

Grammar terms with M

Main clause

A clause which is capable of making a complete sentence by itself. A sentence must have at least one main clause. A simple sentence consists of only a single main clause. Example: John wrote a letter. In a compound sentence, there are two main clauses connected by and. Susie cooked dinner and Jane washed the clothes.

Malapropism

The use of a wrong word, often especially when another word of similar sound is intended.

Manner adverb

An adverb that answers the question 'how?' Examples are: slowly, carefully, rashly, kindly, furiously etc.

Mass noun

A noun which denotes something which cannot be counted. Examples are: wheat, sand, milk, rice etc. A mass noun cannot be used with numbers and it does not have a plural form.

Matrix clause

A clause which contains a subordinate clause within it. In the sentence 'The girl who won the first prize is my cousin', the matrix clause is 'The girl ... is my cousin', while the remainder is the subordinate clause.

Mood

The label mood refers to the degree or kind of reality assigned by the speaker to what she is saying. English has four or five moods: indicative, subjunctive, imperative, optative and interrogative.

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Morpheme

A morpheme is the smallest unit of word structure. For example, dog consists of a single morpheme (dog) while happiness consists of two morphemes (happy) and (ness). A particular morpheme may have different forms which are called its allomorphs.