What is a word?

1. **Words** are units of the writing system (orthographic criterion): ‘a word is an uninterrupted string of letters which is preceded by a blank space and followed by either a blank space or a punctuation mark’;

- How many words are there in the sentence below?
  - ‘People love studying English.’

- How many words are there in the sentence below?
  - The housekeeper’s wife lived in a five-room flat in a five-storey building.

- Is the orthographic criterion reliable?
WHAT IS A WORD

- Words are units of the sound system (phonological criterion): ‘a word is a unit of speech surrounded by pauses’;
- How would you utter the sentences below?
  - 1. What did you say?
  - 2. What did YOU say?
  - 2. That’s really a-ma-zing!
- According to the Phonological criterion words have a primary and a secondary stress;
- If spoken in isolation words have only one main primary stress: /ˈɡlæmərəs/; /ˈhɔːsˌkiːpər/; /ˈbɪldɪŋ/
- The main stressed syllable is the most prominent one in a word;
- Prominence of a syllable is a function of loudness, pitch and duration;
**What is a word?**

- Longer words also have secondary stresses:
  - /ˌmænəˈtobə/; /ˈfɒtəˌɡræf/; /ˈdɛləˌɡet/;
- Does the orthographic criterion match the phonological criterion? Consider:
  - ‘Five-room’: how many words? How many main stresses?
  - ‘Housekeeper’s’: how many words? How many stresses?
  - ‘Building site’: how many words? How many stresses?
- Not all words bear stress: function words, for example, don’t. Consider the words below:
  - /ðə/; /æt/; /hæv/; /əɪl/;
- Is the phonological criterion reliable?
WHAT IS A WORD?

• Words are indivisible (integrity criterion): words are indivisible units into which intervening material may be inserted;
• Any modification occurs at the edge of words, never inside words. Consider:
  • usual vs unusual vs * usunual; normal vs normalize vs * normizeal; student vs students vs studenst;
• Yet, see the following words:
  • ‘Sons in love’; ‘Absobloodylutely’;
  • ‘Absobloominglutely’; ‘Theojollylogical’;
  • ‘Beawfullyware’;
• Is the integrity criterion reliable?
WHAT IS A WORD?

- Words are expressions of meaning *(semantic criterion)*: ‘a word expresses a unified semantic concept’;
- However, not every unified semantic concept corresponds to one word in a given language:
- Consider the following phrases:
  - ‘the man whom you saw’;
  - the student in the next room’;
  - ‘the woman who lived twice’
- The phrases above refer to a specific person. Hence, according to the semantic criterion, they express a unified concept. However, such a concept is expressed by more than one word;
WHAT IS A WORD?

- Words are syntactic atoms (*syntactic criterion*): ‘words are considered to be the smallest elements in a sentence’;
- Words belong to certain syntactic classes which are called *parts of speech, word classes* or *syntactic categories* (i.e. nouns, adjectives, prepositions and so on);
- The position of given words in a sentence depends on the syntactic rules of the language;
WHAT IS A WORD?

- A word like ‘the’ belongs to the word-class ‘articles’ and there are rules that determine where such words occur in a sentence; articles usually appear before a noun and its modifier;

- We can test if something is a word by checking if it belongs to such word classes. Also, only words can be moved to different positions in a sentence, while smaller units can’t;

- Words are ambiguous: the same form may refer to different words:
  - ‘go’: ‘bare infinitive;
  - ‘go’: 1st pers. sing. simple present
  - ‘go’: subjunctive

- Hence, the word form ‘go’ is used to express three different grammatical words: 1st pers. sing.; simple present; subjunctive;
**MORPHOLOGY**

- **Morphology** is the study of the structure of words in a language. It considers the individual parts of the word, commonly called **morphemes**;
- **Morphemes** are the smallest units of meaning in the language;
- **Morphology** lies between the levels of **phonology** and **syntax**. The reason for this is that the same features of meaning may be delivered by the morphology of one language and the syntax of another.
MORPHOLOGY

- Consider the verb phrase below:
- *will have been being served*;
- The **lexical** part of the verb ‘serve’ is ‘served’ and the other four are the **auxiliary** verbs adding **modal**, **perfective**, **progressive**, and **passive** meaning;
- In other languages these same meanings may be delivered partly or largely by the addition of morphemes to the end of the lexical verb.
- For example, Turkish, which is an agglutinative language, adds suffixes to a root-word, to convey in a single words what English would express with a whole sentence.
- For example, the English sentence “They were not coming” is a single word in Turkish: ‘come’ is the root word, and elements meaning ‘not’; ‘-ing’; ‘they’ and ‘were’ (past tense marker) are all suffixed to it: Gelmiyorlardı.
Morphology

- **Morphemes** are units consisting of form and meaning;
- Consider the **morphemes** (in bold type) in the words below:
  - **mis**understand; **dis**appearance;
  - **im**polite; **addressee**; **runner**;
- Being a unit of form and meaning a morpheme is a sign in Saussurian sense;
- The form is expressed by the **black marks** on the page or the **physical sound**;
- The form of a morpheme is called **morph**;
# Word-formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7A</th>
<th>7B/7C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressee</td>
<td>Parking lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Wardrobe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useless</td>
<td>Steam engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madness</td>
<td>Redskin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td>Father-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depauperization</td>
<td>7c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arrive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word-formation

- All the words in columns 7A and 7B are **complex words**: that is to say, words composed of smaller units that have more complex meanings;
- What smaller units make up the words in the columns 7A and 7B?
- All the smaller units the words in columns 7° and 7B are made of are called **morphemes**;
WORD-FORMATION

• The words in columns 7C are, instead, simple words; that is to say, words that cannot be divided into smaller units. They are, in fact, **mono-morphemic** words;

• Consider again the words in columns 7A and 7B. Which units within them can occur alone and which need be attached to other words?

• The units that occur alone are called **free morphemes** while those which need be attached to other words are called **bound morphemes**;
WORD-FORMATION

• Look again at columns 7A and 7B. Which **bound morphemes** must be attached before the central meaningful element of the word?

• Which **bound morphemes**, instead, must attached after the central meaningful element of the word?

• The bound morphemes that are attached before the central meaningful element are called **prefixes**, those attached after the central meaningful element are called **suffixes**; finally, those inserted into other morphemes are called **infixes**;

• **Prefixes, suffixes** and **infixes** belong to the superordinate category **affixes**. The central meaningful elements are instead called **roots, stems** or **bases**;
WORD-FORMATION

- **A Base**: the part of a word an affix is attached to;
- **A Root**: a base that cannot be analyzed into further morphemes; the indivisible central part of a complex word;
- **A Stem**: a base of inflections and sometimes also for derivational affixes;

The derived word is often called a **derivative**;

Consider the word ‘Untouchables’: which is the **stem**, which the **root**, which the **base**?
WORD-FORMATION

- Consider the word ‘untouchables’
- ‘touch’ = root (it cannot be divided into further morphemes. Remember: all roots are bases, but bases cannot be roots because they are divisible);
- ‘touchable’ = base (it can be divided into ‘touch’ + ‘able’).
- ‘untouchable’ = stem (a stem is a base for inflectional suffixes). Remember: all stems are bases because they can attach inflectional morphemes, but bases are not necessarily stems, because they can also attach non inflectional morphemes. See below:
- 1. ‘touchable’ = stem + ‘-s’ inflectional morpheme.
- 2. ‘touchable’ = base + ‘un-’ non inflectional prefix.
- Conclusione: according to the type of morpheme we attach to it, ‘touchable’ can function either as a base or a stem, as examples 1 and 2 above show.
How many morphemes are there in the passage below?

It was a mile wide: all the land between the main road and the sea. There was a grassy field below the road, then the lane with her house, then more fields, then a railway line, then another field and the sand dunes and the beach. To the right there was a parking area and a little shop, and a tiny caravan site that you couldn’t see from the house;
Suppose you don’t know the word *yells* and you want to look it up in a dictionary. You wouldn’t look up the form *yells* but the form *yell* instead. Together with *yell*, in the dictionary you would also find other forms like *yells*, *yelling* and *yelled*.

The form *yell*, then, is the key member of the inflectional paradigm in which *yells* occurs. When YELL is meant in such a sense, it does not refer to a particular shape of its paradigm but to all the possible forms it can take.

This sense of the word ‘YELL’ is called *lexeme*. 
On the contrary, when it is not the lexeme that is taken into consideration but a particular kind of shape the form can take on, the term word-form is used:

- Yells
- Yelled
- Yelling

The word-form has specific orthographic and phonological shapes;

Yells is one of the word-forms of the lexeme YELL.
**Word, word form, lexeme**

- **Word-forms** realize lexemes.
- The **citation form** of a lexeme is the word-form from the inflectional paradigm of the lexeme which is used when a **lexeme** is entered in a standard dictionary.

- The **citation form** is established in a conventional way:
  - Latin: *amo* > first person singular of the present tense;
  - French: *aimer* > infinitive
  - English: *yell* > base form of the infinitive without to.
Consider again the **word-forms** below:
- *Yell; yelled; yelled*

The **word-form** *yelled* represents both the simple past and the past participle of *yell*. That is to say, the word-form *yelled* represents two grammatical words, both of which belong to the paradigm of the lexeme YELL.

The term **word** is usually employed to mean something between **word-form** and **lexeme**.
WORD-FORMATION

• Suffixes like participial -ing, plural –s or third person singular –s create new word-forms;
• Suffixes like –er, -ee, -ity, -full create new lexemes;
• On the basis of the criterion above a distinction is made in morphology between inflection and derivation.
• We can speak, thus, of inflectional and derivational morphology;
• The former mainly consists of word-formation realized through those processes that in traditional grammar are called conjugation or declension. The latter through compunding;
WORD-FORMATION

- Words are not made up only of bases, roots and affixes. Another way of combining words is also through compounding;
- The words below, for example, consist of two bases:
  - Greenhouse; girlfriend; pickpocket;
- All word-formation processes seen so far were realized through concatenation, that is to say, by linking bases and affixes in a sequential order;
- There are, however, also other processes that are non-concatenative;
- Examples of non-concatenative processes are realized by turning nouns into verbs without adding any further element: e.g. water (N) vs water (V); fast (Adj) vs fast (Adv); go (v) vs have a go (N);
- The process above is called conversion or zero-affixation or transposition;
### Differences between Inflectional and Derivational Morphology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derivation</th>
<th>Inflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encodes lexical meaning;</td>
<td>Encodes grammatical categories;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not syntactically relevant;</td>
<td>It is syntactically relevant;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can occur inside derivation;</td>
<td>Occurs outside all derivations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often changes the part of speech;</td>
<td>Does not change part of speech;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is often semantically opaque;</td>
<td>It is rarely semantically opaque;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is often restricted in its productivity;</td>
<td>It is fully productive;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not restricted to suffixation;</td>
<td>It is always suffixational (in English);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ALLOMORPHY

- **Morphs** can be realized in different forms;
- Consider the examples below:
  - /ə/ a book; /ən/ instrument; /eɪ/  
  - /ðə/ teacher; /ði/ aeroplane; /ði/  
- There are three distinct realizations for each of the **morphs** in the two examples above: two when spoken in **context**, one spoken in **isolation**;
- The different realizations of a **morph** realizing the same morpheme are called **allomorphs**;
- The phenomenon whereby different morphs realize the same morpheme is called **allomorphy**
NOUNS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- Nouns make up one of the largest word classes in English;
- One of the most important distinction between two subclasses of noun is mass or ‘non-countable’ nouns and countable nouns;
- **Countable nouns** can occur in combination with numbers, with the indefinite article ‘a’ and can be pluralized by the addition of the plural: cat(s), table(s) …
- The subclass **non-countable** or **mass noun** does not occur with numbers or the indefinite article and cannot be pluralized;
NOUNS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- Notice that no linguistic categories are absolutely watertight and there are examples that cut across any boundaries we try to set up.

- Many nouns are **countable** or **non-countable** in different contexts. There are also many nouns that seem to belong fundamentally to one or another subclass even though they can be used as though they belonged to the other class, though usually with a more specific meaning: Ex: ‘How many sugars?’; ‘How many coffees?’; How many papers?’;

- The nouns above have a central **mass** or **uncountable** meaning, but are consistently associated with particular measurements or units (spoon, cup and so on);

- This allows mass nouns to be used as though they were countable nouns but without mention of the measurements.
Nouns: Formal and Functional Features

- **Morphological categorization**: nouns can take the plural suffix, though this does not include all the proper nouns. But: ‘Where are all the Johns and Marys?’

- A slightly more inclusive test of membership of the word-class noun is the possibility of adding the possessive morpheme ‘s’, which is theoretically possible for all nouns: Ex:
  - Countable nouns: ‘the dog’s tail’;
  - Proper nouns: ‘John’s bike’;
  - Mass nouns: ‘sugar’s properties’;
Nouns: formal and functional features

- **Syntactic categorization**: the basic function of a noun is to be the ‘head’ of a noun phrase. That is, it can occur after a definite or indefinite article or a determiner (‘the cat’, ‘some air’) and may have a number of adjectives between the article and the noun (‘the fat cat’, ‘the fresh air’);

- The other function nouns can perform is that they can operate, as part of noun phrases, in the larger context of *clause structures*;

- They have the most varied potential of any word class in being able to function as subject, object, complement and even adverbial;
NOUNS

- Consider:
  - Subject: ‘The crocodile (ate my hat)’;
  - Object: ‘(The president announced) his plans’;
  - Complement: (This substance is) refined sugar;
  - Adverbial: Every night (they sing karaoke);
  - There are some potentially confusing aspects of syntactic structure if both form and function tests of word-class membership are not used. Words can change class in certain regular ways (conversion) and it is possible for a form to look like a verb (for example ‘playing’) but be used in a noun-like way: ‘Joshua Bell’s playing was divine’;
VERBS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- **Inflectional features**: present-tense, third-person singular singular morpheme, past tense morpheme (‘ed’ in all regular verbs in English); progressive form;

- Verbs may be the head of a verb phrase, but they may stand alone as verb phrases too. Ex:
  - ‘The students **worked** hard all year’;
  - ‘No one **suspects** me!’;
  - ‘Although **dancing** as well as ever . . .’;
  - ‘**Dropped** from the team . . .’;
  - ‘**To sit** in the sun with a drink in your hand . . .’;
VERBS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- Non-finite forms: ‘-ing’, ‘-en’; ‘I(nfinitive) form’;
- These forms are called the **progressive** form, the **perfective** form and the **infinitive** form.
- These forms do not link to the subject in a clear way (for example by an ending that indicates a person) and they do not establish the tense of the verb as either present or past;
- They need auxiliaries to establish such aspects of the meaning of the **predicator**:
  - ‘She **was dancing** as well as ever’;
  - ‘He **was dropped** from the team’;
  - ‘I **shall sit** in the sun with a drink in my hand’;
VERBS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- **Lexical verbs** that do not need an auxiliary verb in order to function in main clauses are known as **finite forms**.
- They include the **present tense** form, which is normally indistinguishable from the infinitive form in terms of having no morphological suffix (‘catch’, ‘sing’); the **third-person present tense** form, which normally adds ‘-s’ to base forms, and the **past tense form**, which adds ‘-ed’ to regular verbs.
VERBS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- **Intransitive verbs**: are not found with an object, and thus will occur in subject and predicator structures. Ex: *I’m dying*.

- **Transitive verbs**: occurs with an object in subject-predicator-object structures. Ex: ‘She hates you’;

- **Ditransitive verbs**: occur with both indirect and direct objects. Ex: ‘They gave me a beautiful present’;

- **Intensive verbs** (also copular verbs): (‘be’, ‘look’, ‘seem’) can occur either with subject complements (‘She was really tired’) or with object complements. Ex: ‘You make me happy’;

- **Intensive verbs** have a particular semantic effect in that they invoke existence (‘there is a tree’) and equivalence (‘she is my daughter’).
VERBS: FORMAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

- **Intensive** verbs describe the subject. They are usually followed by a noun or a noun phrase, an adjective or a prepositional phrase;

- **Intensive** means to **focus on one thing**: in this case, the subject;

- The words or phrases following an intensive verb work as the subject complement. This means that they apply to the subject not to the verb.

- Ex: “My father is an engineer’;
VERBS: ASPECT

- **Perfect**: used for an action considered as a completed whole. It refers to actions seen as prior to a specific or implicit moment in time. Ex. ‘I had worked in London’;

- **Imperfect**: used for forms of a verb that are past progressive as opposed to perfect. Ex. ‘I was living in London’

- **Perfective**: refers to actions or processes conceived as simple events located at an undivided moment of time. Ex.: ‘I went to London’;

- **Imperfective**: it refers to actions conceived as extending over a period of time, continuously or at intervals. Ex. ‘I am coming to the university every day’;

- **Progressive vs non-progressive**: expresses the distinction between the speaker's viewing of a given action in its duration or without the focus on the course of the action;
ADJECTIVES

- The **adjective** word class is smaller than the noun and verb classes and has both a more restricted set of forms than the verb and a more limited set of functions than the noun;

- Subclasses: **gradable adjectives**, which form comparative and superlative forms either by the addition of morphemes or by the insertion of adverbs (‘shorter’, ‘more expensive’)

- **Non-gradable** adjectives: can be considered to belong to groups, but these are largely semantic groupings, such as **colour, material** or **nationality**;

- **Non-gradable** adjectives do not belong strictly to syntactic categories as they are not defined by their form or function. Yet, they are sometimes treated as gradable by the addition of comparative and superlative adverbs. Ex.; ‘He looked more English than I expected’;
ADJECTIVES

- The basic function of adjectives is as head of adjective phrase;
- The adjective phrase is frequently restricted to the adjective itself. Only gradable adjectives regularly have preceding intensifying adverbs. Ex: ‘totally awful’, ‘very unhappy’;
- The main two functions of an adjective are as premodifier to the head noun in a noun phrase (e.g. ‘a brilliant artist’) and following an intensive verb as the complement of a clause (e.g. ‘the artist is brilliant’);
- These functions of adjectives are possible for most adjectives. In most cases the meaning of the adjective remains constant, irrespective of the function of the adjective. Yet, there are some cases where different meanings of the adjective arise in different positions; ‘A certain teacher of French . . .’ vs ‘The teacher of French is certain . . .’;
ADVERBS

- **Adverbs** do not perform the most central roles in the clause and are often not essential to the grammatical completeness of the utterance in which they occur;
- There is one clear subclass of adverbs and it is the class derived from adjectives by the addition of the ‘-ly’ suffix. Most gradable (and some non gradable) adjectives can be made into adverbs in this way: ‘proudly’, ‘weirdly’;
- Another subclass functions as **pre-modifier** in an adjective phrase. They are called **intensifiers** because they in some way quantify the amount of the (gradable) adjective: ‘dead proud’; ‘completely shattered’; ‘quite tired’;
- Note, however, that the quantity is not always specified;
ADVERBS

- There are whole phrases in English that have a function similar to adverbs since they function as ‘adverbials’ but syntactically they are prepositional phrases;
- Like non-intensifying adverbs they add information about the circumstances of the process being described in the clause: ‘On Saturday, we went to the theatre’;
- These prepositional phrases can be replaced by adverbs, though they will not always be as specific as the prepositional phrases: ‘Then we went there’.
**Grammatical Categories**

- Lexical word classes are **open-ended** and very large, while grammatical word classes are small and very rarely change their membership;

- *Grammatical* word classes are sometimes described as **closed systems**, in contrast with the open class of *lexical* words;

- **Grammatical classes:**
  - Pronouns;
  - Determiners (articles, demonstrative adjectives, possessive adjectives, both distal and proximal);
  - Prepositions;
  - Conjunctions:
  - Auxiliaries (and modals);
SUMMARY: LEXICAL AND FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

- **Substantive** (or *lexical*) items have descriptive content:
  - **Nouns**: items that refer to objects or entities;
  - **Verbs**: items express actions or states;
  - **Prepositions**: items which refer to movement, location, time and so on;
  - **Adjectives**: items that denote states, attributes, qualities and so on;
  - **Adverbs**: items that denote the manner, mode or time in which an action is carried out;

- Lexical items head NPs (*Noun Phrases*), VPs (*Verb Phrases*), PPs (*Prepositional Phrases*) and AdvPs (*Adverbial Phrases*);
SUMMARY: LEXICAL AND FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

- **Functional (or grammatical)** items do not have descriptive content;
- **Complementizers**;
- **Auxiliaries**;
- **Ppositions**;
- **Determiners**;
- **Conjunctions**;
- **Pronouns**;
- The items above do not refer to objects, events, entities but possess syntactic and discursive properties;
- **Inflectional** features on tenses and many others, all allowing lexical items to be glued together to form sentences;
Test to check whether an item is **lexical** or **functional**: lexical items usually, although not always, have antonyms. Functional items usually lack them: ‘white’ vs ‘black’; ‘coherence’ vs ‘incoherence’;

But what about ‘table’?; ‘chair’?

Unlike these words, a **determiner** like the definite article ‘the’ has no antonym and neither has an auxiliary like ‘do’ or complementizers like ‘that’ or ‘for’;
Another test to distinguish between **substantive** and functional items is that of trying to draw a mental picture of the item we are thinking of. If we can draw a picture of a noun like ‘table’, then we can say with a fair degree of certainty that it is a lexical item, otherwise, as in the case of ‘that’ which is very difficult to translate into a picture, we can label it as a **functional** item since it does not refer to any object, entity, action or quality;

But what about ‘justice’; ‘honesty’; truth?
SUMMARY: LEXICAL AND FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

Five criteria to distinguish lexical and functional categories:

1) functional categories consist of closed elements;

2) these elements are neither morphologically nor phonologically independent but need to be attached to items that are independent;

3) functional categories allow just one complement;

4) they cannot be separated from such a complement;

5) they do not have descriptive content;