Grammar Glossary

Grammar Glossary

Adjective

An adjective is a word that describes somebody or something. *Old*, *white*, *busy*, *careful* and *horrible* are all adjectives. Adjectives either come before a noun, or after verbs such as *be*, *get*, *seem*, *look* (linking verbs):

> a <u>busy</u> day   I'm <u>busy</u>
> <u>nice</u> shoes   those shoes look <u>nice</u>

Adjectives (and adverbs) can have comparative and superlative forms. The comparative form is adjective + *-er* (for one-syllable adjectives, and some two-syllable) or *more* + adjective (for adjectives of two or more syllables):

> *old - old<u>er</u>*
> *hot - hott<u>er</u>*
> *easy - easi<u>er</u>*
> *dangerous - more dangerous*
> *The corresponding superlative forms are -est or most ...:*
> *small - small<u>est</u>*
> *big - bigg<u>est</u>*
> *funny - funni<u>est</u>*
> *important - <u>most</u> important*

Adverb

Adverbs give extra meaning to a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a whole sentence:

> *I <u>really enjoyed</u> the party. (adverb + verb)*
> *She's <u>really nice</u>. (adverb + adjective)*
> *He works <u>really slowly</u>. (adverb + adverb)*
> <u>*Really, he should do better*</u>*. (adverb + sentence)*

Many adverbs are formed by adding -ly to an adjective, for example *quickly, dangerously, nicely*, but there are many adverbs which do not end in *-ly*. Note too that some *-ly* words are adjectives, not adverbs (eg *lovely, silly, friendly*).

In many cases, adverbs tell us:

> how (manner)   *slowly, happily, dangerously, carefully*
> where (place)   *here, there, away, home, outside*
> when (time)   *now, yesterday, later, soon*
> how often (frequency)   *often, never, regularly*

Other adverbs show degree of intensity:
> <u>*very*</u> *slow(ly)* <u>*fairly*</u> *dangerous(ly)* <u>*really*</u> *good/well*

the attitude of the speaker to what he or she is saying:
perhaps obviously fortunately
connections in meaning between sentences (see **connective**):
however furthermore finally

An **adverbial phrase** is a group of words that functions in the same way as a single adverb. For example: *by car, to school, last week, three times a day, first of all, of course*:

They left <u>yesterday</u>. (adverb)	*She looked at me <u>strangely</u>.* (adverb)
They left a <u>few days ago</u>.	*She looked at me <u>in a strange way</u>.*
(adverbial phrase)	(adverbial phrase)

Similarly, an **adverbial clause** functions in the same way as an adverb. For example:

It was raining <u>yesterday</u>. (adverb)
It was raining <u>when we went out</u>. (adverbial clause).

Apostrophe (')

An apostrophe is a punctuation mark used to indicate either omitted letters or possession.

Omitted letters

We use an apostrophe for the omitted letter(s) when a verb is contracted (= shortened). For example:

I'm (*I am*)	*who's* (*who is/has*)
they've (*they have*)	*he'd* (*he had/would*)
we're (*we are*)	*it's* (*it is/has*)
would've (*would have*)	*she'll* (*she will*)

In contracted negative forms, *not* is contracted to *n't* and joined to the verb: *isn't, didn't, couldn't* etc.

In formal written style, it is more usual to use the full form.

There are a few other cases where an apostrophe is used to indicate letters that are in some sense 'omitted' in words other than verbs, eg *let's* (= *let us*), o'clock (= *of the clock*).

Note the difference between *its* (= '*belonging to it*') and *it's* (= '*it is*' or '*it has*'):

The company is to close one of its factories. (no apostrophe)
The factory employs 800 people. It's (= it is) the largest factory in the town.
(apostrophe necessary)

Possession

We use an apostrophe + *s* for the possessive form:

> *my mother's* car
> *Joe and Fiona's* house
> *the cat's* tail
> *James's* ambition
> *a week's* holiday

With a plural 'possessor' already ending in *s* (eg *parents*), an apostrophe is added to the end of the word:

> *my parents'* car
> *the girls'* toilets

But irregular plurals (eg men, children) take an apostrophe + *s*:

> *children's* clothes

The regular plural form (-*s*) is often confused with possessive -*'s*:

> *I bought some apples.* (not *apple's*)

Note that the possessive words *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs*, and *its* are not written with an apostrophe.

Article

A, *an* and *the* are articles. A (*an* before a vowel sound) is the indefinite article; *the* is the definite article. Articles are a type of determiner.

Auxiliary verbs

These are verbs that are used together with other verbs. For example:

> *we are going*
> *Lucy has arrived*
> *can you play*

In these sentences, *going*, *arrived* and *play* are the main verbs. *Are*, *has* and *can* are auxiliary verbs, and add extra meaning to the main verb.

The most common auxiliary verbs are *be*, *have* and *do* (all of which can also be main verbs).

Be is used in continuous forms *(be + -ing)* and in passive forms:

We <u>are going</u> away. <u>Was</u> the car <u>damaged</u>?
Have is used in perfect verb forms:
Lucy <u>has arrived</u>. <u>I haven't finished</u>.

Do is used to make questions and negatives in the simple present and past tenses:

<u>Do</u> you <u>know</u> the answer? I <u>didn't see</u> anybody.

More than one auxiliary verb can be used together. For example:

I <u>have been</u> waiting for ages. (*have* and *been* are auxiliary verbs)

The remaining auxiliary verbs are modal verbs, eg *can*, *will*.

Clause

A clause is a group of words that expresses an event (*she drank some water*) or a situation (*she was thirsty/she wanted a drink*). It usually contains a subject (*she* in the examples) and verb (*drank/was/wanted*).

Note how a clause differs from a phrase:

> *a big dog*   (a phrase - this refers to 'a big dog' but doesn't say what the dog did or what happened to it)

> *a big dog chased me*   (a clause - the dog did something)

A sentence is made up of one or more clauses:

> *It was raining*   (one clause)
> *<u>It was raining</u> and <u>we were cold</u>.*   (two main clauses joined by and)
> *It was raining <u>when we went out</u>.*   (main clause containing a subordinate clause – the subordinate clause is underlined)

A main clause is complete on its own and can form a complete sentence (eg *It was raining)*. A subordinate clause (*when we went out*) is part of the main clause and cannot exist on its own. In the following examples, the subordinate clauses are underlined:

> *You'll hurt yourself <u>if you're not careful</u>.*
> *<u>Although it was cold</u>, the weather was pleasant enough.*
> *Where are the biscuits <u>(that) I bought this morning</u>?*
> *John, <u>who was very angry</u>, began shouting.*
> *<u>What you said</u> was not true.*

Although most clauses require a subject and verb, some subordinate clauses do not. In many such cases, the verb be can be understood. For example:

The weather, <u>although rather cold</u>, was pleasant enough.
(= although it was rather cold)
<u>When in Rome</u>, do as the Romans do.
(= when you are in Rome)
<u>Glad to be home</u>, George sat down in his favourite armchair.
(= he was glad to be home)

see also **adverbial clause**, **noun clause**, **participle**, **phrase**, **relative clause**, **sentence**

Colon (:)

A colon is a punctuation mark used to introduce a list or a following example (as in this glossary). It may also be used before a second clause that expands or illustrates the first:

He was very cold: the temperature was below zero.

Comma (,)

A comma is a punctuation mark used to help the reader by separating parts of a sentence. It sometimes corresponds to a pause in speech.

In particular we use commas:

to separate items in a list (but not usually before *and*):
My favourite sports are football, tennis, swimming and gymnastics.
I got home, had a bath and went to bed.

to mark off extra information:
Jill, <u>my boss</u>, is 28 years old.

after a subordinate **clause** which begins a sentence:
<u>Although it was cold</u>, we didn't wear our coats.

with many connecting **adverbs** (eg *however*, *on the other hand*, *anyway*, *for example*):
<u>Anyway</u>, in the end I decided not to go.

Conditional

A conditional sentence is one in which one thing depends upon another. Conditional sentences often contain the **conjunction** if:

I'll help you if I can.
If the weather's bad, we might not go out.

Other conjunctions used in conditionals are unless, providing, provided and as long as.

A conditional sentence can refer to an imaginary situation. For example:

> *I would help you if I could.* (but in fact I can't)
> *What would you do if you were in my position?*
> *If the weather had been better, we could have gone to the beach.*

The term 'conditional' is sometimes used to refer to the form *would* + verb: *would go, would help* etc.

see also **auxiliary verb**

Conjunction

A word used to link **clauses** within a sentence. For example, in the following sentences, *but* and *if* are conjunctions:

> *It was raining <u>but</u> it wasn't cold.*
> *We won't go out <u>if</u> the weather's bad.*

There are two kinds of conjunction:

A. Co-ordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or* and *so*). These join (and are placed between) two clauses of equal weight.

> *Do you want to go now <u>or</u> shall we wait a bit longer?*

And, *but* and *or* are also used to join words or phrases within a clause.

B. Subordinating conjunctions (eg *when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that*). These go at the beginning of a subordinate **clause**:

> *We were hungry <u>because</u> we hadn't eaten all day.*
> *<u>Although</u> we'd had plenty to eat, we were still hungry.*
> *We were hungry <u>when</u> we got home.*

see also **clause**, **connective**

Connective

A connective is a word or phrase that links clauses or sentences. Connectives can be **conjunctions** (eg *but, when, because*) or connecting adverbs (eg *however, then, therefore*).

Connecting adverbs (and adverbial phrases and clauses) maintain the **cohesion** of a text in several basic ways, including:

addition	*also, furthermore, moreover*
opposition	*however, nevertheless, on the other hand*

reinforcing	*besides, anyway, after all*
explaining	*for example, in other words, that is to say*
listing	*first(ly), first of all, finally*
indicating result	*therefore, consequently, as a result*
indicating time	*just then, meanwhile, later*

Commas are often used to mark off connecting adverbs or adverbial phrases or clauses:

> *First of all, I want to say …*
> *I didn't think much of the film. Helen, on the other hand, enjoyed it.*

Connecting adverbs and conjunctions function differently. Conjunctions (like but and although) join clauses <u>within a sentence</u>. Connecting adverbs (like *however*) connect ideas but the clauses remain <u>separate</u> sentences:

I was angry <u>but</u> I didn't say anything. (*but* is a conjunction – one sentence)
<u>Although</u> I was angry, I didn't say anything. (*although* is a conjunction - one sentence)
I was angry. <u>However,</u> I didn't say anything. (*however* is an adverb - two sentences)

Dash (—)

A dash is a punctuation mark used especially in informal writing (such as letters to friends, postcards or notes).

Dashes may be used to replace other punctuation marks (*colons*, *semicolons*, *commas*) or brackets:

> *It was a great day out — everybody enjoyed it.*

Determiner

Determiners include many of the most frequent English words, eg *the*, *a*, *my*, *this*. Determiners are used with nouns (*this <u>book</u>, my best <u>friend</u>, a new <u>car</u>*) and they limit (ie determine) the reference of the noun in some way.

Determiners include:

articles	*a/an, the*
demonstratives	*this/that, these/those*
possessives	*my/your/his/her/its/our/their*
quantifiers	*some, any, no, many, much, few, little, both,*
	all, either, neither, each, every, enough
numbers	*three, fifty, three thousand etc*
some question words	*which (which car?), what (what size?), whose*
	(whose coat?)

When these words are used as determiners, they are followed by a noun (though not necessarily immediately):

> *this book is yours*
> *some new houses*
> *which colour do you prefer?*

Many determiners can also be used as **pronouns**. These include the demonstratives, question words, numbers and most of the quantifiers. When used as pronouns, these words are not followed by a noun - their reference includes the noun:

> *this is yours* (= this book, this money, etc)
> *I've got some*
> *which do you prefer?*

Direct speech and indirect speech

There are two ways of reporting what somebody says, direct speech and indirect speech.

In direct speech, we use the speaker's original words (as in a speech bubble). In text, speech marks ('…' or "…" — also called inverted commas or quotes) mark the beginning and end of direct speech:

> *Helen said, 'I'm going home'.*
> *'What do you want?' I asked.*

In indirect (or reported) speech, we report what was said but do not use the exact words of the original speaker.

Typically we change pronouns and verb tenses, and speech marks are not used:

> *Helen said (that) she was going home.*
> *I asked them what they wanted.*

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the omission of words in order to avoid repetition. For example:

> *I don't think it will rain but it might.* (= it might rain)
> *'Where were you born?' 'Bradford.'* (= I was born in Bradford)

An ellipsis is also the term used for three dots (…) which show that something has been omitted or is incomplete.

Exclamation

An exclamation is an utterance expressing emotion (joy, wonder, anger, surprise, etc) and is usually followed in writing by an **exclamation mark (!)**. Exclamations can be **interjections**:

Oh dear!
Good grief!
Ow!

Some exclamations begin with *what* or *how:*

What a beautiful day!
How stupid (he is)!
What a quiet little girl.

Exclamations like these are a special type of **sentence** ('exclamative') and may have no verb.
see also **interjection**, **sentence**

Exclamation mark (!)

An exclamation mark is used at the end of a **sentence** (which may be exclamative, imperative or declarative) or an **interjection** to indicate strong emotion:

What a pity!
Get out!
It's a goal!
Oh dear!

See also **exclamation**, **sentence**

Hyphen (-)

A hyphen is sometimes used to join the two parts of a **compound** noun, as in *golf-ball* and *proof-read*. But it is much more usual for such compounds to be written as single words (eg *football*, *headache*, *bedroom*) or as separate words without a hyphen (*golf ball*, *stomach ache*, *dining room*, *city centre*).

However, hyphens are used in the following cases:

a. in compound adjectives and longer phrases used as modifiers before nouns:
    a <u>foul-smelling</u> substance
    a <u>well-known</u> painter
    a <u>German-English</u> dictionary
    a <u>one-in-a-million</u> chance
    a <u>state-of-the-art</u> computer
    a <u>ten-year-old</u> girl

b. in many compound nouns where the second part is a short word like *in*, *off*, *up* or *by*:

>*a* bre*ak-in*
>*a write-off*
>*a mix-up*
>*a pass*er-by

c. in many words beginning with the prefixes *co-*, *non-* and *ex-*:

>*co-operate*
>*non-existent*
>*ex-husband*

Hyphens are also used to divide words at the end of a line of print.

Modal verb

The modal verbs are:

>*can/could*
>*will/would*
>*shall/should*
>*may/might*
>*must/ought*

These **auxiliary verbs** are used to express such ideas as possibility, willingness, prediction, speculation, deduction and necessity. They are all followed by the **infinitive**, and *ought* is followed by *to* + infinitive:

>*I can help you.*
>*We might go out tonight.*
>*You ought to eat something.*
>*Stephanie will be here soon.*
>*I wouldn't do that if I were you.*
>*I must go now.*

These verbs can occur with other auxiliary verbs (*be* and *have*):

>*I'll be leaving at 11.30.*
>*You should have asked me.*
>*They must have been working.*

In this context *have* is unstressed and therefore identical in speech to unstressed *of*; this is why the misspelling *of* for standard *have* or *'ve* is not uncommon.

Noun

A noun is a word that denotes somebody or something. In the sentence *My younger sister won some money in a competition*, '*sister*', '*money*' and '*competition*' are nouns.

Many nouns (countable nouns) can be **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one). For example *sister/sisters*, *problem/problems*, *party/parties*. Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: *butter*, *cotton*, *electricity*, *money*, *happiness*.

A **collective noun** is a word that refers to a group. For example, *crowd*, *flock*, *team*. Although these are singular in form, we often think of them as plural in meaning and use them with a plural verb. For example, if we say *The team <u>have</u> won all <u>their</u> games so far*, we think of '*the team*' as '*they*' (rather than '*it*').

Proper nouns are the names of people, places, organisations, etc. These normally begin with a capital letter: *Amanda*, *Birmingham*, *Microsoft*, *Islam*, *November*.

Noun phrase is a wider term than 'noun'. It can refer to a single noun (*money*), a pronoun (*it*) or a group of words that functions in the same way as a noun in a sentence, for example:
> *a lot of money*
> *my younger sister*
> *a new car*
> *the best team in the world*

Similarly, a **noun clause** functions in the same way as a noun. For example:

> <u>*The story*</u> *was not true.* (noun)
> <u>*What you said*</u> *was not true. (*noun clause)

Person

In grammar, a distinction is made between first, second and third person.

One uses the first person when referring to oneself (*I/we*); the second person when referring to one's listener or reader (*you*); and the third person when referring to somebody or something else (*he/she/it/they/my friend/the books* etc).

In some cases the form of the verb changes according to person:

> *I/we/you/they know*
> *I/we/you/they have*
> *we/you/they were*
> *he/she knows*
> *he/she/it has*
> *I/he/she/it was*

see also agreement

Phrase

A phrase is a group of words that act as one unit. So *dog* is a word, but *the dog*, *a big dog* or *that dog over there* are all phrases. Strictly speaking, a phrase can also consist of just one word. For example, in the sentence *Dogs are nice*, '*dogs*' and '*nice*' are both one-word phrases.

A phrase can function as a noun, an adjective or an adverb:

a noun phrase	*a big dog, my last holiday*
an adjectival phrase	(*she's no*t) *as old as you*, (*I'm*) *really hungry*
an adverbial phrase	(*they left*) *five minutes ago*, (*she walks*) *very slowly*

If a phrase begins with a **preposition** (like <u>*in*</u> *a hurry*, <u>*along*</u> the lane), it can be called a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase can be adjectival or adverbial in meaning:

adjectival	*(I'm) in a hurry, (the man) with long hair*
adverbial	*(they left) on Tuesday, (she lives) along the lane*

Preposition

A preposition is a word like *at*, *over*, *by* and *with*. It is usually followed by a **noun phrase**. In the examples, the preposition and the following noun phrase are underlined:

> *We got home <u>at midnight</u>.*
> *Did you come here <u>by car</u>?*
> *Are you coming <u>with me</u>?*
> *They jumped <u>over a fence</u>.*
> *What's the name <u>of this street</u>?*
> *I fell asleep <u>during the film</u>.*

Prepositions often indicate time (<u>*at midnight*/*during* the film/*on* Friday</u>), position (<u>*at the station*/*in a field*</u>) or direction (<u>*to the station*/*over a fence*</u>). There are many other meanings, including possession (<u>*of this street*</u>), means (<u>*by car*</u>) and accompaniment (<u>*with me*</u>).

In questions and a few other structures, prepositions often occur at the end of the clause:

> *Who did you go out <u>with</u>?*
> *We haven't got enough money to live <u>on</u>.*
> *I found the book I was looking <u>for</u>.*

In formal style, the preposition can go before whom or which (*with whom*, *about which* etc):

> <u>*With whom*</u> *do you wish to speak?*

Many prepositions (eg *on, over, up*) can also be used as **adverbs** (without a following noun or pronoun):

> *We got on the bus*. (preposition - followed by a noun phrase)
> *The bus stopped and we got <u>on</u>.* (adverb - no following noun or pronoun)

Pronoun

There are several kinds of pronoun, including:

personal pronouns
> *I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, it*
> *I like <u>him</u>. <u>They</u> don't want <u>it</u>.*

possessive pronouns
> *mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its*
> *Is this book <u>yours</u> or <u>mine</u>?*

reflexive pronouns
> *myself, herself, themselves etc*
> *I hurt <u>myself</u>. Enjoy <u>yourselves</u>!*

indefinite pronouns
> *someone, anything, nobody, everything etc*
> *<u>Someone</u> wants to see you about <u>something</u>.*

interrogative pronouns
> *who/whom, whose, which, what*
> *<u>Who</u> did that? <u>What</u> happened?*

relative pronouns
> *who/whom, whose, which, that*
> *The person who did that … The thing that annoyed me was …*

Many **determiners** can also be used as pronouns, including *this/that/these/those* and the quantifiers (*some, much* etc). For example:

> *<u>These</u> are mine.*
> *Would you like <u>some</u>?*

Pronouns often 'replace' a noun or noun phrase and enable us to avoid repetition:

> *I saw your father but I didn't speak to <u>him</u>.* (= your father)
> *'We're going away for the weekend.' 'Oh, are you? <u>That's</u> nice.'* (= the fact you're going away)

Question mark (?)

A question mark is used at the end of an interrogative **sentence** (eg *Who was that?*) or one whose function is a question (eg *You're leaving already?*)

Relative clause

A relative clause is one that defines or gives information about somebody or something. Relative clauses typically begin with relative pronouns (*who/whom/whose/which/that*):

> *Do you know the people who <u>live in the house on the corner</u>?* (defines *'the people'*)
> *The biscuits <u>(that) Tom bought this morning</u> have all gone.* (defines *'the biscuits'*)
> *Our hotel, <u>which was only two minutes from the beach</u>, was very nice.* (gives more information about the hotel)

Semi-colon (;)

A semi-colon can be used to separate two main **clauses** in a sentence:

> *I liked the book; it was a pleasure to read.*

This could also be written as two separate sentences:

> *I liked the book. It was a pleasure to read.*

However, where the two clauses are closely related in meaning (as in the above example), a writer may prefer to use a semi-colon rather than two separate sentences.

Semi-colons can also be used to separate items in a list if these items consist of longer phrases. For example:

> *I need large, juicy tomatoes; half a pound of unsalted butter; a kilo of fresh pasta, preferably tagliatelle; and a jar of black olives.*

In a simple list, **commas** are used.

Sentence

A sentence can be simple, compound or complex.

A simple sentence consists of one **clause**:

> *It was late.*

A compound sentence has two or more clauses joined by *and*, or, *but* or *so*. The clauses are of equal weight (they are both main clauses):

> *<u>It was late</u> but <u>I wasn't tired</u>.*

A complex sentence consists of a main clause which itself includes one or more subordinate clauses:

> *Although it was late, I wasn't tired*. (subordinate clause beginning with *although* underlined)

Simple sentences can also be grouped as follows according to their structure:

declarative (for statements, suggestions, etc):
> *The class yelled in triumph. Maybe we could eat afterwards.*

interrogative (for questions, requests, etc):
> *Is your sister here? Could you show me how?*

imperative (for commands, instructions, etc):
> *Hold this! Take the second left.*

exclamative (for exclamations):
> *How peaceful she looks. What a pity!*

In writing, we mark sentences by using a capital letter at the beginning, and a full stop (or question mark or exclamation mark) at the end.

Singular and **plural**

Singular forms are used to refer to one thing, person etc. For example: *tree*, s*tudent*, *party*.

Many nouns (countable nouns) can be **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one). The plural is usually marked by the ending *-s*: *trees, students, parties*.

Some plural forms are irregular. For example: *children*, *teeth*, *mice*.

Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: *butter*, *cotton*, *electricity*, *money*, *happiness*.

Verbs, **pronouns**, and **determiners** sometimes have different singular and plural forms:

> *He was late*   *They were late*
> *Where is the key? Have you seen it?*   *Where are the keys? Have you seen them?*
>
> *Do you like this hat?*   *Do you like these shoes?*

Note that *they/them/their* (plural words) are sometimes used to refer back to singular words that don't designate a specific person, such as *anyone* or *somebody*. In such cases, they usually means 'he or she':

> *If anyone wants to ask a question, they can ask me later.* (= he or she can ask me)
> *Did everybody do their homework?*
> *Work with a partner. Ask them their name.*

See also **agreement**, **pronoun**

Subject and object

In the sentence *John kicked* the ball, the subject is *'John'*, and the object is *'the ball'*.

The subject is the person or thing about which something is said. In sentences with a subject and an object, the subject typically carries out an action, while the object is the person or thing affected by the action. In declarative sentences (statements), the subject normally goes before the verb; the object goes after the verb.

Some verbs (eg *give*, *show*, *buy*) can have two objects, indirect and direct. For example:
She gave the man some money.

Here, *'some money'* is the direct object (= what she gave). *'The man'* is the indirect object (= the person who receives the direct object).

When a verb has an object, it is transitive, eg <u>find</u> a job, <u>like</u> chocolate, <u>lay</u> the table. If it has no object, it is intransitive (eg *go*, *talk*, *lie*).

See also **active** and **passive**, **complement**

Tense

A tense is a verb form that most often indicates time. English verbs have two basic tenses, present and past, and each of these can be simple or continuous. For example:

present	**past**
I play (simple)	*I played* (simple)
I am playing (continuous)	*I was playing* (continuous)

Additionally, all these forms can be perfect (with *have*):

present perfect	**past perfect**
I have played (perfect)	*I had played* (perfect)
I have been playing (perfect continuous)	*I had been playing* (perfect continuous)

English has no specific future tense. Future time can be expressed in a number of ways using *will* or present tenses.

For example:
John <u>will arrive</u> tomorrow.
John <u>will be arriving</u> tomorrow.
John <u>is going to arrive</u> tomorrow.
John <u>is arriving</u> tomorrow.
John <u>arrives</u> tomorrow.

see also **verb**

Verb

A verb is a word that expresses an action, a happening, a process or a state. It can be thought of as a 'doing' or 'being' word. In the sentence *Mark is tired and wants to go to bed*, *'is'*, *'wants' and 'go'* are verbs. Sometimes two or more words make up a verb phrase, such as *are going*, *didn't want*, *has been waiting*.

Most verbs (except modal verbs, such as *can* or *will*) have four or five different forms. For example:

base form or infinitive	+ -s	+ -ing (present participle	simple past	past participle
wait	*waits*	*waiting*	*waited*	
make	*makes*	*making*	*made*	
drive	*drives*	*driving*	*drove*	*driven*

A verb can be present or past:
>   *I wait/she waits* (present)
>   *I waited/she waited* (past)

Most verbs can occur in simple or continuous forms (*be + -ing*):
>   *I make (simple present)/I'm making* (present continuous)
>   *she drove (simple past)/she was driving* (past continuous)

A verb can also be perfect (with *have*):
>   *I have made/I have been making* (present perfect)
>   *he had driven/he had been driving* (past perfect)

If a verb is regular, the simple past and the past participle are the same, and end in *-ed*. For example:
>   *want<u>ed</u>*
>   *play<u>ed</u>*
>   *answer<u>ed</u>*

Verbs that do not follow this pattern are irregular. For example:
>   *make/<u>made</u>*
>   *catch/<u>caught</u>*
>   *see/<u>saw</u>/<u>seen</u>*
>   *come/<u>came</u>/<u>come</u>*

see also **active** and **passive**, **auxiliary verbs**, **infinitive**, **modal verbs**, **participle**, **person**, **tense**