postmodifiers.

Another kind of verb form is a frequent postmodifier, though much rarer as a premodifier. "To" + the bare form

of a verb is called the "infinitive" in English and has many uses, postmodifying being one.

a good place to camp

In English we can say

a good camping place

but not

* a good place camping

* a good to-camp place

Though occasionally infinitives show up as premodifiers, as anyone who has ordered a to-go meal knows.

Unit 12: Verb Tense

Verb tense primarily shows the relationship of action to time, with the present moment as vantage point. Verb tenses in different languages may indicate past, present, and future.

English verbs, as we have noted, inflect for just two tenses: present and past. This doesn't mean that we can't discuss the future, just that we don't have a special verb form to discuss it with.

present tense

If "Big Two-Hearted River" were written in the present tense, its verbs would be in the present tense, inflecting for third-person singular where appropriate:

The coffee **boils**
 Hopkins **speaks**
 Nick **drinks** the coffee
 He **starts** a fire
 He **is** sleepy
 His hands **smell** good

But notice an odd thing about English (which we will come back to when discussing the progressive aspect of verbs). The basic present tense, in what we call the "simple aspect," is not generally used when we are talking about something that is taking place right now.

If someone calls you while the coffee is boiling and asks "what's that noise?" you reply "The coffee is boiling" - the progressive aspect, which we will cover in the next unit. You do not say "The coffee boils." Or a few minutes later, if they ask "what are you up to?" you do not answer "I drink coffee." You say "I'm drinking coffee" - again, the progressive aspect.

Simple-aspect present tense is used most often in English for habitual activity. What do you do when you get up every morning? You boil coffee. What next? You drink coffee. If someone calls me right now, *I am revising* this unit of the manual; if someone asks me what I usually do with my semester breaks, I say *I revise* my Structure Manual.

Present tense can also be used for narratives about the past: the so-called "historical present." Historians use this kind of narration to put us directly into the action; fiction writers sometimes do this, too.

In June 1815, Napoleon marches into Belgium. He hopes to divide the British and Prussian armies and defeat them in detail. On the morning of 18 June, his valet boils coffee. Napoleon wishes he were somewhere else

etc.

past tense

Past tense is simpler than present, because a single inflectional form serves for all persons and numbers.

The coffee **boiled**

Hopkins **spoke**

Nick **drank** the coffee

He **started** a fire

He **was** sleepy

His hands **smelled** good

By contrast to present tense, past tense more straightforwardly expresses its relation to time. We do use the simple-aspect past to talk about what we did yesterday or last year.

future action

English verbs have no future tense. This does not mean that we are locked into perpetual contemplation of the present and past. We express future action in various ways that don't involve verb inflection.

Let's say a math test is scheduled for Friday, four days in the future. You can express this event with a modal verb (which we will get to a couple units from now):

I will take the math test

or a slightly more formal and emphatic modal verb

I shall take the math test

or with the progressive aspect and an adverbial of time

I'm taking the math test Friday

or with the simple present and an adverbial of time

I take the math test Friday

or with the phrasal auxiliary verb "be going to"

I'm going to take the math test

"Big Two-Hearted River" doesn't indicate much future action, but there is one instance of the auxiliary "be going to" - and as elsewhere, since the whole story is in the past, the initial verb in the phrase is in the past tense. It also uses a negator:

He was not going to spoil it all.

Unit 13: Aspect and Auxiliaries

auxiliary verbs

Auxiliaries (AUX) are a very small closed class of verbs that are used in verb phrases (VP) to "help" the main verb; they always precede that main verb. The most common auxiliaries (be, have, do) can also be main verbs in their own right; another type of auxiliary, the modal verb (next unit) has no independent uses.

So far we've looked at verbs in simple aspect, which does not use auxiliaries. Verb phrases in the two other aspects, perfect and progressive, are formed using auxiliaries. (We have already seen auxiliaries at work in the passive voice, where English uses the auxiliary "be" plus the -ed participle.)

perfect aspect

He **had walked** along the road.

The trees **had grown** tall.

He **had made** his camp.

He **had played** polo.

It **had been** a hard trip.

The perfect aspect is used to refer to things that are completed. It can be present or past tense; it always refers to things that are or were *already* completed relative to the

moment you're talking about. The perfect aspect follows the rule

Auxiliary verb "have" + -ed participle (Of the main verb)

Since the whole of "Big Two-Hearted River" is being told in the past, the auxiliary verb in the examples above is in the past tense: "had." If the story were being told in the present tense, the auxiliary might be in the present tense:

He **has walked** along the road.

The trees **have grown** tall.

It **has been** a hard trip.

The main verb in a perfect-aspect verb phrase always comes last and is always the -ed participle. The -ed participle does not inflect for tense. It stays what it is; one of its functions is to indicate the perfect aspect.

A common item in verb phrases is a negative word that inverts the meaning of the sentence. These words ("not," "never," etc.) are technically adverbs but have such a narrow function that they might be seen as a special word class, sometimes called "negators."

He **had not eaten** since a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich in the station restaurant at St. Ignace.

He **had never enjoyed** fried bananas.

He **had not been** unhappy all day.

progressive aspect

The trout **were rising**.

His mind **was starting** to work.

The rule for the progressive aspect is

Auxiliary verb "be" + -ing participle (of the main verb)

As with the perfect aspect, the auxiliary verb indicates the tense of the phrase (here, past). The -ing participle does not inflect for tense; it is always the same, here indicating the progressive aspect.

We have already seen how the progressive aspect is used to convey what you are doing at the present moment; in the past tense, it conveys what you were doing at a given past moment. The progressive is concerned with actions that continue over some length of time and are still going on at the time you talk about them (or again, were going on at some time in the past, or will be going on during some span of time in the future).

Negators can be used in the progressive aspect:

The trout **were not rising**.

Unlike tense, which must be either present or past, aspect can be both perfect and progressive in the same verb phrase.

Here's a made-up example:

Nick **had been catching** trout.

The rule is that the perfect auxiliary "have" must come first (thus showing the tense of the phrase), followed by the -ed participle of the progressive auxiliary "be" - that is, "been" - followed by the -ing participle of the main verb. It doesn't work the other way:

Nick **was having caught** trout.

Unit 14: Modal Verbs

Modal verbs (MOD) are special auxiliaries. They do not have regular inflections; strictly speaking they have only one form. Modals always come first in a verb phrase (the rule is VP -> Modal + Auxiliaries + Main, though of course modals and auxiliaries are optional), and in Standard English only one modal is allowed per VP. As the first verb in their phrase, modals do show tense, but not by inflection; instead, one modal is generally thought of as the past form that corresponds to a present-tense modal; but each modal continues to have other uses (including future uses). Some common pairs of modal verbs (present/past) include:

will/would

can/could

shall/should

may/might

must (which doesn't seem to have a corresponding past modal)

Since "Big Two-Hearted River" is a story about the past, the modal verbs we find there tend to be past-tense forms:

He **could remember** an argument.

He **would get** a yacht and they **would all cruise** along the north shore of Lake Superior.

It **should be** straight Hopkins all the way.

Those examples are all simple aspect, using the bare form of the main verb; but here is one in the perfect aspect: the perfect auxiliary "have" is in its bare form, followed by the -ed participle of the main verb:

He **could have made** camp hours before.

And we can construct a made-up example with a modal and the progressive aspect (with bare form "be" and -ing participle of the main verb):

He **should be making** camp now.

Modal verbs are used in English to express uncertainty, probability, obligation, and other matters of opinion. As such, modals are often about an indefinite future, so even the past forms in these sentences are frequently about a future time relative to the present moment in the story.

"He **could** remember an argument" ... but there might be other arguments he couldn't. "He **would** get a yacht and they **would** all cruise" ... if wishes were yachts and he had the time and the money and they were free. "It **should** be straight Hopkins" - this is the coffee, remember - but that's a matter of opinion, that's how Nick likes his coffee. It's a strong suggestion; it doesn't **have to** be straight Hopkins - to use a different, phrasal modal verb. "He **could** have made camp hours before," but he didn't (note the perfect aspect here and how the modal precedes the auxiliary "have.")

Modal verbs can be used with negators:

He **would not let** it steep in the pot at all.

It **could not be** more than a mile.

Unit 15: NICE (Negation, Interrogation, Code, Emphasis)

Auxiliaries and modals in English, particularly the all-purpose "operator" auxiliary "do," are crucial to four common types of expression that go by the acronym NICE: negation, interrogation, code, and emphasis.

Negation

In early modern English, "not" can be used without the auxiliary "do." In *Hamlet*, a messenger says of some sailors:

Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.

The syntax of later modern English (i.e. now) requires the auxiliary "do," as in Hemingway:

Nick **did not see** them at first.

He **did not speak** again.

The examples above are simple aspect. In the perfect and progressive aspects, "do" is not used, as these variations show:

Nick **had not seen** them at first.

He **was not speaking**.

Modal verbs can be used instead of "do" in all aspects - with the bare form of the verb in the simple aspect, and with an auxiliary in perfect and progressive:

Nick **could not see** them.

Nick **should not have spoken**.

Nick **would not be speaking**.

Interrogation

When the main verb is "be," we form simple-aspect English questions by inverting subject and verb.

Nick **was** hungry.

Was Nick hungry?

In early modern English, you could do the same with most main verbs:

See'st thou this sweet sight? (Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Whereas in modern English we must use the "do" auxiliary or a modal to ask this kind of question. Subject and main verb are not inverted, but the auxiliary or modal moves to the front:

Do you **see** this sweet sight?

Can you **see** this sweet sight?

In perfect and progressive aspect questions, the auxiliary moves to the front:

Have you **seen** this sweet sight?

Are you **seeing** this sweet sight?

Code

Auxiliaries can sometimes appear alone when the main verb is clear from the context, as in possible answers to some of the questions above:

Do you **see** this sweet sight?

I do.

Can you **see** this sweet sight?

I can.

Have you **seen** this sweet sight?

I have.

Are you **seeing** this sweet sight?

I am.

Linguists call these reduced sentences "code" expressions because the speaker and listener must share the key to the code (the context) to understand the answers; without that code, they're fairly cryptic.

Emphasis

Let's say somebody doubts your answer to one of these questions we've been posing. You can re-assert the answer by using "do" or a modal:

I don't think you see this sweet sight.

I **do see** this sweet sight!

I **can see** this sweet sight!

Unit 16: Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are the first type of subordinate clause we will look at over the next three units, the other two being adverbial and nominal clauses. "Dependent" subordinate clauses contain verbs, and often subjects and objects or complements as well, but do not stand on their own as complete sentences in the way that "independent" main clauses can. Relative clauses typically appear as postmodifiers in noun phrases.

the far blue hills **that marked the Lake Superior height of land**
 the rope **that served the tent for a ridge-pole**
 this bare space **they had once covered with shadow**
 a pole **he had cut up**

The bolded sections of the noun phrases above are relative clauses. Suppose there are some blue hills. Those hills mark the Lake Superior height of land. We can make a complete sentence:

The far blue hills marked the Lake Superior height of land.

Now suppose we want to use those blue hills as a nominal, as subject or object or complement in a larger sentence; at the same time, we want to convey what we know about them (they mark the Lake Superior height of land) by modifying the hills within their noun phrase.

We can take the entire "predicate" of our original sentence and use it as a postmodifier, introduced by the "relativizer" "that," and make a noun phrase with a subordinate clause (as Hemingway did):

the far blue hills that marked the Lake Superior height of land

Since "the far blue hills" were the subject of our original sentence, we need the relativizer "that."

* The far blue hills marked the Lake Superior height of land were tall.

But if the item being postmodified is the object of the original sentence, "that" becomes optional. Linguists call this the "zero relative."

He had cut up a pole.
the pole he had cut up
[the pole that he had cut up]

How would you parse the other sample NPs? What are their "original sentences?"

the internal structure of relative clauses

in transitive relative clauses preceded by "that," the relativizer "that" takes the place of the subject, and the rest

of the clause looks much like an ordinary transitive sentence.

<u>that</u>	<u>marked</u>	<u>the Lake Superior height of land</u>
S	TV	DO

<u>that</u>	<u>served</u>	<u>the tent</u>	<u>for a ridge-pole</u>
S	TV	DO	ADV

In transitive relative clauses with zero relative, the object is understood (the object is what's being postmodified). The rest of the syntax is, again, straightforward:

<u>[this bare space]</u>	<u>they</u>	<u>had once covered</u>	<u>with shadow</u>
[DO]	S	TV	ADV

<u>[a pole]</u>	<u>he</u>	<u>had cut up</u>
[DO]	S	TV

Hemingway doesn't use them in our corpus, but relative clauses can be intransitive:

<u>the mouse</u>	<u>that</u>	<u>roared</u>
	S	IV

and they can be subject-complement:

<u>goats</u>	<u>that</u>	<u>were</u>	<u>streaked</u>
	S	LV	SC

"That" is the most common English relativizer, and certainly Hemingway's favorite. But other words can serve as relativizers, especially "wh-" words:

the hills **which** marked the shore

this bare space **which** they covered

the man **who** caught fish

the author **who** wrote *The Sun Also Rises*

Unit 17: Adverbial Clauses

We have seen that prepositional phrases are common adverbials, but also noted that some adverbials are subordinate clauses. It's time to look at adverbial clauses in more detail.

Nick's heart tightened **as the trout moved**.

Nick was happy **as he crawled inside the tent**.

For some time **as he walked** Nick had been in sight of one of the big islands of pine standing out above the rolling high ground he was crossing.

It was a long time **since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout**.

At the edge of the meadow, **before he mounted to a piece of high ground to make camp**, Nick looked down the river at the trout rising.

If he looked too steadily they were gone.

He pegged the sides out taut ... **until the rope loops were buried**.

While he waited for the coffee to boil, he opened a small can of apricots.

He watched the glow of the fire **when the night wind blew**.

Like relative (and nominal) clauses, adverbial clauses contain a verb but aren't able to stand on their own as complete sentences. In effect, adverbial clauses have the structure of independent sentences, but they are introduced by subordinating conjunctions.

Often this subordinating conjunction is "as," a favorite of Hemingway's. But others, as we see here, also appear: "since, before, if, until, while, when" and others like "once, so, though."

As with subordinate relative clauses, we have "original sentences" that fit into larger sentences.

he mounted to a piece of high ground to make camp
 he crawled inside the tent
 he walked

Place "as" before any of those intransitive sentences, and you have a subordinate clause that can be used as an adverbial in a larger sentence. The structure of adverbial clauses is often much like that of independent clauses except for the single subordinating conjunction that introduces them.

Note that these adverbial clauses themselves have smaller adverbials inside them (here, prepositional phrases) - an example of recursion.

<u>as</u>	<u>he</u>	<u>mounted</u>	<u>to a piece of high ground</u>	<u>to make camp</u>
C	S	IV	ADV	ADV

<u>as</u>	<u>he</u>	<u>crawled</u>	<u>inside the tent</u>
C	S	IV	ADV

Unit 18: Nominal Clauses

We've seen that words ("Nick") and phrases ("the can of spaghetti") can serve as nominals, and thus as subjects, objects, and complements. So can entire clauses. Take this transitive sentence:

<u>He</u>	<u>knew</u>	<u>the spaghetti was still too hot.</u>
S	TV	DO

The direct object here is a fact that Nick knows. To express that fact, Hemingway embeds an entire sentence, the clause

<u>the spaghetti</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>still</u>	<u>too hot</u>
S	LV	ADV	SC

Here, no subordinating conjunction is necessary, but Hemingway could have used one if he'd wanted:

He knew that the spaghetti was still too hot.

Linguists call these clauses nominal clauses. "That" is a common subordinating conjunction preceding a nominal clause. Note that it's different from the relativizer "that." In a relative clause, "that" takes the place of the subject:

the spaghetti **that was still too hot**

But in a nominal clause, "that" just introduces a clause with its own expressed subject:

He knew **that the spaghetti was still too hot**

Some other examples of nominal clauses from our corpus:

Hopkins said very confidently **that none of them would make fun of his real girl.**

He realized **that the fire must have come the year before.**

Other subordinators frequently introduce nominal clauses, though Hemingway prefers "that." Wh- words are common, sometimes acting like pronouns to take the place of some element of the embedded clause. Here are some examples from outside our corpus:

I know **what you did last summer.**

Whatever you want is fine by me.

That is **how we play the game.**

What you said really hurt my feelings.

Unit 19: Ditransitives & Object-Complements

ditransitive constructions

Ditransitive sentences follow the rule S - TV - Indirect Object (IO) - DO. There aren't any in the first half of "Big Two-Hearted River," and ditransitives are rarer than our three common types (intransitive, transitive, subject-complement). Ditransitive sentences involve verbs of giving; the subject gives the direct object to the indirect object. Hemingway expresses giving on a couple of occasions in our corpus by using a prepositional phrase:

He gave his camera to Bill.

Hopkins gave away his .22 caliber Colt automatic pistol to Nick.

If we wanted to use word order instead of prepositions to express the direction of the giving, we could rewrite the sentences as:

<u>He</u>	<u>gave</u>	<u>Bill</u>	<u>his camera.</u>
S	TV	IO	DO

<u>Hopkins</u>	<u>gave</u>	<u>Nick</u>	<u>his .22 caliber Colt automatic pistol.</u>
S	TV	IO	DO

The word order alone indicates the process of the gift. Invert it and it becomes nonsense:

- * He gave his camera Bill.
- * Hopkins gave his .22 caliber Colt automatic pistol Nick.

Usually the meaning, not the syntax, makes such inversions impossible. But you can think of sentences where IO and DO can change places and produce sentences with distinct meaning depending solely on word order:

Washington sent Lafayette the battalion.
Washington sent the battalion Lafayette.

object-complement constructions

Rarer still is the type of sentence that expresses, via word order, the making of one thing into another - often used for appointment, naming, or physical (or metaphorical) shaping. The rule here is S - TV - DO - OC, where OC is the "object complement," the item or quality (sometimes nominal, sometimes an adjective) that the direct object gets made into. Hemingway uses one in our corpus:

Nick made it a tent.

S TV DO OC

Here, "it" is an assembly of poles and canvas.

Inverted, the sentence is nonsense:

* Nick made a tent it.

Unit 20: Parsing; Non-Finite Clauses

"Non-finite" clauses - where the main verbs are -ing participles, -ed participles, or to-infinitives - have subjects and objects and complements just like finite main clauses (where the verb ends in singular or plural personal endings).

Non-finite clauses have the same uses as finite clauses and other sentence elements, appearing often as adverbials or nominals. Here are some adapted examples based on a sentence from our corpus:

Nick sat there, **looking out over the country**. (adverbial -ing clause)

Looked at from the hilltop, the country was beautiful. (adverbial -ed clause)

To look at the country, Nick climbed to the hilltop. (adverbial to-infinitive clause)

To look at the country gave Nick a happy feeling. (nominal to-infinitive clause)

Looking at the country was dull after a while. (nominal -ing clause)

Let's put everything together in analysis of a single long sentence.

If I had asked you to analyze the following sentence at the start of this semester, you would probably just have screamed silently and left the course forever.

He had his leather rod-case in his hand and leaning forward to keep the weight of the pack high on his shoulders he walked along the road that paralleled the railway track, leaving the burned town behind in the heat, and then turned off around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side onto a road that went back into the country.

At this point, though, we have encountered (almost) every rule we'll need to parse a fairly long (64-word) sentence that is compound (uses coordination by means of conjunctions) and complex (includes subordinate clauses). I will generate a verbal parsing of this sentence as a model for analyzing similar sentences.

As always, we start from the big picture and, before anything else, ask what actions or states of being the sentence describes. Nick is going somewhere, and the sentence offers a sequence of directions through time. There are three main clauses, joined by coordinating conjunctions:

He had his leather rod-case in his hand

and

leaning forward to keep the weight of the pack high on his shoulders he walked along the road that paralleled the railway track, leaving the burned town behind in the heat,

and

then turned off around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side onto a road that went back into the country.

The first establishes something about Nick, and the others describe two stages of his journey.

The first main clause is transitive and pretty simple:

<u>He</u>	<u>had</u>	<u>his leather rod-case</u>	<u>in his hand</u>
S	TV	DO	ADV

In detail, the two phrases that serve as direct object and adverbial are also straightforward:

his	leather	rod-case
DET	N	N-N

"Leather rod-case" is something of a "noun stack." The object is a "case," so "case" is the internal head of the whole thing. "Case" is premodified by the noun "rod," and that NP has become conventional enough that Hemingway thinks of it as a compound noun. But not quite as compound as words that Hemingway might run together in spelling, like "corkscrew" or "icebox"; so he hyphenates the word. You can't hear a hyphen, but to a reader "rod-case" somehow looks "righter" than "rodcase" or "rod case."

And then "rod-case" is premodified by the noun "leather," making a three-noun NP.

in	his hand
P	(D+N) = NP

In the adverbial phrase, the noun phrase "his hand" is complement of the preposition "in."

The next main clause has long adverbials attached, but a very simple core:

leaning forward to keep the weight of the pack high on his shoulders

ADV

he walked
S IV

along the road that paralleled the railway track
ADV

leaving the burned town behind in the heat
ADV

Note that as Hemingway wrote the sentence, "he walked along the road that paralleled the railway track" is set off by the punctuation (with a comma after "track") to show that the adverbial PP "along the road that paralleled the railway track" is more closely associated with the main verb "walked" (which it directly follows) than the other adverbials are.

Let's take them one by one. The first is an -ing participle clause:

leaning	forward	<u>to keep the weight of the pack high on his shoulders</u>
-ING	ADV	ADV

To subordinate the clause, Hemingway puts its main verb "lean" in the -ing participial form. Nick leans while he walks, and the simple adverb "forward" tells how he leans. The more complex embedded adverbial clause tells why he leaned forward. It is a to-infinitive clause:

<u>to keep</u>	<u>the weight of the pack</u>	<u>high on his shoulders</u>
INF	DO	OC

Here, the verb "keep" is an object-complement verb that turns something into something (or rather maintains it that way). I guess some might parse it as subject-complement, but since it can be made passive

the weight of the pack was kept high on his shoulders

I prefer to parse it as object-complement.

The direct object is a NP with determiner and postmodifying PP; the complement of the preposition is a D+N noun phrase:

the	weight		of	the	pack
D	N		P	D	N

The object-complement phrase is an adjective postmodified by a prepositional phrase:

high		on	his	shoulders
ADJ		P	D	N

And now the next adverbial. This is a prepositional phrase, with the noun-phrase complement postmodified by a relative clause:

along	<u>the road</u>	<u>that paralleled the railway track</u>
P	D+N	POSTMODIFIER

The internal structure of the relative clause is transitive. (An "original sentence" would be "The road paralleled the railway track"; relativizer "that" takes the place of the subject):

that	paralleled	<u>the railway track</u>
S	TV	DO

and the direct object "the railway track" is a NP with determiner and premodifying noun.

And the final adverbial in the second main clause is also transitive. It is an -ing participle clause. I'm actually not 100% sure whether the implied subject is Nick or the road. They're both going the same way:

leaving	<u>the burned town</u>	<u>behind in the heat</u>
TV	DO	ADV

The direct object is a NP with determiner and premodifying -ed participle. I take "behind in the heat" as an adverb phrase here, the main adverb "behind" postmodified by the PP "in the heat" (P + [D+N] NP). But one might want to take "leave behind" as a phrasal verb, which would make "in the heat" a more independent adverbial PP. But the meaning seems to indicate a more "grouped" concept of the town being "behind in the heat"; "in the heat" does not seem as if it can move around the sentence very freely.

And then finally, the last main clause:

then turned off around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side onto a road that went back into the country

Subject "he" (Nick) is understood, and the core of the clause is simply the intransitive verb "turned." But there are a lot of adverbials in play:

then

off

around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side

onto a road that went back into the country

"Then" and "off" are simple adverbs; the other two are complicated prepositional phrases. Let's parse each of them:

around	<u>a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side</u>
P	NP

The complement is a noun phrase consisting of determiner + noun ("a hill") postmodified by a long embedded prepositional phrase which in turn contains another PP:

with	<u>a high, fire-scarred hill on either side</u>
P	NP

The head noun here is again "hill" (different hills, though) with determiner "a." This instance of "hill" is premodified

high, fire-scarred
ADJ -ED PARTICIPLE

In writing, the comma between "high" and "fire-scarred" is optional. The compound modifier "fire-scarred" seems to contain the noun "fire" as an agent with the -ed (passive) participle: the hill has been scarred by fire.

Or rather there are two hills, as the postmodifying prepositional phrase makes clear:

on either side
P NP

"Either" is a specialized premodifier, almost like a numeral. It does not have comparative or superlative forms, but most dictionaries call it an adjective. It does "agree" with the noun it modifies, in number. Hemingway could have written "both sides," but

- * either sides
- * both side

And last of all:

onto a road that went back into the country

P NP

The complement noun phrase "a road" (D+N) is postmodified by a relative clause:

that	went	<u>back into the country</u>
REL	IV	ADV P

Note that since "a road" is the subject of the "original sentence"

A road went back into the country

the relativizer "that" is required:

* onto a road went back into the country

The adverb phrase closely modifies "went"; the adverb "back" is postmodified by the PP "into the country" (P+NP; NP = D+N).

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