AILET

English Grammar for CLAT: Introduction and Elements

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This article aims to help the students on English Grammar for CLAT and other law entrances. It was first published in 2019

As a law aspirant and a prospective lawyer, the use of language is pertinent to your profession. **One is expected to speak lucidly and write as impeccably**.

The better we are at our linguistic skills, the better the chances of making a forceful argument that gains the required attraction of the person in question. It is then when the role of grammar steps in to really allow and equip us with the tools to make the language coherent.

I was once told, *'Language gives you the ability to express thoughts and convey knowledge.'* Grammar gives you the tools and guidelines for choosing a correct word, arrange such words, apply the appropriate punctuations to it, thus forming a sentence that is understandably universally to all those speaking or writing that language.

In the series of blog posts, we shall aspire to present all aspirants, with a comprehensive understanding of all the essentials of English Grammar, in an orderly, logical and acceptable form and do so whilst providing a considerable number of interesting examples.

By the end of this series, **an aspirant shall be familiar with basic concepts, functional parts of the language, punctuation, conventions, spelling, usage, and common usage errors**

Before beginning we must also realise the peculiarities of English grammar viz, that many things are gender-neutral, there are complex phrase structure and the word order thus presumes importance.

It may seem complicated but trust you me, it is already embedded in your mind. So we have grammatical units, words classes, phrases and sentence elements to make a proper sentence that is so correct and coherent in understanding.

We shall analyse each individually to further our understanding and to make sense of what shall follow in the other posts under this series of English Grammar for CLAT.

Grammatical Units

Words, phrase, clause and sentence are the basic grammatical units that are employed to convey meaning. Any sentence is made up of a culmination of words, which in turn is a simple or complex grouping of alphabets.

A collection of one or more words is called a phrase, they are devoid of a subject or a predicate. A clause is a collection of phrases that has its own subject and a predicate.

We use single or multiple clauses to build a sentence which begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.

Word Class

There are eight major word classes in English nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, preposition, determiner, pronouns and conjunctions; which in turn has many thousands of members, and new nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are often created. The examples of such words class are:

- Verb: climb, eat, welcome, be
- Noun: aircraft, country, lady, hour
- Adjective: good, British, cold, quick
- Adverb: quickly, always, approximately
- Preposition: to, of, at, on
- Determiner: the, his, some, forty-five
- Pronoun: we, you, them, myself
- Conjunction: and, but, so

Notably, items may belong to more than one class. In most instances, we can only assign a word to a word-class when we encounter it in the context of the sentence.

Phrases

A phrase is made up of multiple words each having its own function. These group of words collectively perform a larger function that is to make a sentence. It does not have a subject or a

predicate.

A phrase acts as a noun or adjective or an adverb in a sentence. A phrase may contain other phrases inside it.

Common types of phrases include noun phrases (such as a good friend), verb phrases (drives carefully), adjective phrases (very cold and dark), adverb phrases (quite slowly), and prepositional phrases (in the first place).

Sentence elements

To help you better understand the structure of sentences, you'll learn to distinguish between simple and complete subjects and predicates. You'll also learn to recognize and avoid fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences.

A basic sentence is made up of a subject and a predicate. Know them well, because you can't have a sentence without them. **The subject performs the action of the sentence**.

The subject of a sentence is that noun, pronoun, or phrase or clause about which the sentence makes a statement. Subjects identify the people, places, things, ideas, qualities, or conditions that act, are acted upon or are described in a sentence.

The dog ran in circles wherein the highlighted is the subject.

A predicate, on the other hand, is **what comes after the subject**. In a simple sentence, the predicate can be just a verb (the action happening in the sentence), there may also be an object (the thing receiving the action), or more still it could be a combination of a verb and an object. It can also include complements and adverbials.

In the following examples, the italicised is the predicate.

- I wrote a letter." (What did I write? A letter.).
- I wrote a letter to my friend." (Who did I write a letter to? My friend.)
- "I wrote on the paper." (What did I write on? The paper.)

These are the elements of an English sentence and the kinds of phrase that we can use for each element.

- Subject Noun phrase: the flight, I, two stewards

- Verb Verb phrase: is, served, must book
- Object Noun phrase: a newspaper, lunch
- Complement Adjective phrase: very good

Noun phrase: a pilot

Adverbial Adverb phrase: shortly

Prepositional phrase: at three o'clock

Noun phrase: next week

Now that we have touched with the basic elements of grammar we shall in our future blog posts endeavour to provide an understanding of **each of these elements individually at length** so as to enable you to actively identify and learn the English grammar for CLAT.

Read our post on Tenses.

Click to read an introduction to English for CLAT by Clatapult.