

CAMBRIDGE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE
Spoken and Written English
Grammar and Usage



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RONALD CARTER
MICHAEL McCARTHY

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Contents

Note: the numbers are section numbers, not page numbers.

There are more detailed contents pages at the start of each chapter.

Introduction to the Cambridge Grammar of English 1–4

From word to grammar: an A–Z 5–18

Spoken language

Introduction to grammar and spoken English 82–91

From utterance to discourse 92–103

From discourse to social contexts 104–122

Grammar and discourse

Grammar across turns and sentences 123–139

Grammar and academic English 140–154

Word and phrase classes

Introduction to word classes and phrase classes 155–166

Nouns

The noun phrase 167–175

Nouns and determiners 176–196

Pronouns 197–212

Verbs

Verb phrase 1: structure of verb phrases 213–216

Verb phrase 2: tense and aspect 217–226

Types of verb 227–235

Adjectives and adverbs

Adjectives and adjective phrases 236–241

Adverbs and adverb phrases 242–249

Prepositions and particles

Prepositions and prepositional phrases 250–257

Word formation

Word structure and word formation 258–268

Sentence and clause patterns

Introduction to sentences and clauses 269–280

Verb complementation 281–289

Clause types 290–303

Clause combination 304–318

Adjuncts 319–337

Time

Present time 338–345

Past time 346–360

Future time 361–376

Notions and functions

Modality 377–407

Speech acts 408–423

Questions 424–433

Negation 434–447

Condition 448–459

Comparison 460–471

Information packaging

Word order and focus 472–475

The passive 476–487

Speech representation 488–502

Appendices

Word clusters and grammar 503–505

Punctuation 506

English spelling 507–511

Numbers 512–525

Referring to the time 526

Units of measurement 527

Nationalities, countries and regions 528

Irregular verbs 529

North American English grammar 530–538

Glossary 539

Bibliography 540

Index 541

Introduction to the *Cambridge Grammar of English*

What is grammar? 1

- Arrangement of items (syntax) 1a
- Structure of items (morphology) 1b
- Acceptable and unacceptable forms 1c
- Vocabulary (lexis) 1d
- Phrases 1e
- Clauses 1f
- Classes of word, phrase and clause 1g
- Functions 1h
- Sounds (phonology) 1i
- Choices 1j

What is the *Cambridge Grammar of English*? 2

- Usage and acceptability 2a
- Grammar rules: deterministic and probabilistic 2b
- Descriptive versus prescriptive approach 2c
- Grammar as structure and grammar as choice 2d
- Grammar and lexis 2e
- Grammar and discourse 2f
- Grammar and variation: the importance of context 2g
- Grammar and the spoken language 2h

Grammar and corpus data 3

- What is a corpus? 3a
- Using the corpus 3b
- Information on frequency 3c
- Information on concordance 3d
- Deciding what to include 3e
- Insights into use 3f
- Word clusters 3g
- Frequent, common and preferred patterns 3h
- Learner corpus 3i

How *CGE* is organised 4

- From word to grammar: an A–Z 4a
- Topic chapters 4b
- Appendices 4c
- Glossary 4d
- Index 4e

Introduction to the *Cambridge Grammar of English*

WHAT IS GRAMMAR?

1

Grammar is concerned with how sentences and utterances are formed. In a typical English sentence, we can see the two most basic principles of grammar, the arrangement of items (syntax) and the structure of items (morphology):

I gave my sister a sweater for her birthday.

Arrangement of items (syntax)

1a

The meaning of this sentence is obviously created by words such as *gave*, *sister*, *sweater* and *birthday*. But there are other words (*I*, *my*, *a*, *for*, *her*) which contribute to the meaning, and, additionally, aspects of the individual words and the way they are arranged which enable us to interpret what the sentence means. For example, we know it is *I* who gave the sweater, not *my sister*, because *I* comes before the verb (*gave*). In English, subjects (the doers of actions) come before verbs in statements. We also know the relationship between the indirect object, *my sister*, and the direct object, *a sweater*, (that *the sweater* was given and *my sister* was the recipient) because indirect objects come before direct objects. We also expect *my* to come before *sister*, not after. These aspects of the arrangement of things in sentences is referred to as syntax. Syntax is one of the two basic principles of grammar.

Structure of items (morphology)

1b

The example sentence also illustrates the other basic principle of grammar. *I* and *my* are two different forms, one with a subject meaning, the other with a possessive meaning, even though they both refer to the same person. *Gave* refers to past time, in contrast to *give(s)*, which refers to present time. *Sweater* is singular; if there were more than one sweater, the form would be *sweaters*. These small items of meaning, such as *I*, *my*, the past form *gave*, a plural *-s* ending, are called grammatical morphemes, and come under the heading of morphology. Morphology is concerned with the structure of words and phrases. It is the second basic principle of grammar.

Acceptable and unacceptable forms

1c

Grammar is concerned with acceptable and unacceptable forms and the distinctions of meaning these forms create. The fact that *sweater* means 'knitted outer garment worn on the upper part of the body for warmth' and that *sister* means 'female sibling' are matters of vocabulary (lexis), but the distinction between present and past, one and more than one, subject and object, possession

and non-possession, etc., are matters of grammar. In every language, some forms are acceptable and others are not. So, in English, we can create arrangements of our example sentence which are not acceptable, either syntactically or morphologically:

I my sister gave a sweater for birthday her.

Gave I my sister a sweaters for his birthday.

I gives my sisters sweater a for her birthday.

In this grammar book, we indicate unacceptable forms with a line through the text:

~~*I my sister gave a sweater for birthday her.*~~

Vocabulary (lexis)

1d

Although some aspects of our example sentence are concerned with lexis, lexis and grammar are not totally independent. A 'sweater' is the kind of thing in the world that English treats as countable (we may have one, two or more of them). However, if I gave my sister 'information', the fact that information is an abstract entity, which English considers to be uncountable, affects the grammar, and the sentence would have to be *I gave my sister some information*. 'I gave my sister an information' would be an unacceptable form.

Phrases

1e

Our initial example sentence may also be seen as composed of units or building blocks of different sizes, not just individual words and their endings. For example, the sentence could be divided up thus:

I | gave | my sister | a sweater | for her birthday.

We have now divided the sentence into its constituent phrases (items which have individual functions in the sentence). It is the phrase *a sweater* which acts as the object, not just the word *sweater*, and the whole phrase *for her birthday* indicates the reason or circumstances of the giving.

Clauses

1f

We could extend the example sentence:

I gave my sister a sweater for her birthday and she bought me a CD for mine.

We can now see two larger building blocks (in green) in the sentence, connected by *and*. These are clauses (separate units containing their own verbs: *gave/bought*). Grammar is concerned with how the constituent units of sentences (morphemes, words, phrases and clauses) are put together to form sentences.

Classes of word, phrase and clause**1g**

Words are not all of the same type. Some, such as *sweater* and *sister*, are nouns (words referring to entities: persons, things, animals, abstract concepts); some, such as *gave* and *bought*, are verbs (words referring to actions, events or states); and so on. These words belong to different classes.

Equally, the phrases belong to different classes: *for her birthday* and *for mine* are prepositional phrases (phrases introduced by prepositions).

Clauses too belong to classes: some are declarative (they have the subject first and typically make statements), some are interrogative (they have a verb such as *do*, *be* or *have* first, and typically ask questions). Grammar is concerned with how units and classes relate to one another.

Functions**1h**

The noun phrases *my sister*, *a sweater* are types of object in our example sentence in 1f, and *for my birthday* and *for mine* are operating as phrases indicating the circumstances. They are referred to as adjuncts. The terms subject, verb, object, adjunct refer to the functions the different phrase-types carry out in the clause. Grammar describes what the acceptable functions are.

Sounds (phonology)**1i**

How sentences are spoken is also relevant. The sentence *I do like your car*, on the face of it, seems to break the rule that *do* is not used in statements. However, if the sentence is spoken with appropriate stress, then it becomes acceptable. This is the emphatic *do*, which may be used in statements:

I do like your car.

Phonology (the sound systems of a language) is therefore also connected in important ways with grammar and lexis, and influences the interpretation of sentences.

Choices**1j**

Throughout the construction of a sentence, the speaker/writer makes choices. Choices involve things such as number (singular or plural), tense (present or past), definiteness (*a sweater* versus *the sweater*), etc. Every choice carries a different meaning, and grammar is concerned with the implications of such choices.

WHAT IS THE CAMBRIDGE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH?**2****Usage and acceptability****2a**

This book is a grammar of standard British English. Standard British English is a variety of English defined by its grammar, lexis and phonology. There are, of course, other standard varieties of English, for example, standard North American English or standard Indian English or standard Australian English, which may

differ quite considerably in terms of pronunciation, but only minimally as far as grammar is concerned. ❖ **Appendix 530–538 for particular differences in North American English grammar.**

However, issues of acceptability are never far from the surface when there is reference to what is standard in grammar or in language use in general. In this book, the following main categories of British English are adopted:

- acceptable in standard written and spoken English (most forms are in this category)
- acceptable in standard written and spoken English but not approved in more prescriptive grammar books and often avoided by many writers of formal English; for example: split infinitives, stranded prepositions, choices between *who* and *whom*
- unacceptable in standard written English but acceptable in standard spoken English (❖ for example **96 and 97 on headers and tails**)
- unacceptable in standard written and spoken English but acceptable in many regional varieties of English (❖ for example **119b on the use of *ain't***); such forms are not included in the main description in this book, and are simply referred to occasionally
- unacceptable in all varieties of English (for example a structure such as *he did must speak*); such forms are excluded from this book.*

Where possible in this book, we always give an indication if a particular grammatical usage is likely to be considered non-standard, but we also indicate in which contexts such usage may nonetheless pass unnoticed.

Grammar rules: deterministic and probabilistic

2b

The general lay person's perspective is that grammar is about rules of speaking and writing, but not all 'rules' given by grammarians are of the same kind.

Some rules are deterministic, that is, they are rules which always apply. For example, the definite article always comes before the noun (we say *the cup*, not *cup the*), or indicative third person singular present tense lexical verbs always end in *-s* (we say *she works*, not *she work*).

Other rules are probabilistic, that is to say, they state what is most likely or least likely to apply in particular circumstances. For example, in the overwhelming majority of cases, a relative pronoun (e.g. *who*, *which*, *that*) must be used to refer to the subject of a relative clause:

*We met a woman **who had lived** in Berlin during the 1980s.*

However, in informal spoken styles, the relative pronoun may often be omitted, especially after a *there* construction:

*There was a shop in the village **sold home-made ice cream.***

(or: There was a shop in the village which/that sold home-made ice cream.)

* Our thanks to Susan Hunston for suggesting this list of categories.

It is not a rule that the relative pronoun **must** be omitted; it **can** be omitted. The rules concerning its use are therefore probabilistic (it is most probable in most cases that the relative pronoun will be used). In this book, many of the rules given are probabilistic, since they are based on observations of what is most likely and least likely in different contexts in real spoken and written data.

Descriptive versus prescriptive approach

2c

A descriptive approach to grammar is based on observations of usage; it states how people use the grammar of a language. A prescriptive approach to grammar is based on the idea that some forms are more ‘correct’ or more associated with ‘good usage’ than others. Prescriptive rules are often social rules that are believed to mark out a speaker or writer as educated or as belonging to a particular social class. Examples of prescriptive rules are:

DO NOT END A SENTENCE WITH A PREPOSITION.

(e.g. Do not say *This is something you should not be involved in*; say *This is something in which you should not be involved*)

DO NOT SPLIT AN INFINITIVE.

(e.g. Do not say *I expect to shortly welcome him here*; say *I expect to welcome him here shortly*)

Examples are given throughout the book of contexts of use in which prescriptive rules do or do not apply, where this is useful to language learners. The book also contains a number of specially written panels that highlight common prescriptive rules, discuss attitudes to the rules and examine how they do or do not apply in different contexts of use (❖ for example 337).

The main approach taken in this book is descriptive. The emphasis throughout the book is on describing the ways in which speakers and writers of English use the language to communicate with one another, as evidenced in large numbers of spoken and written texts from all over the British English community. The approach taken is, we believe, compatible with a pedagogical grammar which is written primarily for advanced learners of English. It is therefore important that learners are aware of the social importance which attaches to certain prescriptive rules while at the same time being aware of the way in which English is used by real speakers and writers of the language. Issues relevant to a learner’s grammar are explored further at several places below.

Grammar as structure and grammar as choice

2d

The book regularly draws attention to the implications of different grammatical choices and gives the user opportunities to observe and learn about grammatical choices in relation to particular contexts in which the language is used.

The *Cambridge Grammar of English (CGE)* makes a distinction between grammar as structure and grammar as choice. Grammar as structure means: What rules does one need to know in order to construct a sentence or clause appropriately? An example of a structural rule would be that the determiner *none* must be followed by *of* (*none of my friends*, as opposed to *none my friends*).

On the other hand, grammar frequently involves ellipsis, which is the absence of words which can be understood from the surrounding text or from the situation. For example the ellipsis of the subject noun or pronoun in expressions such as *Looking forward to seeing you*, *Don't know* and *Think so* is largely the speaker's/writer's interpersonal choice. Interpersonal choices are choices which are sensitive to the relationship between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. In such a case as this, grammar as choice means: When is it normal to use ellipsis? Are some forms of ellipsis more likely to be used in spoken than in written modes? What kinds of relationship does it project between speakers and listeners? Are the forms linked to greater or lesser degrees of intimacy and informality?

Another example of grammar as choice would be the use of the past simple and the past progressive tense in reported speech. For example, the most frequent form of speech report is the past simple, as in:

*She **said** the central heating needed to be repaired.*

But the past progressive form can also be used. This is especially common in spoken rather than in written English as speakers can choose to express reports as 'pieces of news' rather than as representations of people's words:

*She **was saying** that she's going to quit her job.*

Both forms of *say* are acceptable but the progressive form is less frequent. It is, however, a choice which speakers or writers can make in particular contexts. In this book, both grammar as structure and grammar as choice are treated, and the grammar of choice is as important as the grammar of structure.

Grammar and lexis

2e

Grammar does not exist separately from other levels of language. There is a close link between grammar and lexis and in this book attention is given to the meaning, structure and formation of individual words. There are also many places in the book where grammatical choices entail particular choices of vocabulary, or vice versa.

The book reflects recent computer-assisted research, which shows the patterned relationship between vocabulary and grammar. For example, the pattern of about twenty verbs in English is verb + *by* + *-ing*, where the verb is followed by the preposition *by* and an *-ing* clause. Most verbs of this kind fall into two main groups, one group meaning 'start' or 'finish', the other group meaning 'respond to' or 'compensate for' something. For example:

*They **started off** by collecting money for children's charities.*

*She **concluded** by singing three songs in Italian.*

*They **responded to** the news by cutting off all communication with the outside world.*

*He **allowed for** the bend by braking sharply.*

Experienced users of English recognise such patterns intuitively but it is often only when computer analysis demonstrates the patterns across many examples of use that they are fully acknowledged. Description of such patterns is becoming a more established feature of many modern grammar books. *CGE* is no exception and lists of words which behave in similar ways to one another are frequently given.

Grammar and discourse

2f

Another important level of language organisation that has received detailed investigation in recent years is the level of discourse. Discourse refers to the patterns of language used beyond the level of the sentence or beyond the individual speaking turn. There has been much description of spoken discourse patterns (e.g. how people open and close conversations; how they organise their speaking turns) and also attention to the ways in which sentences combine to form coherent texts in writing. This book pays attention to such patterns and describes the cohesion of sentences – that is, the ways in which grammatical links across sentences or speakers' turns create coherent texts (❖ 214). Two chapters in this grammar (123–139 and 140–154) are devoted to grammar and discourse and to the way in which larger units of meaning are created.

In *CGE* it is not our aim to take a text and then extract atomised, grammatical points from it. Rather, texts are used to illustrate how grammatical meanings are created in actual use. The place, distribution and sequencing of the grammatical feature in its text and context are as important as its actual occurrence. This book is based on insights from the fields of text and discourse analysis, rather than just traditional sentence grammars. The emphasis in *CGE* is, wherever appropriate, on the relationship between choice of form and contextual factors.

In parts the book represents a first step towards a context-based or discourse grammar of English. For example, where it is appropriate, extracts from different written sources are clearly indicated and spoken exchanges are marked and explained with reference to particular contexts and speaker roles. For example,

[public notice]

*Vehicles parked **here** will be towed away.*

[notice in a train compartment]

***These** seats are reserved for disabled customers.*

[at a travel agent's; the customer has just received his tickets]

Customer: *Right well **this** is all right now is it?*

Agent: ***That's** the ticket yes.*

(what is *this* for the customer is *that* for the agent)

Grammar and variation: the importance of context

2g

Language variation takes many different forms. Language can vary in levels of formality; it can vary according to the regional or social groups to which speakers belong; it can vary over time; it can vary according to the uses to which it is put.

Certain types of language use are associated with particular forms of activity or registers and are marked by distinctive patterns of use, including distinctive patterns of grammar.

For example, cookery books and instructional manuals use many imperatives; newspaper headlines often deploy highly compressed forms of language; some forms of academic English make particular use of the passive voice; incomplete sentences are commonly used to highlight key information in advertisements and in radio and television news broadcasts. In conversation, too, the choice of one grammatical feature rather than another can depend on the speaker's perception of the relationship they have with other speakers, the formality of the situation or their assessment of the context in which they are communicating.

An important factor that affects the context of communication is whether the medium is spoken or written. Several parts of this book describe differences and distinctions between spoken and written grammar and indicate the different degrees of formality that affect choices of grammar. Wherever necessary to avoid ambiguity, information about the context in which examples typically function, whether predominantly spoken or written, is given. In *CGE* we are assisted in this practice by access to a corpus (☛ 3a), which is very carefully annotated with reference to contexts of use.

Grammar and the spoken language

2h

Most books on the grammar of English have had a bias towards the written language. For many centuries dictionaries and grammars of the English language have taken the written language as a benchmark for what is proper and standard in the language, incorporating written, often literary, examples to illustrate the best usage.

Accordingly, the spoken language has been downgraded and has come to be regarded as relatively inferior to written manifestations. Both in the teaching and learning of first, second and foreign languages, and in educational institutions and society in general, oral skills are normally less highly valued, with linguistic expertise being equated almost exclusively with a capacity to read and write.

Until recently, the forms and structures typically found in spoken communication have not been highlighted. It is only recently that advances in audio-recording and associated technology have enabled sufficient quantities of spoken language to be used for analysis. *CGE* draws for its examples of spoken English on the CANCODE corpus (☛ 3a). The CANCODE corpus is a collection of everyday informal spoken texts which provides very useful evidence of significant structures, especially as they are found in spontaneous, unplanned, conversational usage. Although the corpus has not been systematically coded for phonetic features and features of intonation, this book has an accompanying CD-ROM in which key sentences, conversational exchanges and patterns of use can be listened to.

A bias towards written grammar means that in some cases appropriate terms for describing particular features of spoken grammar are not available within existing grammatical frameworks. In some cases new ways of describing language

(metalinguage) have to be introduced. An example is the use of the terms ‘headers’ and ‘tails’ (❖ 96 and 97). Thus, structures such as:

header

Her friend, Jill, the one we met in Portsmouth, she said they'd moved house.

tail

He always makes a lot of noise and fuss, Charlie.

are unlikely to be found in written contexts but are standard spoken forms. These have, in the past, often been described using metaphors such as left- and right-dislocation, based on the way words are arranged on a page in western writing. We consider these inappropriate to describe spoken grammar, which exists in time, not space.

Another example of differences between spoken and written use involves voice (the choice of active or passive). Voice is more subtle and varied in the grammar of everyday conversation than is indicated in grammar books that focus only on written examples. There is, naturally, a focus on the core *be*-passive in contrast to the active voice, but when we look at a large amount of conversational data, we see that the *get*-passive form is much more frequent in spoken data than in comparable amounts of written data. At the same time it adds a further layer of choice, reflecting speakers' perceptions of good or bad fortune, or of the degree of involvement of the subject. For example:

I'm afraid his car window got broken.

(an unfortunate outcome)

She got herself invited to the official opening.

(she is seen as partly instrumental in being invited)

Detailed attention needs to be paid to such complex phenomena, which might otherwise be underplayed in a book based only on written examples. Where it is appropriate to do so, in *CGE* there is a thorough examination of spoken examples side by side with balanced written examples so that relevant differences can be revealed.

Some people argue that learners of English should not be presented with details of how native speakers speak. The position taken in this book is that such an approach would disadvantage learners. This book presents information about spoken grammar because it is important for learners to observe and to understand how and why speakers speak as they do. To describe these features does not mean that learners of English have to speak like native speakers. *CGE* presents the data so that teachers and learners can make their own informed choices.

GRAMMAR AND CORPUS DATA

3

What is a corpus?

3a

The word corpus has been used several times already in this introduction. A corpus is a collection of texts, usually stored in computer-readable form. Many of the examples in this book are taken from a multi-million-word corpus of spoken and written English called the Cambridge International Corpus (CIC). The corpus

is international in that it draws on different national varieties of English (e.g. Irish, American). This corpus has been put together over many years and is composed of real texts taken from everyday written and spoken English. At the time of writing, the corpus contained over 700 million words of English. The CIC corpus contains a wide variety of different texts with examples drawn from contexts as varied as: newspapers, popular journalism, advertising, letters, literary texts, debates and discussions, service encounters, university tutorials, formal speeches, friends talking in restaurants, families talking at home.

One important feature of CIC is the special corpus of spoken English – the CANCODE corpus. CANCODE stands for Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English, a unique collection of five million words of naturally-occurring, mainly British (with some Irish), spoken English, recorded in everyday situations. The CANCODE corpus has been collected throughout the past ten years in a project involving Cambridge University Press and the School of English Studies at the University of Nottingham, UK. In *CGE* dialogues and spoken examples are laid out as they actually occur in the transcripts of the CANCODE recordings, with occasional very minor editing of items which might otherwise distract from the grammar point being illustrated.

The CANCODE corpus is a finely-grained corpus. The CANCODE research team have not simply amassed examples of people speaking; they have tried to obtain examples from a range of sociolinguistic contexts and genres of talk. There is considerable advantage in being able to demonstrate statistical evidence over many millions of words and broad general contexts.

Using the corpus

3b

Grammar, like vocabulary, varies markedly according to context, allowing speakers considerable choice in the expression of interpersonal meanings (that is, meanings realised in relation to who one is speaking to rather than just what one is saying). A carefully constructed and balanced corpus can help to differentiate between different choices relative to how much knowledge speakers assume, what kind of relationship they have or want to have, whether they are at a dinner party, in a classroom, doing a physical task, in a service transaction in a shop, or telling a story (for example, our corpus tells us that ellipsis is not common in narratives, where the aim is often to create rather than to assume a shared world). By balancing these spoken genres against written ones, our corpus can also show that particular forms of ellipsis are widespread in certain types of journalism, in magazine articles, public signs and notices, personal notes and letters and in certain kinds of literary text. In descriptions of use, the most typical and frequent uses of such forms are described in relation to their different functions and in relation to the particular contexts in which they are most frequently deployed. (→ 3h below)

CGE is a grammar book that is informed by the corpus. The word ‘informed’ is used advisedly because we are conscious that it is no simple matter to import real data into a reference book in the belief that authentic language is always the right language for the purposes of learning the language. In places, this means that corpus examples which contain cultural references of the kind that are so common in everyday language use are either not selected or, while ensuring that

the key grammatical patterns are preserved, are slightly modified so that they do not cause undue difficulties of interpretation. It is our strong view that language corpora, such as the Cambridge International Corpus, can afford considerable benefits for language teaching but the pedagogic process should be informed by the corpus, not driven or controlled by it.

Information on frequency

3c

The corpus was analysed in a variety of ways in the preparation of this book. One way was to compile frequency lists. A frequency list simply ranks words, phrases and grammatical phenomena (e.g. how many words end in *-ness* or *-ity*, or how many verb phrases consist of *have* + a verb ending in *-en*) in a list. In this way, we are able to see not only which items are most and least frequent, but also how they are distributed across speech and writing and across different registers (e.g. newspapers, academic lectures, conversations at home). For example, the list of the twenty most frequent word-forms in the CIC for spoken and written texts (based on five-million-word samples of each) are different.

The twenty most frequent word-forms in spoken and written texts

spoken		written	
1	<i>the</i>	1	<i>the</i>
2	<i>I</i>	2	<i>to</i>
3	<i>and</i>	3	<i>and</i>
4	<i>you</i>	4	<i>of</i>
5	<i>it</i>	5	<i>a</i>
6	<i>to</i>	6	<i>in</i>
7	<i>a</i>	7	<i>was</i>
8	<i>yeah</i>	8	<i>it</i>
9	<i>that</i>	9	<i>I</i>
10	<i>of</i>	10	<i>he</i>
11	<i>in</i>	11	<i>that</i>
12	<i>was</i>	12	<i>she</i>
13	<i>it's</i>	13	<i>for</i>
14	<i>know</i>	14	<i>on</i>
15	<i>is</i>	15	<i>her</i>
16	<i>mm</i>	16	<i>you</i>
17	<i>er</i>	17	<i>is</i>
18	<i>but</i>	18	<i>with</i>
19	<i>so</i>	19	<i>his</i>
20	<i>they</i>	20	<i>had</i>

In the spoken list, *I* and *you* rise to the top, indicating the high interactivity of face-to-face conversation. *Know* is at number 14, indicative of the high frequency of the discourse marker *you know* (••• 106b), and *mm* and *er* reflect the frequency with which listeners vocalise their acknowledgement of what the speaker is saying, or whereby speakers fill silences while planning their speech in real time or while hesitating. *It's* and *yeah* reflect the informality of much of the talk in the CANCODE spoken corpus.

Information on concordance

3d

Another way the corpus was analysed was in terms of concordance. Concordances help researchers see how words are actually used in context. Words or phrases which researchers are interested in are displayed in a vertical arrangement on the computer screen along with their surrounding co-text: we see what came just before the word and what came just after. For example, these sample lines from a concordance for the adverb *yet* in the spoken corpus show us that a negative environment is very common, but not in questions (negative items and question marks in bold), and that *as yet* is a recurrent pattern. The A–Z entry for *yet* in this book, and much of our grammatical description, is based on this type of observation.

Sample lines from a concordance for *yet*

<\$2> Yeah. We haven't got any answer yet . We'd like it trimming. <\$E> laughs	71094002.dcx
the wedding. <\$2> I haven't got any yet . Em <\$O69> Janet looked lovely <\\$O6	90127004.dcx
but we haven't made er any arrangements yet it's sort of er a bit too early yet	80339001.inx
? <\$1> Sorry? <\$2> Has FX arrived yet ? <\$1> Who is this? <\$2> MX's f	90449020.dcx
be in. <\$2> They haven't arrived as yet . <\$1> <\$=> It is a whole <\\$=> it	70752001.dnx
yet? <\$1> No not a price breaker as yet . Just their own winter programme.	70764003.dnx
ame in. <\$E> laughs <\\$E> Erm but er as yet it's not available in every store.	90089007.knx
ll over the place. Em we haven't got as yet a timetable to show you as to what's	90003001.dnx
haven't come have they? <\$2> Not as yet . No. Normally about two weeks before	70765004.dnx
. Well I said I don't know the story as yet <\$2> Mm. <\$1> <\$=> I said But	70365004.dcx
. But they're not putting anybody up as yet because they have an appeal launch r	70502001.dfx
ms. Er that's still not p= er set up as yet though. Erm we're gonna do something	70499001.dfx
n't managed to mark any of your work as yet but I I promise I'll have it back to	71232001.kpx
manda are you ready for your assessment yet ? <\$F> I think so yeah. <\$1> I'	71229001.kpx
Anyway you obviously haven't gone back yet so <\$=> erm I won't be er <\\$=> you	70515012.imx
t know. <\$G?> <\$1> Oh he's not back yet . <\$2> No. <\$1> Oh right. <	70584004.dcx
eeeks ago. And he he hasn't written back yet . So <\$E> laughs <\\$E> <\$1> No. Mm	70645001.dcx
G?>. <\$4> Have you changed your bank yet ? <\$3> My turn. <\$E> sighs <\\$E>	71031003.kmx
<\$1> Bye. Cheers. <\$3> Won't be yet until I've <\$O13> lost <\\$O13> a lit	90082002.knx
<\$2> Have you seen Beauty And The Beast yet ? <\$1> No I was wanting to go.	70056002.dcx
p to see me every year. She hasn't been yet . And she and I like to trip out on a	71094002.dcx
tomorrow <\$6> No. No. Not for a bit yet . <\$3> Good. <\$6> We we thought	70499004.dfx

The concordance also gives us a code on the right of the screen (in green here) which tells us what type of conversation each line occurs in, and leads us to the corpus database where we can verify who the speakers are, what age, gender, and social profile they have, how many people were involved in the conversation, where it took place, etc. We are therefore able to say something is in common usage as we see it represented across a range of texts and users in the corpus.

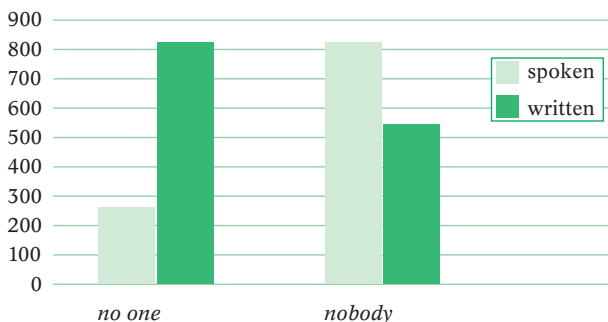
Deciding what to include

3e

In deciding on priorities with regard to the description of items and patterns, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are important. On the quantitative side, the corpus evidence can often show striking differences in distribution of items

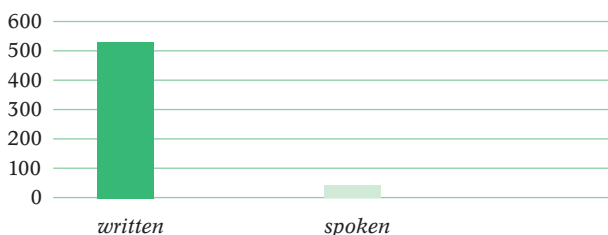
between speaking and writing. For example, the forms *no one* and *nobody* are, on the face of it, synonymous, yet their distribution across five million words each of spoken and written data is very different, with *nobody* greatly preferred in the spoken corpus, as shown below.

Use of *no one* and *nobody* in spoken and written English



The interpretation of such statistics then depends on a more qualitative interpretation of the data, observing how *nobody* tends to correlate with the more informal end of the spectrum. A similar pattern of usage, in this case more clearly related to formality, can be seen for *who* and *whom*, where *whom* is shown to be relatively rare in conversation, only occurring in more formal contexts.

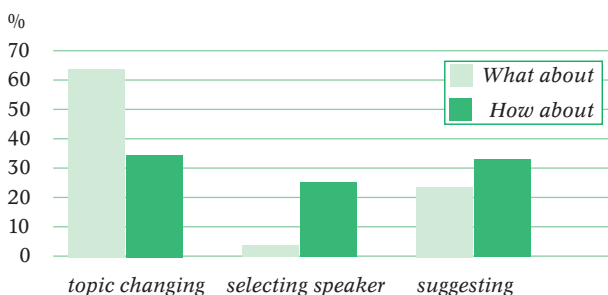
Whom in written and spoken English



Insights into use

3f

Statistical evidence from the corpus can also give insight into the communicative acts most typically performed by particular items. The next diagram shows the different functions of *what about* and *how about* in the CANCODE corpus. Both forms are used to change the topic in conversation, with *what about* being used to do this more frequently than *how about* (*What about this new airport plan; what do you think of that?*). Another common function for both items is in the turn-taking system, where there is a strong preference for *how about* as a way of selecting the next speaker (*How about you Jean; what do you think?*). When suggestions are being made, both forms seem more or less equally available (*How about a walk before lunch?*) (❖ also 421a).

What about and how about in conversation**Word clusters****3g**

Searching a corpus also continually reveals new insights into language structure and use. For example, research for this book has revealed the importance of word clusters and grammar.

Word clusters are groups of words that often occur together; some consist of just two words, e.g. *you know*, some are longer, e.g. *on the other hand*. Some of the most frequently repeated clusters reveal grammatical regularities. They often merit special consideration outside of the normal structural rules as described in the rest of this book, since they perform important basic functions in everyday usage, such as a turn-taking function in a conversation. These word clusters are sometimes different in spoken and written texts but such clusters are an important overall component in speaking and writing a language fluently since they can operate as the frequent and regular building blocks in the construction of meaning.

Research has highlighted patterns that include a range from two-word to six-word clusters and different patterns exhibit different ranges of meaning. It is possible that further research will demonstrate that lines between the vocabulary and the grammar of a language need to be drawn less sharply. The research is ongoing and new descriptions of the functions of clusters are being formulated. In *CGE* the main findings concerning clusters are presented in **503–505 Appendix: Word clusters and grammar**; however, readers will find a number of observations placed in key places throughout the book (particularly, for example, in chapters on spoken grammar, on the noun phrase, and on prepositions and prepositional phrases). The appendix on word clusters highlights possibilities in description, but corpus research is a constant and ever-developing feature of the study of grammar, and subsequent editions of *CGE* may well contain a separate chapter or chapters devoted to word clusters.

Frequent, common and preferred patterns**3h**

Throughout *CGE* particular patterns are said to be frequent or common, either in the language as a whole or in speech rather than in writing or in formal rather than informal contexts of use. Sections 3a–3g above indicate how in this book a corpus is consulted before statements concerning the frequency of grammatical patterns are made.

As we have seen, some patterns are frequent but not acceptable in standard grammar while some patterns are non-standard in written usage but frequent in informal spoken varieties and perfectly acceptable in those varieties. Section 2a above indicates the range of possibilities. We believe information about frequency is important, especially for learners of a language.

A corpus also enables us to indicate which patterns are ‘preferred’. Speakers and writers have choices and some choices are more typical in some contexts than in others. Preferences are attested with reference to the corpus and in several places throughout the book the choices open to a speaker or writer are described with an indication of which choices most typically occur. The fact that a speaker may choose the form which is the most typical does not mean that the alternative forms are incorrect or non-standard. The term ‘preferred’ as used in *CGE* highlights the most frequent choices made by users of the language.

Learner corpus

3i

We also had access during the writing of this book to a large learner corpus consisting of texts produced by learners of English from a wide range of lingua-cultures, coded for error and inappropriate use. This, along with our own language-teaching experience and that of our reference panel, has enabled us to give warnings of common areas of potential error where appropriate. These error warnings are signalled by the 🌟 symbol.

HOW *CGE* IS ORGANISED

4

CGE is organised differently from other contemporary books on the grammar of English. Our coverage is, we believe, extensive, and major areas of description of the grammar of English are treated. However, as argued in section 2b above, this book is unique in the attention devoted to the spoken language. A high proportion of illustrative examples in *CGE* are drawn from a spoken corpus, a unique A–Z section covers many key words and phrases that have particular prominence in spoken English, and there are several chapters specifically devoted to the structural features of spoken grammar. The organisation of *CGE* reflects this orientation and the first chapters in the book are therefore those most saliently devoted to spoken grammar and to differences and distinctions between spoken and written English grammar. This is not to say that spoken grammar is not treated throughout the book, including the appendices, but it is to underline the belief that spoken and written language need, as far as is practicable, to be accorded equal priority. Previous grammar books have given greater attention to written grammar. *CGE* offers a more balanced approach.

Throughout the book, we make much use of cross references. This is because some of the most common grammatical items in English have many different meanings and uses and their descriptions will consequently be found under different headings in the book. For example, the word *anyway* is used as an adverb, and is also used as a discourse marker in spoken language; the modal verb

could is used to express possibility but it is also common in the performance of everyday speech acts such as requesting and suggesting. It is rarely possible to say everything that needs to be said about an item in one place in the book. The cross-references also allow further exploration of any item you may be interested in, and may be useful to lead you to more precise information when you look up an item.

From word to grammar: an A–Z

4a

The first part of *CGE* (5–81) is the **A–Z**, where individual words are described. These words have been selected for special attention because they are:

- very frequent in everyday language
- often polysemous (that is, they have more than one meaning)
- individual in some way in their grammar, possessing characteristics that are worthy of particular note
- known to be difficult for learners of English and often lead to errors.

Topic chapters

4b

The **A–Z** is followed by the topic chapters. These are organised as follows:

Spoken language

82–91 Introduction to grammar and spoken English

92–103 From utterance to discourse

104–122 From discourse to social contexts

The three chapters here are a major focus of *CGE*. They are devoted to aspects of the grammar of everyday speech, including the effects of social context.

Grammar and discourse

123–139 Grammar across turns and sentences

140–154 Grammar and academic English

These two chapters take us beyond the sentence. How grammar creates links across sentences and speaker turns is described, and there is a special chapter on the discourse conventions of academic English.

Word and phrase classes

155–166 Introduction to word classes and phrase classes

This chapter acts as an introduction to the sections on Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives and adverbs, and Prepositions and particles.

Nouns

167–175 The noun phrase

176–196 Nouns and determiners

197–212 Pronouns

These three chapters first look at the construction of noun phrases; they then focus on nouns, pronouns and determiners (e.g. *the, a, some, my*).

Verbs

213–216 Verb phrase 1: structure of verb phrases

217–226 Verb phrase 2: tense and aspect

227–235 Types of verb

The three chapters here look at how verb phrases are constructed, including the use of modal verbs and auxiliary verbs, and at the different types of verb.

Adjectives and adverbs

236–241 Adjectives and adjective phrases

242–249 Adverbs and adverb phrases

Here there are two chapters; they look at how adjectives and adverbs are formed and how they are used.

Prepositions and particles

250–257 Prepositions and prepositional phrases

This chapter deals with prepositions and the phrases they form (e.g. *in the morning, on the floor*).

Word formation

258–268 Word structure and word formation

This chapter describes the ways in which words are formed, including the use of prefixes and suffixes and the process of compounding.

Sentence and clause patterns

269–280 Introduction to sentences and clauses

281–289 Verb complementation

290–303 Clause types

304–318 Clause combination

319–337 Adjuncts

The five chapters here introduce the notion of the sentence and the clause, describe different clause types and illustrate how different verbs require different clause elements to be present (the process of verb complementation). How clauses combine to form sentences and the role of adjuncts are also dealt with.

Time

338–345 Present time

346–360 Past time

361–376 Future time

These three chapters look at how time is expressed in English, dealing with present, past and future time, and with how English expresses different perspectives on time.

Notions and functions**377–407 Modality****408–423 Speech acts****424–433 Questions****434–447 Negation****448–459 Condition****460–471 Comparison**

In the six chapters here, core conceptual notions such as negation, condition and comparison are described. The important communicative functions performed by modal verbs and other items are explained in chapters on modality and speech acts.

Information packaging**472–475 Word order and focus****476–487 The passive****488–502 Speech representation**

Here the three chapters are concerned with how speakers and writers decide to present information in clauses, by using active and passive voice choices, different word orders and other ways of emphasising things. How speech is represented and reported is also dealt with.

Appendices**4c**

The appendices give detailed information on punctuation, spelling, irregular verbs, numbers, measurement, time, nationalities and countries, as well as important differences between British and North American grammatical usage, and an insight into the functions performed by word clusters.

Glossary**4d**

The glossary contains brief definitions of all the key grammatical terms used in this book. The glossary also recognises that different grammar books use different terms. The *CGE* glossary refers to terms that are not employed in this book but which are a part of the language used to talk about grammar. Throughout, the aim is to provide an easy navigation between different terminologies and the description of the grammar of English contained in this book.

Index**4e**

The comprehensive index is designed to provide access to a wide range of topics and key words covered in *CGE*.

From word to grammar: an A-Z

<i>About</i> 5	<i>Each</i> 34	<i>Opposite, in front (of)</i> 62
<i>Above</i> 6	<i>Epecially</i> 35	<i>Over</i> 63
<i>According to</i> 7	<i>Even</i> 36	<i>Own</i> 64
<i>Across</i> 8	<i>Ever</i> 37	<i>Person</i> 65
<i>Actual, actually</i> 9	<i>Every</i> 38	<i>Pretty</i> 66
<i>After, afterwards</i> 10	<i>Except</i> 39	<i>Quite</i> 66
<i>After all</i> 10	<i>Expect</i> 40	<i>Rather</i> 67
<i>Afterwards</i> 10	<i>Explain</i> 41	<i>Really</i> 68
<i>Against</i> 11	<i>Fairly</i> 66	<i>Right, rightly</i> 69
<i>All</i> 12	<i>Fall</i> 42	<i>Round</i> 18
<i>Allow</i> 48	<i>Fell</i> 42	<i>Since</i> 70
<i>Already</i> 13	<i>Fetch</i> 29	<i>So</i> 71
<i>Also, as well (as), too</i> 14	<i>Few, Fewer</i> 50	<i>Still</i> 72
<i>Although, though</i> 15	<i>For</i> 43	<i>Stuff</i> 74
<i>Always</i> 16	<i>Get</i> 30	<i>Take</i> 29
<i>Among</i> 26	<i>Go</i> 30	<i>Then</i> 73
<i>Anyway</i> 17	<i>Hardly</i> 44	<i>There</i> 45
<i>Apart from</i> 39	<i>Here, there</i> 45	<i>Thing, stuff</i> 74
<i>Around, round</i> 18	<i>Hope</i> 40	<i>Though</i> 15
<i>As</i> 19	<i>In</i> 21	<i>Too</i> 14
<i>Ask (for)</i> 20	<i>In fact</i> 46	<i>Under</i> 25
<i>As well (as)</i> 14	<i>In front (of)</i> 62	<i>Until</i> 24
<i>At</i> 21	<i>Just</i> 47	<i>Wait for</i> 40
<i>Back</i> 22	<i>Less</i> 50	<i>Want</i> 75
<i>Because/cos</i> 23	<i>Let</i> 48	<i>Well</i> 76
<i>Before</i> 24	<i>Like</i> 49	<i>Whatever</i> 77
<i>Below</i> 25	<i>Little, a little, few, a few</i> 50	<i>While</i> 78
<i>Beneath</i> 25	<i>Make</i> 51	<i>With</i> 79
<i>Besides</i> 39	<i>Mean</i> 52	<i>Worth, worthwhile</i> 80
<i>Between, among</i> 26	<i>Mind</i> 53	<i>Yet</i> 81
<i>Bit, a bit (of)</i> 27	<i>Now</i> 54	
<i>Both</i> 28	<i>Of</i> 55	
<i>Bring, take, fetch</i> 29	<i>Of course</i> 56	
<i>By</i> 24	<i>Oh</i> 57	
<i>Come, go</i> 30	<i>Okay/OK</i> 58	
<i>Cos</i> 23	<i>On</i> 21	
<i>Do</i> 31	<i>Once</i> 59	
<i>Down</i> 32	<i>One</i> 60	
<i>During</i> 33	<i>Only</i> 61	

From word to grammar: an A–Z

The individual words described here have been selected for special attention because they are:

- very frequent in everyday language
- often polysemous (that is, they have more than one meaning)
- individual in some way in their grammar, possessing characteristics that are worthy of particular note
- known to be difficult for learners of English and often lead to errors.

ABOUT

5

Preposition *about*

5a

The most frequent meaning of *about* as a preposition is ‘on the subject of’ or ‘connected with’:

*Er, I'm not too sure **about that**.*

*He became very anxious **about the condition of two of his patients**.*

*We've only just started making enquiries **about him**.*

*I've already told you what I feel **about the appointment**.*

*Why is she always going on **about it**?*

A less frequent use is as a synonym of *round* or *around*:

*The dog was running **about the garden** all day.*

About can be contrasted with *on*, which focuses on more specific and detailed content:

*He gave a lecture **about Karl Marx**.*

*She gave a lecture **on the position of English adverbs in spoken language**.*

Adverb *about*

5b

About is used as an adverb in expressions of time, number and quantity. It is used to express approximation and can be replaced by *around*. It also occurs in the phrase *round about*. It is more common in spoken than in written English:

*I'll see you **about six** then?*

*That was **about six years ago** wasn't it?*

*The suspect was **about 1.7 metres tall**.*

*The main changes took place **round about 1860** at the time of the shift away from agriculture as main source of employment.*

About is rare without a complement. Particular uses are:

*Is John **about**?*

(Is John here/in the neighbourhood/in town?)

*There's a lot of flu **about** at the moment.*

A–Z 18 *Around, round*

⚡ 103b *Approximations*

Be about to

5c

Be about to means 'be on the verge of doing something':

*We were just **about to leave**.*

*She looks as if she's **about to burst into song**.*

Common spoken uses of about

5d

About is common in spoken English when a speaker is orienting a listener to a topic:

***About that car of yours**, do you still want to sell it?*

***About Fran**, she can call in to see your grandmother, can't she?*

What about is common in questions when the speaker points out something or wishes to orient the listener to a topic:

***What about all the cuts** in education and in housing?*

***What about Andreas?** Isn't he coming with us?*

What about, *how about*, and very informally, *how's about* are commonly used to make suggestions:

***What about moving that bookshelf** into the other room? It would give us a bit more space.*

How about an ice-cream?

***How's about going to Kyoto** for the day?*

⚡ 421a *What about, what if, how about*

About after nouns

5e

Some common nouns are frequently followed by *about*. These include:

anxiety

argument

assertion

assumption

complaint

concern

debate

discussion

doubt

enquiry

feeling

fuss

idea

information

joke

misgiving

news

point

qualm

question

reservation

scepticism

speculation

statement

story

talk

uncertainty

worry

*It is dangerous to make too many **assumptions about** basic cognitive processes.
She's always making a **fuss about** our bedrooms being untidy.
Is there any **news about** the people trapped in that avalanche?*

About after verbs

5f

Many common verbs are followed by *about*. They include:

<i>agonise</i>	<i>forget</i>	<i>reminisce</i>
<i>ask</i>	<i>fret</i>	<i>speak</i>
<i>bother</i>	<i>hear</i>	<i>speculate</i>
<i>care</i>	<i>know</i>	<i>talk</i>
<i>chat</i>	<i>learn</i>	<i>think</i>
<i>complain</i>	<i>moan</i>	<i>wonder</i>
<i>enquire</i>	<i>quibble</i>	<i>worry</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>write</i>

*They **agonised** for ages **about** changing their car.*

*More and more people are beginning to **speculate about** a change of management.*

★ *About* is not used with the verb *discuss*:

*We wanted to **discuss** the arrangements for Chinese New Year.
(We wanted to discuss about the arrangements for Chinese New Year.)*

*I wanted to **discuss** ways of improving the essay.*

Note, however, that *about* is used with the noun *discussion*:

***Discussions about** the situation took place yesterday.*

About is used after *complain*:

*They didn't know what to do when people came to **complain about** the goods they had bought.*

(They didn't know what to do when people came to complain the goods they had bought.)

About after adjectives

5g

Many common adjectives are followed by *about*. They include:

<i>apprehensive</i>	<i>fussy</i>	<i>snobbish</i>
<i>blasé</i>	<i>happy</i>	<i>sorry</i>
<i>cautious</i>	<i>knowledgeable</i>	<i>sure</i>
<i>concerned</i>	<i>nervous</i>	<i>unhappy</i>
<i>coy</i>	<i>optimistic</i>	<i>upset</i>
<i>enthusiastic</i>	<i>pessimistic</i>	<i>uptight</i>
<i>excited</i>	<i>sceptical</i>	<i>worried</i>

*The minister was far too **blasé about** public opinion and in the end the media forced his resignation.*

*She's very **nervous about** flying in charter aircraft.*

*Ah, I'm really **sorry about** this.*

*She is more **worried** than she should be **about** her exam results.*

ABOVE

6

Preposition *above*

6a

Above means 'higher than'. It has a meaning that is close to the preposition *over*. Its opposites are *below* and *beneath*. In both the following sentences *over* can be substituted for *above*:

*There was a faded sign **above the door**.*

*Once the plane got **above the clouds** and levelled out, they started to relax.*

Above is preferred when things are at an upper level:

*They lived in a small bungalow **above the village**.*

~~(They lived in a small bungalow over the village.)~~

Above can only be used when there is no contact between the people or things referred to. *Over* or *on top of* have a more general meaning and can be used whether or not one person or thing touches or covers another:

*He put a light plastic raincoat **over his jacket**.*

(or: on top of his jacket)

~~(He put a light plastic raincoat above his jacket.)~~

Above can be used to refer to a higher part, usually of a building, or to a higher structure or place. It can also be used to refer to an increase in size or scale:

*Nairobi is about 2000 metres **above sea level**.*

*Their performance was distinctly **above average**.*

Above is also used metaphorically, often meaning 'a long way from' or 'is superior to'. It can also have a sense of being difficult to understand. *Beyond* is also possible in such phrases:

*She is **above suspicion** and **above reproach**.*

*I'm afraid that type of mathematics is all rather **above me**.*

Above modifying nouns

6b

Above can be used in writing as a premodifier to refer to something which has already been mentioned in the text. The fixed phrase *the above* means 'the foregoing text'. *Below* cannot be used in this way as a premodifier, and *the below* is not possible:

*As we can see from **the above figures**, the profits are likely to be significantly lower this year.*

*As we have argued in **the above**, the results are not convincing.*

Both *above* and *below* can postmodify a noun:

*There was noise coming from the **room above**, so I couldn't sleep.*

*The **picture below** is a striking example of new methods of advertising.*

★ *Above* is not normally used with numbers. *Over* is normally preferred:

*You can only buy alcoholic drinks here if you are **over 18**.*

(You can only buy alcoholic drinks here if you are above 18.)

*It'll cost **over a thousand pounds** to repair.*

A–Z 25 *Below*; 63 *Over*

ACCORDING TO

7

According to meaning 'as reported'

7a

The most frequent use of *according to* is when reference is made to external evidence to support a statement or an opinion:

***According to the safety experts**, it was all right when they left it.*

*It's the same in every block, **according to Cliff**, the caretaker.*

*This delay, **according to Mr McKay**, probably violated federal law.*

*It's going to be delayed, **according to what Nick told us**.*

According to is frequently used to refer to statistics, official reports, surveys, opinion polls, studies, research, etc., especially in more formal contexts:

***According to a recent report** by the National Food Alliance, children are being saturated with advertisements for sugar-rich confectionery.*

*And regional government, **according to a poll** taken last month by Gallup, attracts the support of less than one in three of the public.*

★ Note that *according to* refers to evidence from someone or somewhere else. As such, it usually has a third person referent. It cannot be used to refer to one's own views or statements:

***In my opinion** all those sites should be made green-field sites.*

(According to me/according to my opinion, all those sites should be ...)

According to meaning 'in agreement with'

7b

According to is also used to mean 'in line with', 'in harmony with' or 'depending on'. In this meaning it is most typically not used in front position:

*And is it all going **according to plan** so far?*

*If the police acted **according to the law**, then they should arrest him.*

[talking about placing people on a salary scale]

*I'm sure they probably grade people **according to their experience**.*

*Prices vary very slightly **according to whether** you want 'hotel' or 'hostel' service.*

A closely related phrase is *in accordance with*, which is used in formal, written contexts to mean 'in obedience to', or 'strictly following (rules and regulations)':

*The Socialist government, elected in 1994, resigned in December, but, **in accordance with the constitution**, the President had to call on the Socialist party to form another government.*

ACROSS

8

Across is used as a preposition and as an adverb:

*It's just not enough time to get **across London**.*

(preposition)

[giving directions]

A: *You keep going down until you get to the massive traffic-light complex. You know you're at it. It's sort of bright and there's a big main road running **across**.*

B: *Right.*
(adverb)

★ *Across* is not a verb. The verb form is *cross*:

*Every time you **cross** the road, you're worried you're going to get knocked over.*

(*Every time you ~~across~~ the road, you're worried you're going to get knocked over.*)

Across can be used to indicate movement or position relative to two sides or extremes of something:

[referring to a newspaper article]

*In the paper there's somebody who's going to swim **across the Atlantic** four thousand miles.*

*She sat facing me **across the table**.*

When indicating position relative to another person or thing, with the meaning of 'opposite', 'on the other side of the road to', *across* is used with *from*:

*The Town Hall is **across from the cathedral**.*

Across is often used in contexts of comparisons to indicate a range of something:

*The researchers carried out a study **across 20 countries**.*

Across is also used to refer to the width or diagonal measurement of something. It follows the unit of measurement:

*First, a copy; he slipped a minidisk into the port, formatted and labelled it.
Barely **two centimetres across** – easy to lose, but easy to hide.*

Across is also used to refer to an area in which things are distributed:

*There are other smaller sites, scattered **across the Caribbean** and even in the Mediterranean.*

Across and over

8a

Across and *over* are sometimes interchangeable with little difference in meaning:

*She walked on **across the bridge** in the bitter wind.*

*She put her arm around his waist and led him **over the bridge**.*

However, when the meaning is ‘from side to side’ of a surface, *across* is preferred:

*Draw a line **across the middle of the page**.*

(Draw a line over the middle of the page.)

*He glanced at his watch and strode **across the room**, Julian’s dressing-gown flapping around his legs.*

(... and strode over the room, ...)

Across and through

8b

When there is a surrounding environment, movement is usually expressed by *through*, not *across*:

*It’s very pretty in the summer **walking through the orchards**.*

(It’s very pretty in the summer walking across the orchards.)

A-Z 63 Over

ACTUAL, ACTUALLY

9

★ *Actual* and *actually* refer to whether something is true or factual. They do not refer to time:

*They went into a restaurant ... or it was **actually** a café.*

(it was in fact/in reality a café)

*I’m not really sure about the **actual** procedure.*

(This means ‘the right/correct procedure’; if the meaning had been ‘the procedure that is used now’, the speaker would have said *I’m not really sure about the **present/current** procedure*, or *I’m not really sure about the procedure **now/nowadays***.)

She's **actually** working for a computer firm.

(This means something like 'She is in fact working for a computer firm', or 'Surprisingly, she is working for a computer firm', depending on the context; if we mean 'She is at the present time working for a computer firm', we would say *She's working for a computer firm **at the moment/(right)now.***)

Actual

9a

Actual usually has a meaning similar to 'true', 'real', 'precise', 'right/correct' or 'the thing/person itself/himself/herself':

*I couldn't get an appointment for **that actual day.***
(that precise/exact day)

***My actual involvement** with the project itself was negligible really.*
(my real/true involvement)

[sales assistant (A) talking to a customer in a camera shop]

A: *You don't know which model it is, do you?*

B: *No, I can look it up. Maybe I'll come in with **the actual camera.***
(the camera itself)

A very common expression with *actual* is *in actual fact*, which is an emphatic form of *in fact*:

*But **in actual fact**, a year ago the situation was the same.*

A–Z 46 In fact

Actually

9b

Actually can often be used emphatically, especially to refer to something which is in sharp contrast with expectations:

*He **actually admitted** that he enjoyed it.*
(this was unexpected, not normal behaviour for him)

*There **actually is a plant** that produces what is known as 'the curry leaf'.*

*The original connection with Dave was **actually more through jazz** than through folk music.*

Actually often implies a contrast between a desirable and an undesirable situation:

*So, here is a practical seminar that **actually offers solutions** to the challenges women managers face.*

(implied: in contrast to most other seminars)

*Unlike a blender or liquefier, the juicer **actually separates the juice** from the pulp.*

Actually often operates as a discourse marker in spoken language, signalling topic openings, contrasts in topics, specifying within topics, etc.:

[customer (A) at the information desk in a large bookshop enquiring about a technical manual]

A: *Could you tell me where your manuals are kept? **Actually** I'm looking for a Haynes manual.*

B: *Er what on?*

A: *It's on washing machines.*

[beginning of a one-to-one student tutorial at a university; A is the student]

A: *Where would it be best for me to sit?*

B: *Um, anywhere there's a space.*

[pause]

A: *Well **actually** there's a couple of things really really quickly to ask you. One is about the draft of my history of English essay.*

When used in questions, *actually* can often focus on 'missing' information which the speaker desires or needs for the purposes of the conversation:

[speakers are already talking about B's father]

A: *What did your dad do **actually**?*

B: *Well he was a railway man.*

Actually is often used to hedge statements, making them less direct or less threatening:

*I think Sandra would win hands down **actually**.*

*We had an argument **actually**, a few weeks ago.*

In spoken language *actually* is frequently used in end position, though it may also occur in front and mid positions:

A: *In the afternoon we'll continue with the tour into the training department and on through into the machine division.*

B: *I'd be quite interested in that **actually**.*

AFTER, AFTERWARDS

10

Preposition *after*

10a

After is most frequently used with noun phrases referring to time or to timed events:

*You get used to that, strangely enough, **after a while**.*

*So I'll do those two classes. I'll start probably **after the holidays**.*

*I was sick and tired of being on my own. I wanted to get home. I mean, **after nine months** I was homesick.*

References to place may also be made with *after*, especially when they are seen as part of a sequence of events in time:

[giving directions to someone]

*And **after the fifth roundabout**, you turn off, and there's another roundabout.*

Adverb *after*

10b

After postmodifying a noun

After may postmodify nouns such as *day, morning, week, month, year*, especially in informal speech:

*I've got one interview, then, er, a second interview **the week after**.*
(or, more formal: ... the following week)

A: *And you see yourself as staying round in the London area for the next year or so?*

B: *Oh yeah. Definitely. I mean, for probably **the year after** as well.*

After premodified by another adverb

After does not normally occur alone as an adjunct. It is almost always premodified by adverbs such as *shortly, soon, straight*:

[from a text about the young of the shrew, a small mouse-like animal]

*Born blind and naked, the young quickly develop a thin coat of hair at around nine days old and their eyes open **soon after**.*

[a student talking about a difficult period of study]

*It's just at this real crossroads at the moment when you're just about to start an essay and then you've got to do something else **straight after**.*

Occasionally, in informal speech, *after* may occur alone, with the meaning of 'later':

*That just reminds me of something. [laughs] I'll tell you the joke **after**.*

Afterwards

10c

Where there is no premodifying adverb (➤ 10b above), *afterwards*, not *after*, is normally used:

Suddenly a black cat ran in front of her. In surprise, she cried out aloud.

***Afterwards**, she felt rather foolish.*

(preferred to: After, she felt rather foolish.)

*They laughed together over their tea, but **afterwards** Esther was quiet, analysing what she had been told.*

Afterwards may be premodified by adverbs such as *immediately*, (*not*) *long*, *shortly* and *soon*, and other time expressions involving words such as *days*, *weeks*, *months*, *years*:

*She heard a muffled bang, then a car starting **almost immediately afterwards**.*

*When the phone rang again **shortly afterwards**, he picked up the receiver with regret.*

***A few days afterwards**, Italy joined the war, and with immense relief, we gave up the idea of our rescue.*

After + -ing clause

10d

When used to link two clauses, *after* followed by a verb in the *-ing* form is many times more frequent in writing than in speech. In informal speech there is a strong preference for a full finite clause:

*The police claim he died **after falling** and hitting his head.*

***After graduating**, he became a lecturer at the university.*

*I was out of work for six months **after being** made redundant.*

★ *After having* + *-ed* participle, although it occurs, is rare in both speech and writing. Where it does occur, it often serves to emphasise a contrast between two situations in time:

[part of a speech welcoming a new member of staff in a company]
*And **after having worked** very closely with Gerald for so many years, and **having had** so many people actually believing that he was a member of the company staff, it's very nice finally to be able to welcome him as a real member of staff. [applause follows]*

In most cases, *after* + the *-ing* form of a lexical verb is preferred:

***After journeying** more than 11,000 miles, Russell found the man for whom he was searching.*

(preferred to: *After having journeyed more than 11,000 miles, Russell found the man for whom he was searching.*)

After + finite clause

10e

After may be used with a variety of tense forms and time references to link two clauses:

- Present simple with general present time reference:

[from an article about John Daly, a well-known American golfer]
*He uses at least a dozen balls per round because they lose their shape **after he hits** them.*

- Present perfect with general present time reference:

All adults, **after they have told** off a teenager for not doing his homework, say ‘Do I make myself clear?’.

[that refers to the timing of questionnaires to patients concerning their experience of treatment in the National Health Service in Britain]

And I think people would get a better service if that was done, say, a month **after they’ve been having** treatment.

- Present simple with future time reference:

Ideally, I’d like to move in straight after that, **after you move** out.

(... ~~after you will move out.~~)

- Present perfect with future time reference:

We would love to see you tonight, if it’s possible, **after you’ve visited** David’s mum.

(... ~~after you will have visited ...~~)

- Past simple:

A: And it was only **after you married** you discovered all this?

B: Yes.

- Past perfect:

She was glad that she had resisted an impulse to ring Hal again **after she had read** his note.

The perfect aspect versions stress the completion of the event in the *after*-clause and a break in time between the events in the two clauses. The present simple or past simple versions suggest a closer connection between the two clauses, as with *before* (❖ 24d).

Other uses of *after*

10f

In informal contexts, *after* is occasionally used as a preposition with the meaning of ‘because of’ or ‘as a consequence of’:

[talking about a furniture shop]

After the experience with the chair, I don’t think I’ll buy anything else there.

Look at Brian, how healthy he looks **after all that sun**.

In informal speech, the expression *to be after something* often means ‘to want’ or ‘to look for, to seek’:

[customer in a hardware shop]

I’m **after** a metre of strong chain. Just a metre. It’s for a bike you see. You know, just to tie a bike up. I’ve got a lock and everything.

(I want/I’m looking for ...)

[customer (A) in a bookshop; *Rough Guides* are a very popular type of travel guide book]

A: *Do you have any of these travel guides, Rough Guide to ... wherever?*

B: *Yes, we do. Where in particular **were** you **after**?*

A: *Erm, the south-west of America.*

After all

10g

After all as a conjunction has a concessive meaning, similar to ‘besides’, or the meaning of ‘one should not forget/ignore the fact that ...’.

After all may occur in front, mid or end position in the clause. It is normally separated from the rest of the clause by a comma or commas:

*The garage on the main road has been boarded up for some time. It's been boarded up now for nearly seventeen months. It just seems silly. I mean, **after all**, it's unusual to have a petrol station in a fairly quiet residential area.*
(front position)

*But I stuck at it, pretending to get on and take no notice. Because it was, **after all**, none of my business.*
(mid position)

*I don't mind what you buy. It is your money, **after all**.*
(end position)

The other main use of *after all* is as an adverb meaning ‘contrary to what was believed or expected’. In this meaning, it occurs almost always in end position, and frequently together with *maybe* or *perhaps*. It is not usually separated by a comma in writing:

*Maybe she's not dating him. I mean, maybe they're just friends **after all**.*
(I thought they were dating. Maybe I was wrong.)

*And then at intervals during the interview, I found him ... well, er, creepy really and rather worrying, but then again, at the end, I felt as though I'd done him an injustice and that perhaps he was likeable **after all**.*

*Jeremy looked genuinely pleased to see her and she wondered if they might become friends **after all**.*

AFTER ALL

A–Z 10 *After, afterwards*

AFTERWARDS

A–Z 10 *After, afterwards*

AGAINST

11

Against denoting reactions

11a

Against is used after verbs and nouns denoting (often negative) reactions to situations, beliefs, people, events, etc.

Some common verbs frequently followed by *against* include:

<i>act</i>	<i>discriminate</i>	<i>rebel</i>
<i>advise</i>	<i>fight</i>	<i>speak out</i>
<i>argue</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>struggle</i>
<i>be</i>	<i>guard</i>	<i>testify</i>
<i>campaign</i>	<i>have something</i>	<i>vote</i>
<i>decide</i>	<i>militate</i>	
<i>demonstrate</i>	<i>react</i>	

[talking about speaker B's computer]

A: *One thing you could do is you could actually upgrade this machine.*

B: *I know but I **decided against** it.*

A: *So you think it's fair to **discriminate against** age?*

B: *After a certain age, I think.*

*We will **vote against** it but we will be in the minority.*

Some common nouns frequently followed by *against* include:

<i>accusation</i>	<i>charge</i>	<i>grudge</i>
<i>action</i>	<i>complaint</i>	<i>law</i>
<i>aggression</i>	<i>crusade</i>	<i>prejudice</i>
<i>allegation</i>	<i>defence</i>	<i>protection</i>
<i>appeal</i>	<i>demonstration</i>	<i>protest</i>
<i>argument</i>	<i>discrimination</i>	<i>reaction</i>
<i>battle</i>	<i>evidence</i>	<i>rebellion</i>
<i>campaign</i>	<i>fight</i>	<i>safeguard</i>
<i>case</i>	<i>grievance</i>	

*She emphasised the need for concerted **action against** poverty and inequality which force children into exploitative work.*

*There is not a scrap of **evidence against** her.*

*There's a **law against** murder but people go out and still murder don't they and rob banks and what have you.*

Against denoting physical contact

11b

Against is frequently used to indicate physical contact between two or more things:

*There was a man leaning **against the wall**.*

[swimming instructor to a learner]

*Right, I want to see your arm. That's right. No the other one. Face that way. That one. That's it. Right, I want to see your arm brushing **against your ear**.*

Against denoting competition

11c

Against occurs frequently with verbs and nouns connected with sport and competing, such as *compete/competition, final, game, match, play, semi-final*:

A: *We used to go there for football. And cricket we used to play on the recreation ground.*

B: *Yes. Mm. And did you have a school team? **Play against** other schools?*

A: *No we used to **play** football **against** other teams but not cricket.*

[*the Clifton Downs is an area of open land near the city of Bristol in England*]
*In the holidays sometimes we **played** a hockey match **against** the Clifton College boys on the Clifton Downs.*

★ *Against*, not *with*, is used in sporting contexts with *play* when two teams or individuals compete:

*It was three years ago when my volleyball team was selected to **play against** an Italian one.*

(It was three years ago when my volleyball team was selected to play with an Italian one.)

About, not *against*, is used with *do* to refer to taking action to solve problems:

[speaker is talking about a very noisy party]

*They were all out on the street and Jim and Sally couldn't sleep. They had to phone the police. The police couldn't **do** anything **about** it.*

(The police couldn't do anything against it.)

Do not confuse *against* and *contrary to*:

Contrary to what you may read in the guidebooks, very few of the locals actually speak English.

(Against what you may read in the guidebooks, ...)

ALL

12

Determiner *all*

12a

All is mainly used as a determiner:

***All** the tickets are sold out.*

*We'll have to get rid of **all** our old furniture.*

As a determiner, *all* comes before articles, possessives or demonstratives, and before numerals.

	article, possessive or demonstrative	numeral	head noun
<i>all</i>	<i>the</i>		<i>children</i>
<i>all</i>	<i>my</i>		<i>clothes</i>
<i>all</i>	<i>those</i>		<i>boxes</i>
<i>all</i>		<i>four</i>	<i>books</i>

★ When *all* refers to an entire class of people or things, *the* is not used:

All dogs love meat.

(every dog in the world)

~~(All the dogs love meat.)~~

Everybody/everyone is preferred to ‘all people’.

Everyone has to die sooner or later.

~~(All people have to die sooner or later.)~~

All of is used before personal, demonstrative and relative pronouns. The object form of the pronoun is used:

Thanks to **all of you** for giving up your time to help us.

That’s very bad news. **All of this** is just too upsetting.

They have three sons and two daughters, **all of whom** are married.

~~(... all of who are married.)~~

Of is optional before definite noun phrases:

I left **all (of) my money** in an account invested in the stock market.

Who’s going to eat **all (of) this food**?

Time expressions like *all afternoon*, *all day*, *all night* are a special case. They have definite reference but do not require the definite article. However, the definite article is permitted with or without *of*:

I spent **all afternoon** at the gym.

I spent **all the afternoon** at the gym.

I spent **all of the afternoon** at the gym.

★ *All*, not *all of*, is used before indefinite plurals and non-count nouns:

All prisoners of war have rights under international law.

~~(All of prisoners of war have rights under international law.)~~

All tobacco is heavily taxed.

All processed food is fattening.

All is not used with singular indefinite count nouns; *a whole* is used:

*They managed to eat **a whole chicken**.*
(They managed to eat all a chicken.)

Pronoun *all*

12b

All can be used as an unmodified pronoun, but such usage is formal and infrequent:

***All** are welcome.*

***All** were concerned that something should be done.*
(more typically: Everyone was concerned ...)

***All** is not lost.*

***All** will be revealed in the course of time.*

[newspaper headline]

*Minister's ex-secretary tells **all**.*

All is most typically either premodified or postmodified:

*In the United Kingdom in 1988, there were nearly 25,000 maintained primary schools, including 586 middle schools deemed primary. **Almost all** were mixed-sex schools.*

*It doesn't matter if the car's damaged. **All that matters** is that you're okay.*

*I paid him **all that he wanted**.*

When followed by a relative clause, *all* has a similar meaning to 'everything'. *That* may be omitted before a personal pronoun:

*They lost **all that they had earned** in the stock market crash.*

*I told her to forget **all that had happened**.*

*She taught me **all I know** about computers.*

Adverb *all*

12c

All referring to the subject of a clause usually occupies the normal mid position for adverbs (→ 325):

*The members **all knew** what was going on.*

*We **all try** our best to be on time.*

*This is something that they **can all do**.*

*We've **all been waiting** for ages.*

*We **could all have made** the same mistake.*

*They **are all** qualified social workers.*

When *all* refers to a personal pronoun, there is a choice between pronoun + *all* and *all of* + pronoun:

We're *all* thinking the same thing.
(or: All of us are thinking the same thing.)

A: *Are there any cakes left?*

B: *No, the kids ate **them all**.*

(or: No, the kids ate all of them.)

However, in short elliptical responses, the *of* construction must be used:

A: *Which books do you want to take with you?*

B: **All of them** if that's okay with you.

(~~Them~~ all, if that's okay with you.)

All is also used as an adverb to mean 'entirely', 'completely' or 'extremely', especially in spoken English:

*I've left them **all alone** in the house.*

*When I ask you where you've been, you get **all upset and agitated**.*

*He took one of the cans from the shelf and the whole shelf **all went down**.*

*I got lost and it's **all because** they gave me the wrong directions.*

*He got **all excited** when he heard the news.*

All in fixed expressions

12d

All is particularly common in fixed expressions, especially in spoken English. These are the most common:

All right

All right meaning 'acceptable' or 'okay':

*Is it **all right** if she just pops along tomorrow?*

(also spelled as a single word: alright)

At all

At all as an intensifier in negative and interrogative clauses:

*No, it isn't exactly modesty. I am not **at all** certain that I am modest.*

*Are you **at all** concerned about interest rates rising?*

When placed at the end of questions, *at all* can also function as a marker of politeness:

*Do you have any sparkling water **at all**?*

And all that

And all that is used as a marker of deliberate vagueness and imprecision:

*He's into rock music **and all that**.*

And all

And all (usually pronounced /ə'no:l/) can mean 'as well' in informal spoken language:

*They've already had one holiday this year and now they're off to France **and all**.*

Discourse markers

All occurs in a range of fixed expressions which function primarily as spoken discourse markers. In most cases, the markers function to signpost the direction in which a stretch of talk is going or has gone:

***Above all**, the election was won on a sympathy vote.*
(meaning: primarily)

***First of all**, let me thank you for attending this evening.*
(meaning: the first thing I want to say)

***All right**, tell me why you think we should change the schedule?*
(meaning: seeks to establish a new direction in the discourse)

***All the same**, I think there are other points of view.*
(meaning: despite this)

***All in all**, the best team won.*
(meaning: to summarise)

*So you did decide to go to Leeds **after all**, did you?*
(meaning: nevertheless)

A–Z 34 *Each*; 38 *Every*

ALLOW

A–Z 48 *Let*

ALREADY**13**

Already refers to things that have happened or will have happened at a given point in time, and often (but not necessarily) contrary to expectations. It usually occurs in mid or end position; it is particularly frequent in end position in spoken language:

*There are about ten people here **already**.*
(more than we might expect at this time)

*What makes you think he hasn't done it **already**?*

[*The Commons* refers to the elected part of the British Parliament]

*The Commons has **already** agreed that there should be a referendum in which Londoners are asked whether they want a new council and a separately elected mayor.*

'I shall think about it when I get there.'

'By which time, it will be too late to decide where you want to go,' she pointed out.

*'Because you will **already** be there.'*

Front position is uncommon in informal spoken language, but does occur in more formal, written styles:

***Already** younger women without children are more likely than their male counterparts to use the video recorder daily.*

Already is often used with a verb in the past perfect to stress that something was completed before something else happened:

*They **had already made** their plans for various visits before they arrived.*

★ Do not confuse *already* with *yet*:

*Have you booked a flight **already**?*

(You've done it so soon, have you? It seems very early to book.)

*Have you booked a flight **yet**?*

(We know you have to book one, but I have no idea if you have done it up to this point in time.)

A–Z 72 Still; 81 Yet

ALSO, AS WELL (AS), TOO

14

Also

14a

Also is twice as frequent in writing as it is in speech. It may occupy a variety of positions.

Front position

In this position, *also* is used to add a new point or topic to what has been said:

*She felt a little uncertain on her legs. **Also**, it seemed to her that the sounds of traffic were abnormally loud, giving her an odd sensation of vertigo.*

[on the telephone]

*I will give you a ring instead of sending it to you. I can do that. That's no problem. **Also**, how are things down there in Bristol?*

In front position, *also* occurs frequently together with *and*, especially in speech:

*I'll fax through to you the two sheets that have the adverts on, and the address of where you want us to send it. **And also** I'll fax through to you the letter I've received that has the address on.*

Mid position

Also may be used in the normal mid position for adverbs (❖❖❖ 325). In this position, the meaning of *also* usually refers to the whole clause:

*The boy needs a bath and some food. I don't think he's eaten in a while. He **also needs** clean clothes, which I don't think you'll find at his home.*

*So I've been doing that this week, and I've **also been reading**. I've done a lot of reading.*

*She is very approachable and treats everyone equally, but she's not soft. She **is also** very good to staff with domestic problems.*

End position

In end position, *also* normally links two phrases. Items linked by *also* are in green in the examples below:

*Pollution can cause **trees and bushes** and other things like that to die. And then animals that were in them, like **birds and squirrels and things**, can die **also**.*

*She replaced **it** [the telephone receiver] and this time **it** stayed silent. She went over to the window. **The world outside** was silent **also**.*

In these end-position examples, *as well* and *too* may be used instead of *also*, especially in speech.

Linking phrases

Also may be used to link various types of phrase:

[in an article about the numbers of people visiting theme parks in Britain]
*But Chessington World of Adventures **in Surrey** slipped from fourth to fifth as attendances fell 4 per cent to 1.7 million. Thorpe Park, **also in Surrey**, fell by more than 2 per cent, although it still had well over 1.1 million visitors.*

*He had been nervous as he wished them goodbye **at the departure lounge**, and **also at the river**.*

Too and *as well* cannot normally substitute for this use of *also*.

As well**14b**

As well is many times more frequent in speech than in writing, and it is more than twice as frequent in speech as *also*.

★ *As well* almost always comes at the end of a clause:

*I just ignored it. I think everybody else did **as well**.*
(I just ignored it. As well I think everybody else did.)

[in a restaurant; A is the customer, B is the waiter]

A: *And can I have special fried rice please.*

B: *Yes.*

A: *Could I have a fried beef in black bean sauce **as well**.*

(Could I as well have a fried beef in black bean sauce.)

As well as

14c

As well as may join different types of unit to one another.

- Noun phrases:

*My father was **an artist as well as a priest**, which was his profession.*

- Verb phrases:

*I was going to write it myself, so I was going to **write as well as publish**.*

- Clauses:

★ When *as well as* links a finite clause to another clause, the *as well as* clause has its main verb in the *-ing* form:

*I **am** the press officer **as well as being** the person that has a link in with all of those other communications issues.*

(I am the press officer as well as I am the person that ...)

***As well as working** out a post-war settlement, the Paris Peace Conference also **gave** birth to the League of Nations, which was designed to create a completely new framework of international relations.*

(As well as it worked out a post-war settlement, ...)

As well as can be used at the beginning of a sentence. This use is much more frequent in formal writing than in informal speech:

***As well as** the castle and cathedral, there are other Norman buildings in Lincoln, such as these stone-built houses with round arches.*

***As well as** journalistic skill, being editor teaches you about dealing with stress.*

Front-position *as well as* may occur together with *also* in the second clause:

***As well as** pointing towards the magnetic north, the compass **also** points down into the Earth in the northern hemisphere and up out of the Earth in the southern hemisphere.*

***As well as** visiting the centre of the city to buy goods, many people **also** visit it to enjoy themselves in the theatre or the art gallery, to visit historic buildings, or eat and drink at various restaurants, clubs and cafés.*

Too

14d

Too is much less frequent in speech than either *also* or *as well*. In writing, *too* is only half as frequent as *also*, but many times more frequent than *as well*.

Too is not used at the beginning of a clause. It occurs mostly at the end of the clause, or, in more formal styles, in mid position.

End position

Most occurrences of *too* are in end position. Which part of the clause it refers to depends on context. In the examples below, linked items are in green:

*Karen's having pat . I'll probably have pat  **too**.*

*That was the way **she looked at it**. And **she was dead right**, **too**.*

[talking about reading a boring work document]

*It's as **joyful** as reading a telephone directory, and as **useful** **too**.*

End-position *too* often occurs in speech after a clause with a fronted complement beginning with *and*:

*One of her friends was a sort of pioneer at this new school of study. And I decided that was for me. **And very interesting** it was, **too**.*

[talking about a library book which the speaker has mislaid]

*It's probably around here then, hiding from me. **And a very good book** it was, **too**.*

Also would not normally be used in these examples. *As well* is possible.

Mid position

In more formal styles, *too* occurs in mid position. In written texts, it is often separated by commas before and after:

*Her personal life, **too**, seems happier.*

The meaning, once again, depends on context. This example, out of context, could mean 'her personal life as well as her professional life', or 'her personal life, as well as someone else's personal life'.

Too can occur immediately after the subject, even where auxiliary verbs are present, if it refers directly to the subject:

*He, **too**, was coming to a decision.*

(he and someone else were coming to a decision)

(~~He was too coming to a decision.~~)

*Isabel put her hand to her head and found that her own hat, **too**, had gone.*

(hers and someone else's hat had gone)

(~~... and found that her own hat had too gone.~~)

However, if *too* links a verb phrase or a whole clause with another, it occurs in the normal mid position, after the first auxiliary verb (❖ 325):

*A formal letter **would be sent**, and Victor **would be grateful** if Signor Busi **would extend his stay for three more days so that a press conference could be arranged and the timescale for construction plotted**. He **would, too, be sending** Signor Busi sketches of a small statue which was a birthday gift to Victor from how appropriate! the leading market traders.*

(he would send a letter, and he would send sketches)

Choosing between *also*, *as well* and *too*

14e

Looking at all three expressions together, in speech *as well* is by far the most frequent, *also* is half as frequent, and *too* is the least frequent. In writing *also* is the most frequent, *too* is much less frequent, and *as well* is the least frequent.

In addition to the cases already mentioned, where one of the three expressions may be preferred to the others (e.g. speech versus writing), there are other cases of differences in the use of *also*, *as well* and *too*.

In imperative clauses, *as well* and *too* are normally preferred to *also*:

[customer in a post office, buying first-class and second-class stamps]

*Give me a book of ten first and a book of ten second **as well** then please.*

(preferred to: ... a book of ten second also then please.)

*Dave found her the key. 'Have my ring **too**,' he said, taking it off his finger.*

(preferred to: 'Have my ring also,' he said ...)

As well and *too* are normally preferred in short responses and elliptical structures:

A: *I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be good.*

B: *Yes, I am **too**.*

(or: Yes, I am as well.)

(preferred to: Yes, I am also.)

*And usually, if I can't see who it is when I go to the door, I always ask who it is, and my daughter does **as well**.*

(or: ... and my daughter does too.)

(preferred to: ... and my daughter does also.)

Too is especially common in responses to fixed expressions (e.g. extending good wishes, salutations) and in responses consisting of a single object pronoun:

A: *All the best. Take care.*

B: *You **too**.*

(preferred to: You as well./You also.)

A: *Right. Have a nice weekend.*

B: *I shall try. You **too**.*

(preferred to: You as well./You also.)

A: *I need to do some serious work.*

B: *Yeah, me **too**.*

(preferred to: Yeah, me also./Yeah, me as well.)

Negative clauses

14f

Where two negative ideas are linked, *either* takes the place of *also*, *as well* and *too*:

*Bill's **not** here. I **don't** think Dave is **either**, is he?*

(I don't think Dave is also/as well/too.)

A: That's *not* in paperback yet. It's *not* been in any book clubs **either**, has it?

B: No.

(It's not been in any book clubs also/as well/too, has it?)

A–Z 36 Even

ALTHOUGH, THOUGH

15

Subordinators *although, though*

15a

Both *although* and *though* can introduce subordinate clauses; *although* is the more formal of the two. *Though* is much more frequent than *although* in spoken and written language taken together.

When used with a subordinate clause **before** a main clause, the meaning is something like 'in spite of the fact that ...':

Although a lot of money was thrown into the National Health Service, that money was not being used effectively, which is why they needed more managers.

Though at long last she was by herself once more, she knew this would take some getting used to.

When used to introduce a clause **following** a main clause, the meaning is something like 'but it is also true that ...':

*We work for what they want, not the other way round, **although** obviously we advise them.*

*It was really funny actually, **though** I don't know why.*

In all four examples above, *although* and *though* are interchangeable.

Although, though + reduced clauses

15b

In formal styles, *although* and *though* may be followed by a reduced clause without a verb:

*Miss D., **although a most tragic case**, had not been dying.*

***Though a grandfather twice over**, he is tanned, fit and attractive, with keen brown eyes and a lot of hair – except on the top of his bald head.*

Although, though + non-finite clauses

15c

In formal styles, *although* and *though* may introduce a non-finite clause:

*'The UK, **although starting from a higher base than many other countries**, has achieved approximately the same rate of growth as the USSR, and that should worry us,' Sir Denis said.*

*Edith, **though regretting the accident**, was mindful of the irony.*

*The tracks, **though produced a year ago**, are getting top reviews, which, as Mark points out, is vindication of the musical direction they chose to go in.*

Even though

15d

Even is frequently used with *though* (but not with *although*) for emphasis:

*Do you find that you get tired when you're working, **even though** you're a part-timer?*

***Even though** I had nowhere to go, I moved out of the flat.*

A–Z 36c *Even if, even though* for a comparison of *even if* and *even though*

Though in non-front clause positions

15e

Though (but not *although* or *even though*) can be used in other positions in the clause apart from at the beginning, with a meaning similar to *however* or *nevertheless*. In spoken language it is particularly common at the end of the clause:

(mid position)

*He knows what's happening. Ken, **though**, doesn't seem to know what's going on.*

(end position)

[speaker is talking about his job]

*It's a bit panicky but I've not got any deadlines like you have, **though**.*

As though

15f

The expression *as though* is very frequent, and has a meaning very close to *as if*:

*You look **as though** you're feeling a bit distracted.*

*You feel **as though** you're battering your head against a brick wall most of the time.*

In both cases, *as if* would be equally acceptable.

ALWAYS

16

Position of always

16a

Always usually occurs in the normal mid position for adverbs (➤ 325):

*I **always** try and give a taxi driver ten per cent of the fare.*

*He's **always been** very good to me.*

*There **was always** someone in the class that was above everyone else.*

★ *Always* is not normally used at the beginning of a declarative or interrogative clause:

*I **always** make sure my doors are locked.*
(~~Always I make sure my doors are locked.~~)

*Do you **always** finish your homework on time?*
(~~Always do you finish your homework on time?~~)

However, *always* often comes first in an imperative clause:

***Always** give way to pedestrians. **Always** be prepared to slow down and stop if necessary.*

***Always** gather herbs for storing on a dry day after the dew has evaporated.*

Some literary styles may occasionally use front position for emphasis:

***Always**, if I asked Mair anything, she would refer the decision to Bronwen.*

***Always**, all the time, men are forcing themselves to do what they do not want to do, and keeping themselves from what they do want to do.*

Always + progressive aspect

16b

Although *always* refers to general states of affairs or to repeated events, and is therefore mostly used with simple tense forms, it also occurs with progressive aspect. Such uses often refer to regular events or states which are problematic or undesired:

*Her group **are always blaming** each other. It's awful, isn't it?*

*I **was always lacking** in self-confidence and **lacking** in the confidence to think that I'm acceptable.*

*He's **always moaning** about money.*

Other uses of *always*

16c

Always is often used with *can* and *could* to refer to options and choices of action which the speaker considers to be freely available:

*Of course, if the worst comes to the worst, I **can always** move in there and rent my house out.*

*We **could always** phone up the ferry people and ask them if they've got any deals going.*

Always frequently occurs as an intensifier with mental verbs such as *think* and *remember*:

A: *They look good down there don't they, those tiles?*

B: *Yeah.*

A: *I **always think** they look lovely.*

*I **always remember** when I was fourteen, fifteen, I wanted to be in the Navy.*

As always

16d

As always is used to refer to a particular event which is seen as typical of all such events:

As always, she was doing all the talking.

As always, it's a pleasure to get an email from you.

For good, for ever and for always

16e

References to things which will be permanent are usually made with *for good*, and, more formally, with *for ever* (sometimes written as *forever*), rather than *for always*:

*If we reject her now, we'll lose her **for good**.*

(preferred to: If we reject her now, we'll lose her for always.)

*I determined to enjoy every moment that I might carry it **for ever** in my memory.*

(preferred to: ... that I might carry it for always in my memory.)

For always does occur, but it is rare:

*'I loved no one before you,' she said. 'I thought we were going to be together **for always**. I took it for granted.'*

Forever and always

16f

Forever (usually written as one word; compare *for ever*, **16e** above) has a meaning close to *always* when it is used with progressive aspect to refer to regular and repeated events, but carries an even stronger meaning of undesirability (see **16b** above):

[*darting about* means 'moving very fast']

A: *You know, I mean, your day's gone, so you're not relaxing really.*

B: *No.*

A: *You're **forever darting** about here there and everywhere you know. And it's just too much.*

AMONG**A–Z** 26 *Between, among***ANYWAY**

17

Anyway has two main uses: it is used with the meaning 'in spite of other circumstances mentioned', and it is used as a discourse marker to indicate boundaries in the discourse. Because of this second use, it is much more frequent in spoken language than in written.

When used to contrast two sets of circumstances, *anyway* normally occurs in end position:

*Some kids will do things and it doesn't matter what they do because the parents won't care **anyway**.*
(despite what they do)

[customer (B) and server (A) talking about a suit]

A: *Do you want me to wrap it up again for you?*

B: *No it's only got to come out again **anyway**.*

A: *Oh, all right then.*

(even if you do wrap it)

As a discourse marker in spoken language, *anyway* occurs in front position, and is used to move to a new phase of a narrative or argument, or to resume a conversation after an interruption or diversion, or to signal a move towards closing the talk:

*... she went back to her seat and stood up and sort of started again. **Anyway**, when I got off the bus the teacher came to me and he said 'Thank you for that'.*
(moving to a new stage in the narrative)

*... I'm not that stupid. **Anyway**, what I was saying was, when I first typed it up, it was like normal spacing and normal character size and I'd done nine pages.*
(resuming the narrative after a diversion or interruption)

*But **anyway** we'll continue this discussion when we get into the regulations. I must run cos I have to give a lecture.*
(signalling closure)

Anyway can also have a concessive meaning similar to 'at least', and can be used to limit or restrict a statement or to concede a point. In this meaning it most typically occurs in end position, but may also occur elsewhere in the clause.

*I do like where I am, I've noticed there's never really any trouble down here. Well not where I am **anyway**.*

*It was a quiet place, Portland Close. That was the general consensus, **anyway**.*

*Northampton, that's where I live. Well, **anyway**, that's where I live at the moment.*

APART FROM

A–Z 39 Except

AROUND, ROUND

18

Around is used as a preposition and as an adverb. It is alternatively written as *round*. *Round* is more common in spoken English. The primary meaning of *around/round* is that of surrounding or covering all sides of something.

As a preposition

*The plane had to circle **around the town** twice before it could land.*

*They were all sitting **round the fire** and singing songs.*

*The whole organisation was built **around him**.*

*Do you know if there is a florist **round here**?*

*Her whole life revolved **round her mother**.*

*Jeff always seems to know a way **round the problem**.*

As an adverb

*They just sit **around** all day and never seem to do any studying.*

*She's clearly been **around**.*

(been to many places/is experienced)

*He was **around** earlier this morning but he's probably gone home now.*

(in the area where the speaker is)

*Be careful not to leave any purses and wallets lying **around**.*

*That's one of the best cars **around** at the moment.*

(one of the best available/on the market)

With numbers

Around is often used for numerical approximations. It can occur in the structure *around about* or, more frequently, *round about*:

*There were **around 20,000 people** at the concert but we could still see everything on the stage.*

*You have to pay **around £70 a week** for rented accommodation near the university.*

*I'll see you **around four** then.*

*I think it was **round about 1994** when they moved here from Germany.*

Round and round

Round and round is a common fixed expression:

*We just seemed to be going **round and round** in circles and getting nowhere.*

❖ also 000 Numerals and vague quantifiers

A5

19

Preposition *as*

19a

As is used as a preposition, with a meaning of equivalence or comparison:

*She was thinking of you, as much **as** herself.*

*His chairmanship may well be criticised **as** anti-democratic.*

The preposition *as* is often used to talk about the role or function of a person, event or thing. When the noun denotes a specific or definite entity, the determiner is usually optional:

*Can you remember **as a child** whether your parents had any ambitions for you?*

[*Judi Dench is a well-known actress*]

*Judi Dench, **as the long-suffering wife**, was outstanding.*

*So, so it comes **as a bit of a shock**.*

*I used that **as a guideline** and modified it accordingly.*

***As (the) captain**, I have a responsibility to the whole team.*

★ *As* + noun can have the meaning of ‘in the role of’. It is not the same as *like* + noun, which means ‘similar to’ or ‘in the same way as’. Compare:

1 ***As your tutor**, I want to give you the best possible advice.*

2 ***Like your tutor**, I want to give you the best possible advice.*

In **1** the speaker is the listener’s tutor. In **2**, the speaker is not the tutor, but wishes to act in a similar way to the tutor.

Comparisons of appearance or behaviour are made with *like*, not *as*:

*That dog looks **like** a wolf.*

(~~That dog looks as a wolf.~~)

Than, not *as*, is used to complete a comparative construction with *more*:

*We had more freedom **than** many kids today.*

(~~We had more freedom as many kids today.~~)

Conjunction *as*

19b

The conjunction *as* can have comparative or temporal and consequential meanings. In its temporal meanings it is a synonym for *when* and *while*; in its consequential meanings it is a synonym for *since* or *because*:

*The news from Moscow, **as everyone predicted**, was excellent.*

(comparative meaning: like)

As it fell, it smashed to pieces.
(temporal meaning: when)

*Drivers are warned to expect massive jams at the weekend **as families return home.***
(temporal meaning: while)

***As it was getting late,** they decided to book into a hotel.*
(consequential: because)

❖ 467a *As ... as* for detailed discussion of *as* and *as ... as ...* in comparisons

A–Z 49 *Like*

ASK (FOR)

20

Ask has the meaning of requesting somebody to do or say something or to tell somebody about something. *Ask for* has the meaning of requesting somebody to give something.

The basic complementation pattern with *ask* is ditransitive (*ask somebody something*) (❖ 286), and it is frequently used in reporting structures:

*Can I **ask you a question?***

*Why don't you **ask that man the way?***

*Why don't you **ask them how much** it costs?*

*Can I **ask you who** I should go and see?*

*She **asked me if** I needed anything.*

Ask for is used with a direct object or an object + prepositional complement construction:

*She's not the kind of person who **asks for help.***

*We'll have to **ask the caretaker for the keys to the room.***

Ask can be followed by a direct object, especially in the expressions *ask a question* and *ask the way/ask the time*:

*The audience **asked a lot of questions.***

*I'm not so sure of the roads round here. I think we'd better **ask the way.***

Ask is often used with a direct object with reference to sums of money, usually for selling and renting things:

[speaker B wishes to rent out a flat and a garage]

A: *How much are you **asking?***

B: *We're **asking £180 per week** for the flat plus £30 a week for the garage.*

Ask + direct object + *of* occurs in some common expressions:

*I need to **ask a big favour of** you.*

*I know it's **asking a lot of** Ranji but can't he cover my shift for me tomorrow?*

Both *ask* and *ask for* can be used with object + *to*-infinitive:

*I **asked the whole group to wait** in the market square.*

(asked somebody directly)

*I **asked for the car to be repaired** on the same day.*

(requested that something should happen)

In very formal contexts, *ask* (with the meaning of 'request') may be followed by a *that*-clause with a verb in the subjunctive mood:

*In his will, he **asked that his ashes be scattered** upon the open sea.*

AS WELL (AS)

A–Z 14 Also, as well (as), too

AT

21

At commonly refers to time and place. The basic meanings and uses of *at* are best understood by comparing it with *in* and *on*.

At, in, on (time)

21a

A basic distinction between *at* and *in* depends on whether reference is made to a point (*at*), or an extended place or time (*in*):

*The Edinburgh train leaves **at** seven thirty **in** the morning.*

(*seven thirty* is a point in time; *the morning* is an extended period of time)

Some further examples of *at* and *in*, referring to time

things seen as a specific point in time (<i>at</i>)	things seen as an extended period of time or as a location within longer periods of time (<i>in</i>)
<i>I didn't know if you would have time off at half-term.</i>	<i>Here are some references to Russian poetry written in the early 20th century.</i>
<i>I'm sorry, Jenn has got someone with her at the moment.</i>	<i>He'll be free at about three. Could you wait here in the meantime?</i>
<i>I'm wondering when I could come and pick up visiting cards that I ordered from you at the beginning of October.</i>	<i>Maybe we should aim for a little bit of caution in the beginning, and try and get it right.</i>
<i>Okay, we could meet at 4 o'clock but why don't we meet at lunchtime instead?</i>	<i>Okay, he'll give you a ring in a few days.</i>
<i>Retirement for all civil servants is at 65.</i>	<i>I retire in three years' time.</i>