# Getting gritty with grammar

What's the *subject* of a sentence? Or the *object*?
When should we use *whom*?
What are some cool tools to use when answering linguistic questions?



# Goals for today

Review parts of speech
How to find the subject of a sentence
What's the deal with *who* and *whom*?
Is singular *they* okay?
Cool tools



# Parts of speech

nouns
verbs
adjectives
adverbs
prepositions
determiners
conjunctions
pronouns
interjections

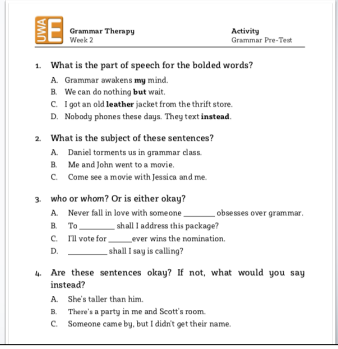
# Pre-test

Parts of speech

Subjects and objects

*who* or *whom*

and more



UVA E **Grammar Therapy** Week 2 — **Activity** Grammar Pre-Test

1. **What is the part of speech for the bolded words?**
   A. Grammar awakens **my** mind.
   B. We can do nothing **but** wait.
   C. I got an old **leather** jacket from the thrift store.
   D. Nobody phones these days. They text **instead**.
2. **What is the subject of these sentences?**
   A. Daniel torments us in grammar class.
   B. Me and John went to a movie.
   C. Come see a movie with Jessica and me.
3. **who or whom? Or is either okay?**
   A. Never fall in love with someone _____ obsesses over grammar.
   B. To _____ shall I address this package?
   C. I'll vote for _____ever wins the nomination.
   D. _____ shall I say is calling?
4. **Are these sentences okay? If not, what would you say instead?**
   A. She's taller than him.
   B. There's a party in me and Scott's room.
   C. Someone came by, but I didn't get their name.



# *who or whom?*

How do you know?

**8 Feb 2015** 13:37

Meanwhile, at an airport in Canberra, a billionaire and balance of power player is engaging in some predictable trolling.

**Clive Palmer:**

> *I'm prepared to meet with whomever leads the Liberal party.*



# Subject and object

**John hit Bill.**

Who's the subject, and who's the object?

John is doing the hitting.

He's the subject.

Bill is getting hit.

He's the object.

But how do you know this?

# Subject case and object case

Imagine an alternate version of English with case marking.

John**a** hit Bill**om**.

How would you say “Bill hit John” in this alternate English?

# Nouns and case

Old English had case marking

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| OE *nominative* | the king | se cyning |
| OE *accusative* | to the king | þone cyning |
| OE *genitive* | the ship of the king | þæs cyninges scip |

Modern English nouns aren’t marked for case

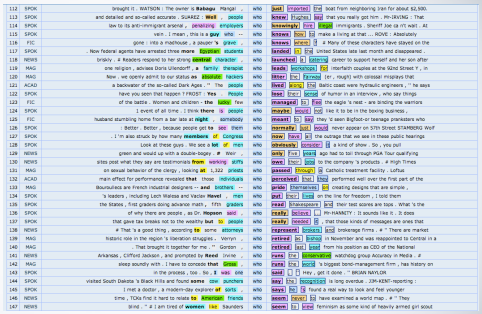
but our pronouns still are.

Also *who* and *whom*.

| | | SUBJECT | | OBJECT | | POSSESSIVE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | I | we | me | us | my | our |
| 2 | | you | | you | | your | your |
| 3 | m | he | they | him | them | his | their |
| | f | she | | her | | her | |
| | n | it | | it | | its | |



# *who*



| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 112 | SPOK | brought it . WATSON : The owner is **Bahaqar** Mangal , | who | **just** | traveled |
| 113 | SPOK | and detailed and so-called accurate . SUAREZ : **Well** , | people | who | **knew** |
| 114 | SPOK | law to its anti-immigrant arsenal , penalizing | employers | who | **knowingly** |
| 115 | SPOK | vein . I mean , this is a **guy** who | — | who | **knows** |
| 116 | FIC | gone : into a mechouse , a jauper ’s | grave | who | **knows** |
| 117 | SPOK | . Now federal agents have arrested three more | Egyptian | students | who |
| 118 | NEWS | brokely , a Readers responsd to her shiney | **sweeet** | character | who |
| 119 | MAG | one religion , advises Doris Ulrendorf , a | family | therapist | who |
| 120 | MAG | Now , we openly admit to our status as | **disabled** | hackers | who |
| 121 | ACAD | a backwater of the so-called Dark Ages . “ The | people | who | **lived** |
| 122 | SPOK | have you seen that hagen ? PROST ! **Yes** , | people | who | **lose** |
| 123 | FIC | of the battle . Women and children - **the** | **weak** | few | who |
| 124 | SPOK | I event of all time . ) think **there** is | people | who | **maybe** |
| 125 | FIC | husband stumbling home from a bar late at **night** , | somebody | who | **meant** |
| 128 | SPOK | : Better . Better , because people get to | see | them | who |
| 127 | SPOK | , I ’m also struck by how many **members** of | Congress | who | **now** |
| 128 | SPOK | Look at these guys . We see a **lot** of | men | who | **obviously** |
| 129 | NEWS | green and would up with a double-bogey . # | Weir | who | **only** |
| 130 | NEWS | sites post what they say are testimonials **from** | working | AIPFs | who |
| 131 | MAG | on sexual behavior of the clergy , looking **at** | 1,322 | priests | who |
| 132 | ACAD | main effect for performance revealed **that** | those | individuals | who |
| 133 | MAG | Bournulrez are French industrial designers — **and** | brothers | — | who |
| 134 | SPOK | ’s leaders , including Lech Walesa and Vaclav **Havel** , | men | who | **put** |
| 136 | SPOK | the blades , first graders doing advance math , | fifth | graders | who |
| 136 | SPOK | of why there are people , as Dr. **Hepsen** | said | , | who |
| 137 | SPOK | that gave tax breaks not to the wealthy **but** to | people | who | **really** |
| 138 | NEWS | # That ’s a good thing , according **to** | some | attorneys | who |
| 139 | MAG | historic role in the region ’s liberation struggles . | Vernyn | , | who |
| 140 | MAG | That brought it together for me . “ | Gordon | , | who |
| 141 | NEWS | Arkansas , Clifford Jackson , and promoted by **Reed** | Irvine | , | who |
| 142 | MAG | sleep soundly with . ( have to concede that | **Gmaz** | , | who |
| 143 | SPOK | in the process , too . So , **I** | said | one | who |
| 144 | SPOK | visited South Dakota ’s Black Hills and found **some** | raw | punchers | who |
| 145 | SPOK | ( met a doctor , a modern-day explorer **of** | sorts | , | who |
| 146 | NEWS | time , ( ?Ou find it hard to relate **to** | American | friends | who |
| 147 | NEWS | blind . “ # ( am tired of **women** | too | saunders | who |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **just** | traveled | the | boat from neighboring Iran for about $2,500. |
| **knew** | Hughes | and | that you really got him . MR-JEKING : That. |
| **knowingly** | hire | illegal | immigrants . Sheriff Joe ca n’t wait . At |
| **knows** | how | to | make a living at that . . . NONE . Absolutely |
| **knows** | where | it | # Many of these characters have stayed on the |
| **landed** | in | the | United States late last month and disappeared . |
| **launched** | a | lobbying | career to support herself and her son after |
| **leads** | workshops | for | interfaith couples at the 92nd Street Y , in |
| **litter** | the | Faroes | ter , naughtl with colossal misplaysl that |
| **lived** | along | the | Baltic coast were hydraulic engineers , ” he says |
| **lose** | their | sense | of humor in an interview , who say things |
| **managed** | to | find | the eagle ’s neck - are braking the warriors |
| **maybe** | would | not | like it to be in the boxing business , |
| **meant** | to | say | they ’d seen Bigfoot-o-teenage pranksters who |
| **normally** | just | would | never appear on 57th Street STAMBERG Wolf |
| **now** | have | an | the outrage that we see in these public hearings |
| **obviously** | tongue | is | a kind of show . So , you pull |
| **only** | five | years | ago had to tail through PGA Tour qualifying |
| **owes** | her | job | to the company ’s products . # High Times |
| **passed** | through | a | Catholic treatment facility . Loftus |
| **performed** | that | they | performed well over the first part of the |
| **prides** | themselves | on | creating designs that are simple , |
| **put** | her | lives | on the line for freedom . ( told them |
| **read** | Shakespeare | and | their best scenes are took . What ’s the |
| **really** | believe | . | MR-HAMETY : It sounds like it . It does |
| **really** | needed | to | , that these kinds of messages are ones that |
| **represent** | brokers | and | brokerage firms . # ” There are market |
| **retired** | in | Bishop | in November and was reappointed to Central in a |
| **retired** | out | and | from his position as CEO of the National |
| **runs** | the | Indianapolis | watchdog group Accuracy in Media . # |
| **runs** | the | world | ’s biggest bond-management firm , has history on |
| **said** | , | ” | Hey , got it done . ” BRIAN NAYLOR |
| **say** | the | recognition | is long overdue . JIM-KENT-reporting ; |
| **says** | he | is | found a ntal way to look and feel younger |
| **seem** | never | to | have examined a world map . # ” They |
| **seem** | to | view | feminism as some kind of heavily armed girl scout |

# whom

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ACAD | earth , " of the Son as the **one** " through | whom | **all** things were made , " and of the Holy Spirit as |
| 2 | ACAD | every creature . So it is crystal clear **that** he through | whom | **all** things were made was not made himself . " (428 |
| 3 | FIC | some unsuffusing thing beyond thee , thou clear **spirit** , to | whom | **all** thy alarmed is but time , all thy creativeness mechanical . |
| 4 | NEWS | " # One way to stay credible is **to** have patches | whom | **Americans** identify with and admire . # " As a minority , |
| 5 | NEWS | Clinton envisions , oversee the care a worker **gets** , from | whom | **and** at what cost . # Two themes emerge from these private |
| 6 | NEWS | by living wage legislation was 100 people , **only** 47 of | whom | **are** only recently . # MARYLAND # During fiscal 1999 , Prince |
| 7 | MAG | both the Saints and their legion of fans , many of | whom | **are** excluded [] too . " We want out to give the |
| 8 | MAG | districts composed largely of non-U.S . citizens , many of | whom | **are** illegal [] . At a recent conference on the Voting Rights Act |
| 9 | NEWS | her computer . # More than 60 authors -- some of | whom | **are** well-known [] , others who are virtually unknown and one who is |
| 10 | FIC | " I do it! give a damn what **you** do with | whom | **behind** closed doors " she continued , " but I do |
| 11 | NEWS | businesses . # Loads of experience # Most **of** the people | whom | **BuzzTrends** has helped set up this business-financing approach |
| 12 | NEWS | back to The New Yorker , and the **office** messenger ( | whom | **Brendan** Kill described as a " gorgeous apparition , fluttering , |
| 13 | NEWS | a homeless woman with a " Food Please " sign to | whom | **Britton** Grant rushed to as he rolls past in his truck . |
| 14 | MAG | demanded by the soccer moms turned **security** moms with | whom | **Bush** GOP is well in 2004 . # On domestic issues , |
| 15 | SPOK | of dollars . We sat down with a **few** kids for | whom | **childhood** is very serious business . SPEAKER-IFEMALE# We |
| 16 | NEWS | " the department of longer-term thinking , " **Ms.** Slaughter -- | whom | **Clinton** Andrew Sung from Princeton University , where she was |
| 17 | NEWS | people who are going to college now are **not** those for | whom | **colleges** were historically designed , " Mr. Gardner said . " It |
| 18 | FIC | self have , what reality , standing against **that** ? To | whom | **could** she speak the very inappropriateness of any personal |
| 19 | NEWS | # About 70% of the population are refugees , many of | whom | **depend** on Lokoja Nations food aid . At a small warehouse in |
| 20 | MAG | , but when voters are asked the more **open-ended** question " | Whom | **do** you favor for the presidency ? " the number of undecided |
| 21 | SPOK | , etc , the epidemic goes up and **down** , but | whom | **do** you think is going to protect you the most ? You |
| 22 | ACAD | of African material culture might be **possible** . To | whom | **does** knowledge of Africa belong , and what are the most authentic |
| 23 | FIC | , over supper . Love Connections , Holding **Hands** , For | Whom | **Does** Your Heart Beat ? Those were her favorites . Watching |
| 24 | ACAD | follower of the Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria , according to | whom | **each** soul has ( " revolves " through) twelve lives. 15 |
| 25 | FIC | She spoke of the Co-op membership , currently **twenty-three** , of | whom | **eighteen** lived in the house . They had a single bank account |
| 26 | NEWS | Raspberry 's Feb. 22 column , " It is those for | whom | **faith** truly matters who find themselves without a place - and who |
| 27 | MAG | prowler at Replawer in 1864 .) # **Rasmussen** Catholics , | whom | **Fordham** Jesuits find fellow Protestants believed at least deluded , |
| 28 | NEWS | more people are immunized , fewer than half **of** those for | whom | **the** shots are recommended get them . Only 36% of health care |
| 29 | SPOK | district attorney general John Paredi so ? **the** man to | whom | **Harrison** has accepted his immunity request , the story sounds |
| 30 | FIC | Rush Harry sounds like a man with genuine **experience** , for | whom | **lived** daily is just down the next fairway , even the minister |
| 31 | NEWS | and diplomacy . // Polish and Baltic officials , most of | whom | **grew** up under Soviet occupation , have long chafed at being |
| 32 | NEWS | WAVX . # The McCoys and other Wavoids -- many of | whom | **had** (much like) half their portfolios in the company -- rejoiced |
| 33 | MAG | , Maryland , Pennsylvania , Connecticut , **and** Wisconsin-most of | whom | **had** never painted west of the Mississippi River-needed time to |
| 34 | NEWS | (was) reviled among the literati , **so** many of | whom | **had** previously ridiculed Monroe . His image of moral integrity |
| 35 | FIC | in the bar with some of her girlfriends , , at of | whom | **had** scattered [] leaving her alone at a large round table covered |



# who or whom?

Using *who* is almost always okay

She is a family therapist *who* conducts workshops.

He thinks of a woman *who/whom* he met.

but you can use *whom* after a preposition.

The criminals, most **of** *whom* refuse to speak...

Beyond that, things get weird.



# who or whom? For experts only

*who* is used in subject case

**Floyd** ate all the cake.

**Who** ate all the cake?

*whom* is used in object case

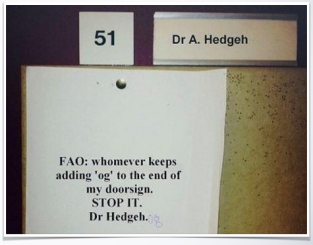
Sarah spoke to **him**.

To **whom** did Sarah speak?

But sometimes *whom* just means the speaker is trying to be fancy

and sometimes getting it wrong

known as *hypercorrection*



# Back to *whomever*

The subject/object rule has limitations

People don't have a good sense of the difference between a *subject* and an *object*

especially when the sentence has more than one *clause* in it.

**8 Feb 2015** 13:37

Meanwhile, at an airport in Canberra, a billionaire and balance of power player is engaging in some predictable trolling.

**Clive Palmer:**

> *I'm prepared to meet with whomever leads the Liberal party.*



# Singular *they*

Is it ungrammatical to use plural *they* to refer to a singular person?

From a message board:

That's actually incorrect usage of they. It is plural, and in this case anyone is "he or she".

They cannot be subsituted for a singlular object of unknown gender. He or she is grammatically correctly.

*http://talk.collegeconfidential.com/sat-act-tests-test-preparation/769321-singular-they.html*



# Singular *they* is ungrammatical?

Singular *they* has been going on for a long time.

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me / As if I were **their** well-acquainted friend — Shakespeare, The Comedy of Errors, Act IV, Scene 3 (1594)

Arise; one knocks. / ... / Hark, how **they** knock! — Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

I would have everybody marry if **they** can do it properly. — Austen, Mansfield Park (1814)

That's always your way, Maim—always sailing in to help somebody before **they're** hurt. — Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884)

Eche of theym sholde ... make theymselfe redy. — Caxton, Sonnes of Aymon (c. 1489)

## Singular *you*

*You* used to be only plural, but then changed to singular.

And how people complained.

> "Again, the *corrupt and unsound* form of speaking in the plural number to a single person (*you* to *one* instead of *thou*;) contrary to the pure, plain, and single language of truth (*thou* to one, and *you* to more than one,) which had always been used by God to men, and men to God, as well as one to another, from the oldest record of time, till corrupt men for corrupt ends, in later and corrupt times, to flatter, fawn, and work upon the corrupt nature in men, brought in that false and senseless way of speaking, *you* to *one*, which hath since corrupted the modern languages, and hath greatly debased the spirits, and depraved the manners, of men. This evil custom I had been as forward in as others; and this I was now called out of and required to cease from."



## Singular *you*

*You* used to be only plural, but then changed to singular.

George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, wrote a book on why it's always *thou* for one, *you* for many.

It's from 1660.

> Is not your own *Original*, *Thou* to *one* singular, and *You* to *many* plural; and proper speech, not non-sence? Do not they speak false English, false Latine, false Greek, false Hebrew, false Caldee, false Syriack, and Arabick, false Dutch, false French; and false to the other *Tongues*, that followes here in this Book, that doth not speak *thou* to *one*, what ever he be, Father, Mother, King, or Judge, is he not a Novice, and Unmannerly, and an Ideot, and a Fool, that speaks *You* to *one*, which is not to be spoken to a *singular*, but to *many*?

*Thx Dennis Barron, @DrGrammar.*



## Singular *you*

*You* used to be only plural, but then changed to singular.

This edition of Murray's English Grammar, used in many American schools, insisted that English speakers should use *thou* for one person.

Incredibly, it's from 1821.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Second.* | *Nom.* | Thou. | Ye *or* you |
| | *Poss.* | Thine. | Yours. |
| | *Obj.* | Thee. | You. |

*Thx Dennis Barron, @DrGrammar.*

# Another one

**flittering-sylph**

Man I hate it when people use the pronoun "you" as a singular pronoun in an informal setting. "You" is plural, unless thou dost speak to an unfamiliar person. The correct singular second person pronoun is "thou" in most cases. Grammar never changes. Pronouns must always stay one way until the end of time. Learn thy proper English. *sigh* Kids these days.

**gollyplot**

If thou this mistake shouldst make on thine own blog, then know, villain, that thou art a dirty descriptivist, and no friend of mine. Ne'er should language itself alter, it doth remain fixèd as such, untouch'd by change. Wouldst thou, vile descriptivist, that we forget the heritage of our great tongue? Nay, say I. Thou art but a dickhead who sayest so.

**kingfucko**

stynt ðy clappe! beoð ðo writerris be wetleas knafen. ðy langag o engelond diffoulened be, ille usenid bi sclaundrous novelri.



http://allthingslinguistic.com/post/1343606982297/kingfucko-gollyplot-flittering-sylph-man

# singular *they*

Then grammar grouches decided they didn't like it

- People tried *he or she*
- and other epicene pronouns
  - *thon*, *xe*, *hir*
  - with little success

Then in 2015, the American Dialect Society named *they* its Word of the Year.

**Am. Dialect Society** @americandialect — Following

The Word of the Year for 2015 is singular "they," esp. to refer to a known person. Read the press release: americandialect.org/2015-word-of-t... #woty15

**The *singular they* articles**
Click here to see a massive list of resources explaining the history and acceptability of singular *they*



# Singular *they* becoming accepted

The Chicago Manual of Style

**3 April 2017**
Chicago accepts this use of singular *they* in speech and informal writing....
A writer (or speaker) may also use they to refer to a specific, known person who does not identify with a gender-specific pronoun such as he or she.

AP STYLEBOOK 2017

**14 March 2017**
*They/them/their* is acceptable in limited cases as a singular and-or gender-neutral pronoun, when alternative wording is overly awkward or clumsy.... We do not use other gender-neutral pronouns such as *xe* or *ze*..."

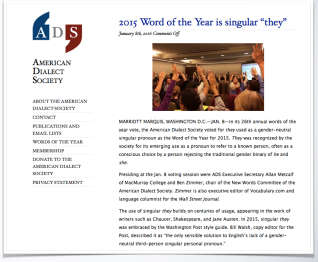
**L.A. Times updates LGBTQ style guidelines, adopts singular 'they'**

**21 April 2017**
The updated guidelines permit use of "they" and "their" as singular pronouns for individuals who do not identify as male or female, or for when gender is unknown.

# Word of the Decade

Singular *they* was voted the Word of the Decade by the American Dialect Society

'While editors have increasingly moved to accepting singular they when used in a generic fashion, voters in the Word of the Year proceedings singled out its newer usage as an identifier for someone who may identify as "non-binary" in gender terms.'






# Questions of language fact

"What are the most common languages on earth?"

Wikipedia is great for these kinds of questions.

***en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_number_of_native_speakers***

# Questions of language fact

"What languages do they speak in India?"

Try the World Factbook.

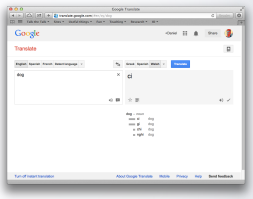
***www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/***

# Questions of language fact

"How do you say *dog* in Welsh?"

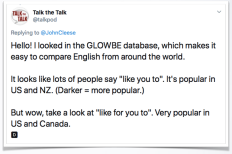
Google Translate can be used with care.

***translate.google.com***





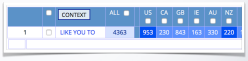
# Questions of language fact



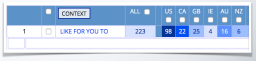

Compare different kinds of English

The Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWBE)

***www.english-corpora.org/glowbe/***



| | CONTEXT | ALL | US | CA | GB | IE | AU | NZ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LIKE YOU TO | 4363 | 953 | 230 | 843 | 163 | 330 | 220 |



| | CONTEXT | ALL | US | CA | GB | IE | AU | NZ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LIKE FOR YOU TO | 223 | 98 | 22 | 25 | 4 | 16 | 6 |

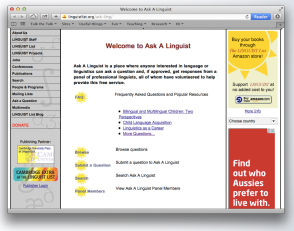


# Questions of language fact

"Which language is the oldest?"

For really tough questions, the Linguist List has "Ask a Linguist".

***linguistlist.org/ask-ling/***



# Questions of language usage

What about when we have questions about what's *right* to say?

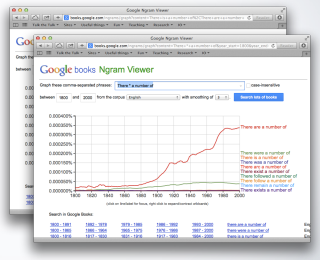
- Avoid self-appointed experts.
  - Their advice is prescriptive, and often just made up.
- Remember, we want to base our decisions on what language users actually do.
  - But how can we find real language data?
  - Look in a language corpus
    - Latin *corpus*: *body*



# A number *is*, or *are*?

We can use Google's Ngram Viewer to look at millions of books over hundreds of years.

***books.google.com/ngrams/***



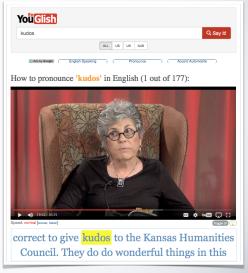



# YouGlish

How do people pronounce a certain word?

Type in a word or phrase, and YouGlish will take you directly to someone saying it in a YouTube video.

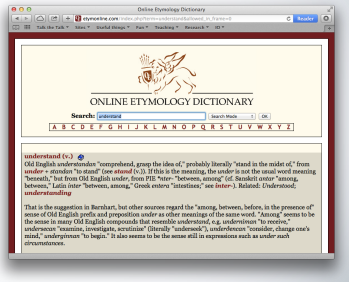
***youglish.com***



# Another resource

The Online Etymological Dictionary

***etymonline.com***

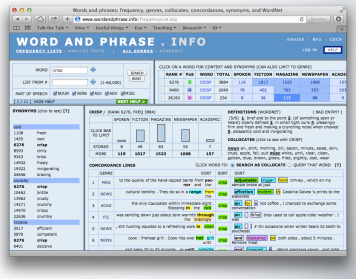





# Word and Phrase Info

How can you use corpus data to inform ideas about English usage?

***wordandphrase.info***






# What have we covered?

Parts of speech

Subject and object

*who* and *whom*

Cool tools

**Next time**

Phrases, clauses, and the verb system of English

# Outcomes for Session 2

Identify the *parts of speech* for various words
Explain what *nominalisation* is, and why it's okay
Identify the *subject* and the *object* of a sentence
Tell whether to use *who or whom* in a sentence
Explain the case for and against singular *they*
Name some tools you can use to answer language questions