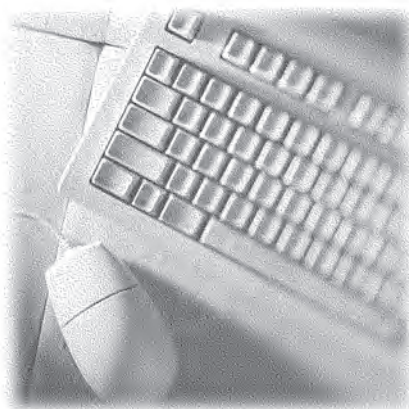
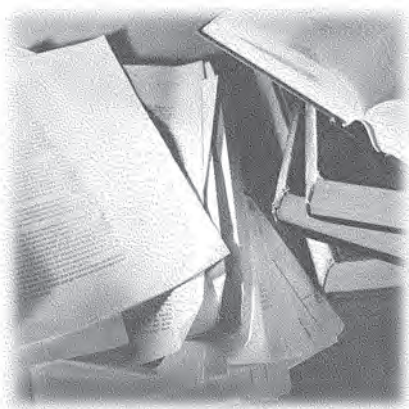


The Exciting World of

Creative Writing

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Ruth E. McDaniel

Christian Liberty Press

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Contents

Introduction.....	v
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Laying the Proper Foundation

Chapter One	Writing Resources	2
Chapter Two	Learn by Reading	4
Chapter Three	Grammar for Writers	9
Chapter Four	Complete the Thought	19
Chapter Five	Forming Paragraphs	25
Chapter Six	Writing Creatively	33

The Art of Writing Creatively

Chapter Seven	Writing in the Light	44
Chapter Eight	What to Write About	48
Chapter Nine	Making Your Outline	55
Chapter Ten	Developing Your Characters	62
Chapter Eleven	What's in a Name?	69
Chapter Twelve	Begin with a Punch!	74
Chapter Thirteen	Describe in Detail	77
Chapter Fourteen	Writing Dialogue	83
Chapter Fifteen	The Moment of Truth	89
Chapter Sixteen	End with a Bang!	96
Chapter Seventeen	Ready to Write!	103

Polishing Your Work

Chapter Eighteen	Rewriting Your Story	108
Chapter Nineteen	Take a Second Look	118
Chapter Twenty	Critiques and Copyrights	121
Chapter Twenty-one	Advice for New Writers	125
Appendix	Letter Writing Techniques	130
Reference List	137

Introduction

The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary defines ‘writing’ as, “to form or inscribe (words) ... a literary composition or production....”

The definition of ‘creative’ is, “creating ... productive ... inventive ... investing with a new character ... original ... innovative, or imaginative.”

So, ‘creative writing’ would be defined as, “an original, imaginative literary composition or production.”

Sounds dull, doesn’t it? On the contrary, you’re going to find that creative writing is stimulating, inspiring—anything but dull.

Think back to your early childhood when you first began to use your imagination. Life was fun and exciting, even scary, at times. At night, shadows on the wall became giants. Kitchen tables covered with sheets served as tents—perhaps located in the middle of a dangerous African jungle. In an instant, you and your friends were transformed into knights, or ballerinas, or Indians.

Creative writing is the ability to tap into your imagination and write words that make an impact on people’s lives, including your own.

This book is designed to help you become a creative writer. Step by step, you’ll learn how to use your imagination and skills to write short stories, poetry, prose, novels ... whatever direction you wish to take.

Right now, you’re probably saying to yourself, “I could never be a writer.” But, I’m going to prove you wrong. If you’ve ever written a letter, you’re already a writer—you just need a little help to make those letters more exciting. Creative writing is nothing more than using your imagination to form stories—or, taking real-life stories and exaggerating them. It’s fun and it’s easy. All you have to do is put your thoughts on paper and arrange them in an interesting way.

Think of your words as wild horses, and you are the trainer. You’re going to learn how to tame your words, bring them under your control, and use them to perform for you. With a little guidance, you’ll soon be giving horse shows that will amaze friends and family alike.

Who knows ... you may even decide to submit your work for publication! There is always a need for more Christian writers to help spread God’s message throughout the world. Perhaps He’ll use you. We’ll address that issue in the last chapter.

Now, it’s time to gather your “tools” (see Chapter One) and get ready for a great adventure!

Ruth E. McDaniel

Chapter One



Writing Resources

In every career, there is a need for certain supplies or pieces of equipment. So it is in writing. The following resources will help meet your writing needs.

References for Writers

Before you begin to write creatively, you will need to have your Bible close at hand—for inspiration, guiding principles, and unsurpassed reading material. My Bibles include the *King James Version* and the *New International Version*. I also have *Nave's Topical Bible* in order to locate just the right scripture. Later we will discuss how you can apply Scripture and biblical heroes to modern-day stories.¹

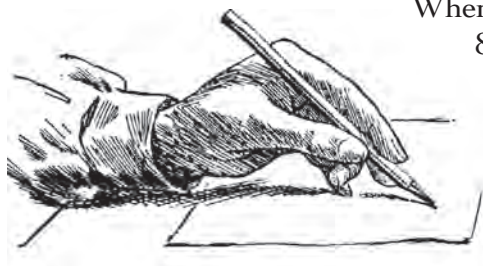
When it comes to grammar and correct English usage, we will cover a certain amount of language skills in this textbook. For those moments, however, when you are unsure of when to use *was* or *were*, *I* or *me*, *who* or *whom* (etc.), it's wise to keep several basic English textbooks available for reference.² *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, and *Write Right*, by Jan Venolia, are handy references in addition to your basic English grammar books that address the most common writing problems and offer solutions.

What's more, *Webster's Collegiate* or *Roget's Thesaurus* will give you a wide variety of replacement words from which to choose to avoid using the same word too often.³ This has been called “echoing.” Part of creative writing is to make your work flow smoothly with few distractions. If you frequently repeat a word, your readers will find themselves keeping count of that word rather than following your story line.



-
1. In addition, Davis's *Dictionary of the Bible* is indispensable for the Christian writer in understanding biblical terms. Likewise, Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine* is essential in grasping the teaching of Scripture.
 2. Chapman's *Handbook of Grammar and Composition* and Warriner's *English Composition and Grammar* are two excellent resources.
 3. Other helpful thesauruses include Sisson's *Synonyms and Word and Expression Locator* and Rodale's *The Synonym Finder*.

Tools of the Trade



When I'm writing, I prefer to use a black ball-point pen on pads of 8 1/2" x 11" yellow, lined paper. You may, however, work better with pencil and small paper tablets. Personal preference rules here. Whichever you choose, make sure you have an abundant supply. I keep paper and pen in every room in the house.

When a thought or idea strikes, I write it down immediately in my journal. I'm using the term "journal" loosely. Mine happens to be a folder of separate notes. (Remember, I write my thoughts in every room of the house.) Use whatever works best for you ... journal, folder, diary, or notebook. As you write daily, you will find that one of these items will fit your needs.

Once you have written your story in longhand, you will need a typewriter, word-processor, or computer. A word-processor or computer will allow you to easily make corrections and store the finished story on a disk. If cost is a factor, however, a typewriter will suffice. A finished manuscript should be typed on 8 1/2" x 11" white bond paper, double-spaced, on one side only, with a one-inch margin all around. Later we'll go into more detail on manuscript preparation.

All right, now that you know what resources to gather, it's time to begin.



Chapter Two



Learn by Reading

In order to become a good writer, you must be a good reader. I don't mean pleasure reading—I mean “study reading.”

When you read for pleasure, you skim over the words and absorb only the essentials. When you “study read,” you closely examine the way other writers write. Each author has a unique writing style—this is known as a “voice.”

The following three examples are excerpts from the Bible, a well-known classic, and a modern-day interpretation of the New Testament written in novel form. Don't just “read” each passage—study the different writing styles. Notice how words are used to describe a particular scene, situation, or person.

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*⁴

Daniel 3:19–25

Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans, and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?”

They replied, “Certainly, O king.”

He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

4. Daniel's three friends have refused to bow down to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue.



Notice how King Nebuchadnezzar reacted: His attitude toward them changed. Then, he ordered his men to heat the furnace seven times hotter than usual. That explains to you, the reader, how enraged the king was—so insanely angry, in fact, that the strongest men in his army were killed from the excess heat.

After Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the fiery furnace and were seen walking around unharmed, the writer tells us that Nebuchadnezzar **leaped** to his feet in amazement. That is a wonderfully descriptive action verb. He didn't "get up"—he "leaped" to his feet. Choosing the right word makes the difference between dull and exciting reading.

*Oliver Twist*⁵

by Charles Dickens



"Oliver!" said Mr. Bumble.

"Yes, sir," replied Oliver, in a low, tremulous voice.

"Pull that cap off your eyes, and hold up your head, sir."

Although Oliver did as he was desired, at once, and passed the back of his unoccupied hand briskly across his eyes, he left a tear in them when he looked up at his conductor. As Mr. Bumble gazed sternly upon him, it rolled down his cheek. It was followed by another, and another. The child made a strong effort, but it was an unsuccessful one. Withdrawing his other hand from Mr. Bumble's, he covered his face with both; and wept until the tears sprung out from between his chin and bony fingers.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Bumble, stopping short, and darting at his little charge a look of intense malignity. "Well! Of all the ungratefulest, and worst-disposed boys as ever I see, Oliver, you are the—"

"No, no, sir," sobbed Oliver, clinging to the hand which held the well-known cane; "no, no, sir; I will be good indeed; indeed, indeed I will, sir! I am a very little boy, sir; and it is so— so—"

"So what?" inquired Mr. Bumble in amazement.

"So lonely, sir! So very lonely!" cried the child. "Everybody hates me. Oh! sir, don't pray be cross to me!" The child beat his hand upon his heart; and looked in his companion's face with tears of real agony.

Mr. Bumble regarded Oliver's piteous and helpless look, with some astonishment, for a few seconds; hemmed three or four times in a husky manner; and, after muttering something about "that troublesome cough," bade Oliver dry his eyes and be a good boy. Then once more taking his hand, he walked on with him in silence.



Charles Dickens was a master storyteller who used "show—don't tell!" artfully. Instead of telling us, "Oliver wept uncontrollably," he **showed** us ... Oliver wiped his eyes but still "... left a tear in them when he looked up at [Mr. Bumble]." Under that man's stern gaze, "... it rolled down his cheek ... followed by another ... and another ... until the tears sprung out from between his chin and bony fingers."

5. A scene from Chapter Four: Mr. Bumble (a member of the board overlooking the care of the poor and homeless) is taking ten-year-old Oliver to his new position as an undertaker's apprentice.

Can't you picture that poor urchin sobbing his heart out? Do you see how much more effective Dickens's method of "showing" was?

Continuing the story, Oliver hastens to explain his emotional outburst, "... clinging to the hand which held the well-known cane" (this shows us that the boy was afraid of being beaten with the walking cane—there was no need to tell us). Oliver painfully confesses his terrible loneliness, striking his heart with his hand. Even the stern Mr. Bumble was touched.

A well-written story can transport you to another time and place and make you experience what the characters are feeling. That is creative writing.

Men Called Him Master

by Elwyn Allen Smith

Chapter One: A Voice in the Wilderness

"Andrew! The baskets are slipping!" Two men on foot were driving heavily loaded donkeys ahead of them. Across the back of Andrew's tiny beast hung two huge baskets. One slanted crazily forward.

"It ought to hold until we get to the top," answered Andrew. He looked critically at the load and then at the path ahead. They were climbing the bank of a wide gully cut by the floods that rushed down from the barren hills into the valley of the Jordan River every spring. Andrew shouted a command and the donkeys climbed slowly upward. At the top the men stopped to catch their breath.

"John," exclaimed Andrew in disgust, "I have tightened this thing on every hill between Galilee and Judea!" He worked impatiently at the knotted ropes and bound the baskets on the donkey's back. John was not listening. He was gazing at the scene before them.



Torrents of muddy water poured through the gully during the season of rains. Now the clay in the bottom was dry and cracked. Under the hoofs of the animals it was as hard as stone. John pushed his damp hair back from his forehead. His home province, with its green hillsides surrounding the cool Lake of Galilee, was very different from this burnt, rocky land of Judea, which lay southwest of where they stood. The gully carried a sluggish stream of heated air up from the valley; he could feel the damp warmth on his skin. Even on the hilltop there was no cooling breeze.



This story is about the New Testament written in the form of a novel. The beginning sentence catches our attention by using dialogue between Andrew and his brother, John, as they hurry to find John the Baptist.

Immediately, we are drawn into the action. We find ourselves climbing up a steep bank, watching the large baskets teetering on the donkeys' backs. We can almost feel the heat and humidity rising from the valley below. The writer has piqued our interest enough to make us want to turn the page.

Writing Exercise

1. Write one paragraph about someone you know, applying the techniques listed above. Limit the number of adjectives and adverbs. Don't say, "She seems very nervous" or "She shakes, nervously." Instead, **describe** her nervousness: "She blinks, fidgets, and taps one toe on the floor in an irritating way." This is called showing, not telling. Throughout this textbook, I will remind you to "show, not tell." This is one of the most important aspects of writing—so it bears repeating.

2. Describe your favorite zoo animal engaged in some action. Make it "come alive" on paper. What does he look like? Smell like? Sound like? Remember, the reader can't see what you're seeing.

3. Observe your bedroom as if through the eyes of a stranger. Now, write a complete description of it (and don't forget to include the sounds and scents).



Chapter Three



Grammar for Writers

Some of the most important skills in today's world are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Everyday, you're required to communicate your ideas, feelings, and a variety of information. Whether you plan to become a creative writer or not, the way you express yourself will make a dramatic difference in your life.

In this chapter, we will address some basic English skills that will help you become a better communicator by using effective language and organizing your thoughts in a logical way.

Parts of Speech—An Overview

A NOUN is a word used as the name of a person, place, animal, substance, measure, object, or quality.

Persons	Places	Quality	Objects	Substances	Animals	Measures
Phil	school	valor	radio	fire	cat	month
Haitian	store	kindness	nail	oil	mouse	decade
classmate	Maine	attribute	blouse	coal	whale	cup
brother	zoo	ambition	sofa	metal	horse	yard

Examples: The *poet* gave a *reading*. The *boy* is playing *soccer*. My *father* cut the *grass*.

Proper Nouns	Common Nouns		
Janet (person)	ship (object)	inch (measure)	lawyer (person)
America (place)	faith (quality)	key (object)	sweetness (quality)
Charles (person)	church (place)	house (place)	food (substance)

NOTE: Proper nouns are capitalized (e.g., Janet); Common nouns are not capitalized (e.g., ship).

Writing Exercises

Fill in the type of noun from the above list for each of the following words. Is it a *person*, *place*, *animal*, *substance*, *measure*, *object*, or *quality*?

water	_____	ocean	_____	Robert	_____
mile	_____	bear	_____	sweetness	_____
air	_____	building	_____	kilometer	_____
year	_____	foot	_____	iron	_____
book	_____	courage	_____	diamond	_____

A PRONOUN is a word that takes the place of a noun.

Without pronouns, you would have to use nouns over and over. So, to avoid repetition (i.e., “Ruth is sitting at Ruth’s word processor using Ruth’s paper.”), we substitute another part of speech.

The following are the most commonly used pronouns.

I	my	mine	me	we	he
our	ours	us	myself	ourselves	his
you	your	yours	yourself	yourselves	him
herself	it	its	itself	they	she
their	theirs	them	themselves	what	her
who	whose	whom	this	that	hers
each	these	those	all	any	both
either	neither	few	many	anyone	none
some	one	other	another	anybody	everybody
nobody	somebody	no one	someone	everyone	whoever

Examples: Mary let her cat outside because it was howling.

The boy rode his bike to his friend’s house.

Joanne, did you finish your homework?

It doesn’t get any better than this.

What kind of movies do you like?

Is everyone happy with his gift?



Writing Exercise

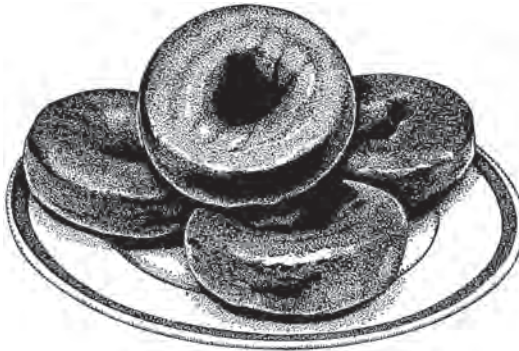
Write ten interesting sentences using a variety of pronouns from the list on the previous page.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

*An ADJECTIVE is a word used to
modify a noun or pronoun.*

Adjectives are meant to be descriptive and often answer the questions: *What kind? What color? Which one? How much? How many?*

What kind/color?	Which one?	How much/many?
<i>bright blue</i> eyes	<i>that</i> scarf	<i>several</i> dollars
<i>violent</i> storm	<i>this</i> month	<i>twenty</i> cents
<i>famous</i> writers	<i>last</i> year	<i>one</i> time
<i>used</i> books	<i>those</i> donuts	<i>no</i> work



Writing Exercise

1. Identify and underline the adjectives below. Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate question: What kind? What color? Which one? How much? How many?

Example: *tiny* airplane (*What kind?*)

large animals	_____	good company	_____
blue car	_____	wide smile	_____
busy city	_____	that style	_____
frail woman	_____	fifty pennies	_____
brave soldier	_____	biggest banana	_____
tardy employee	_____	those earrings	_____
first year	_____	whole thing	_____

2. Write your own adjectives on the blank spaces below to fit the applicable questions.

Example: *big* lake (*What kind?*)

_____	radio	(Which one?)	_____	stars	(How many?)
_____	man	(How many?)	_____	weeks	(What kind?)
_____	dress	(What kind?)	_____	Englishmen	(How many?)
_____	flowers	(Which one?)	_____	rose	(What color?)
_____	fish	(How many?)	_____	dollars	(How much?)
_____	clouds	(What kind?)	_____	weather	(What kind?)
_____	shoes	(Which one?)	_____	house	(Which one?)

A VERB is a word that expresses action or otherwise helps to make a statement.

The *verb* is the only part of speech that can make a statement about a subject.

Example: “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)

No sentence is complete without a verb—not even the shortest sentence. [**Jesus** is the subject; **wept** is the verb.] There are two types of verbs: *action* and *linking* verbs.

The action verb can express either physical or mental action.

<p>Examples: The boy <i>ran</i> home.</p> <p> She <i>calculated</i> the tax due.</p> <p> Can you <i>imagine</i> such a thing?</p> <p> She <i>jumped</i> over the crack.</p>	<p> They <i>believe</i> in prayer.</p> <p> Let’s <i>follow</i> his advice.</p> <p> <i>Listen</i> to the rain.</p> <p> Susan <i>finished</i> her ice cream.</p>
--	--



Other verbs help to make a statement by *linking* the **subject** (the part of the sentence about which something is being said) and the **predicate** (the part of the sentence which says something about the subject). One of the most important verbs in this group is: **to be**. The common forms of **to be** are: *is, are, was, and were*.

Examples: My brother *is* tall The apples *are* ripe.
 Everything *was* wet. The people *were* happy.

.....

Writing Exercise

Write ten simple sentences using both action and linking verbs.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

*An ADVERB is a word used to modify a verb,
an adjective, or another adverb.*

The adverb answers the questions: *When? Where? How? To what extent—how much? or how long?*

Examples: Set the table **now**. (When?) Weeds grow **everywhere**. (Where?)
 The rain fell **down**. (Where?) He **recently** visited us. (When?)
 She laughed **happily**. (How?) She danced **gracefully**. (How?)
 Here I am. (Where?) The summer seems **far** away. (To what extent?)
 He ran **quickly**. (How?) The snow fell **endlessly**. (To what extent?)

Writing Exercise

1. Identify the question these adverbs answer.

(When? Where? How? To what extent?—how much? or how long?)

2. Provide an appropriate verb.

Example:

Verb	Adverb	Question
<i>ran</i>	<i>fast</i>	<i>How?</i>



Verb	Adverb	Question
	frequently	
	wordlessly	
	there	
	soon	
	almost	
	today	
	faster	

Verb	Adverb	Question
	forever	
	up	
	promptly	
	daily	
	nearby	
	suddenly	
	slowly	

*A **PREPOSITION** is a word used to show the relationship of a noun or pronoun to some other word in a sentence.*

The following is a list of words that are the most common prepositions:

about	because of	during	of	to
above	before	except	off	toward
according to	behind	for	on	under
across	below	from	on account of	underneath
after	beneath	in	out of	until
against	beside	inside	outside	unto
along	between	in spite of	over	up
among	beyond	instead of	past	upon
around	but	into	since	with
as	by	like	through	within
at	down	near	throughout	without

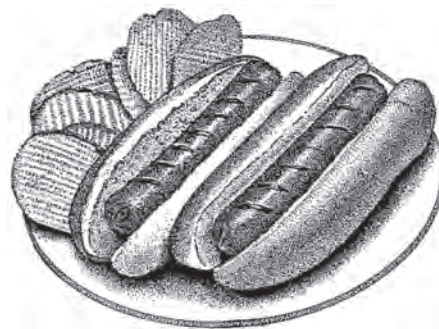


Writing Exercise

Underline the prepositions that appear in the following sentences and enclose in parentheses the words or phrase that each preposition introduces.

Example: In (American history), there were many great orators.

1. He walked toward the sun.
2. His foot was caught between two boards.
3. The man at the door is waiting.
4. There was a hot dog stand across the street.
5. The letter was sent by express mail.
6. The swords hanging over the fireplace were rusty.
7. It snowed throughout the night.
8. The kitten hid under the table.
9. Rex ran out of the house without his leash.
10. John was nervous during the exam.



A CONJUNCTION is a word used to connect words or groups of words in a sentence.

The three most common conjunctions are *and*, *but*, and *or*.

1. **Conjunctions** join single words:

Examples: Bread *and* butter are delicious with soup.

Would you rather have tea *or* cocoa?

The house is small *but* comfortable.

2. **Conjunctions** join groups of words:

Examples: She galloped over the river *and* through the woods.

The sheriff wanted to call her *but* had to wait.

Wolves run in packs *or* wander alone.



3. **Conjunctions** join two independent clauses.⁶

Examples: One sister had ruddy skin, *and* the other sister had a fair complexion.
Chrissy wanted a new doll, *but* she had to wait for her birthday.
We can fly to Arizona, *or* we can drive.

Additional conjunctions are: *nor, for, because, yet, either ... or, neither ... nor, both ... and*, and *not only ... but also*.

Examples: We can listen to *either* classical music *or* jazz.
Both John *and* Sally were late.
Not only the monkeys *but also* the elephants enjoy entertaining people.
We waited until closing time, *for* we didn't want to miss a thing.

Writing Exercise

Write three sentences for each of the following conjunctions for a total of twenty-one sentences. Use *and, but, or, yet, neither ... nor, not only ... but also*, and *because*.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____

6. Please note that a *comma* is needed following the first independent clause and before the *conjunction*.

14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____

*An **INTERJECTION** is a word used to express strong feeling or sudden emotion and is not related grammatically to other words in the sentence.*

These are short exclamations and are followed by an exclamation point[!]. Interjections are especially important to creative writing because they **spice up** your story. Here are some examples: *Behold! Wow! Hey! Oh! Ah! Well! Whew! Ouch! Alas! Listen! No! Bravo!*

Example: *"Oh! You frightened me!"*

.....

Writing Exercise

Write eight sentences using the interjections listed above or choosing ones of your own.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Summary

Parts of Speech	Use	Examples
Noun	Names	George, store, England, ball
Pronoun	Takes the place of a noun	I, you, me, yourself, it, they, what, who, any, several, anyone, everyone
Adjective	Modifies a noun or pronoun	bright, red, violent, used, last, those, twenty
Verb	Expresses action or helps to make a statement	run, climb, think, plan, follow, was, were, are, feel, touch, write
Adverb	Modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb	now, here, very, recently, suddenly, too, daily, faster, brightly, truly
Preposition	Shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun to some other word	in (this world), across (the street), for (Mary), without (her)
Conjunction	Joins words or clauses	and, but, or, nor, for, yet, either ... or.
Interjection	Expresses strong feeling or sudden emotion	Wow! Oh! Ah! Well! Whew! Wait! Now! No!

Note: The same word can function as a *noun* or a *verb*, as an *adverb* or a *preposition*, or as a *pronoun* or an *adjective*, depending on how it is used.

Examples: I marked the *date* on the calendar. (noun)
 I don't want to *date* Sally's brother. (verb)
 My sister tagged *along* with us. (adverb)
 We gathered wild flowers that grew *along* the road. (preposition)
Both did their homework. (pronoun)
Both boys played ball. (adjective)

