

Functional English & Communication Skills For Higher Education

CONGRATULATIONS
READING FOR VOCABULARY

Speech types

RECORDING SPEECH
SPEECH SKILLS

Izuagba, A. C. PH.D
Onwukanjo, M.



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CHAPTER

1

PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR PROBLEMS OF USAGE

BY

Richard C. Ikejirika

The English grammar which is the rule governing the composition of words and sentence in the English Language, classifies the numerous words in English according to their individual function in a sentence. This classification or grouping according to function is what is referred to in the English grammar as parts of speech. There are eight parts of speech in English and they include noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb,

preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

1. NOUN

Noun is a name given to any English word which names a person, place, thing, group, quality or idea. Example:

person	-	Richard, Oluchi, Meg, etc.
place	-	Owerri, Lagos, London, etc.
Thing	-	Book, House, Tree, etc.
Group	-	Crew, Team, Audience, etc.
Quality	-	Kindness, Happiness, Braveness, etc.
Idea	-	Hope, Courage, Fear, etc.

CLASSIFICATION OF NOUNS

(a) **Proper Nouns:** These are nouns that name a particular person, place or thing. Example: John, Eke, Abuja, The River Niger, Great Expectations, Monday, January, Christmas, etc. Note that proper nouns are usually written beginning with a capital letter wherever they occur in a sentence. Example: Mr. John Eke proposed to visit Lagos on the first Sunday in the month of May.

(b) **Common Nouns:** These are nouns that name common things. They are not as specific as proper nouns. Common nouns include things like boy, man, dog, book, tree, etc. It should be noted that common nouns are not written beginning with capital letter unless they begin a sentence.

Common nouns are further classified into two. Namely, countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

i. **Countable Nouns:** These are common nouns that have Singular and Plural forms.

Example: Singular- boy, man, book. House
Plural - boys, men, books, Houses.

ii. **Uncountable Nouns:** These are common nouns that have only singular form. They are not countable. They include nouns like furniture, water, information, advice, work, etc. Note that some nouns are plural in form but singular in meaning. The nouns include news, measles, where abouts, mathematics, etc.

On the other hand, there are nouns that are always in plural form and rarely in singular form. They include trousers, glasses, thanks, police, scissors, data, etc.

(c) **Collective Nouns:** These are nouns that refer to a group of people or things. They include nouns like class, family, team, crew, audience, parliament, etc. Note that collective nouns can be used either in the singular or plural sense depending on the ideas one wants to put across.
Example:

The *family holds* an annual reunion.

The *family have* not been able to agree.

The *team plays* well.

The *team have* gone for lunch.

(d) **Abstract Nouns:** These include nouns that are not concrete, that is, nouns that cannot be recognized by the five senses but only by the mind. They are usually used in singular sense. Examples of abstract nouns are bitterness, hope, kindness, distress, courage, etc.

FORMATION OF PLURAL FORMS OF NOUNS

Basically one of the ways to show that a noun is in plural form is to add the '-s' morpheme at the end of the noun: boy-boys, bus-buses, etc. On other hand, there are nouns that form their plural by adding '-en' morpheme: child-children, ox-oxen, etc. The following should be noted in changing singular nouns to plural forms:

- (a) Add '-s' to nouns that end in sh, -ss, or x. Example: pitch-pitches, pass-passes, push-pushes, mattress-mattresses, fox-foxes.
 - (b) For nouns ending in -y, preceded by a consonant, change y to -ies. Example: baby-babies, pastry-pastries, party-parties, lorry-lorries, etc.
 - (c) For nouns ending in -y, preceded by a vowel, add -s in the plural. Example: monkeys, key-keys, money-moneys, day-days, etc.
 - (d) For nouns ending in -f or fe change to -ves in the plural. Example: thief-thieves, self-selves, loaf-loaves, life-lives, etc. Exceptions: roof-roofs, chiefs, safe-safes, etc.
 - (e) Add -es to nouns that end in -o. Example: hero-heroes, tomato-tomatoes, potato-potatoes.
- Note that there are nouns that have the same form for both singular and plural, such nouns include cattle, deer, sheep, buck, trout, etc.

2. PRONOUN

A pronoun is a word that is capable of replacing a noun in a sentence structure. For instance, we can have:

The man saw the boy.

He saw him.

Where 'he' replaces 'man' 'him' takes the position of 'boy'. The use of pronouns is one of the devices used to avoid repetition.

CLASSIFICATION OF PRONOUNS

(a) **Personal Pronouns:** These are pronouns which refer to people and things. They include I, We, You, He, It, etc. Personal pronouns are further divided into three, namely:

- i. First Person Personal Pronoun - I, We, Me, Us, My, Our, Mine, Ours, etc..
- ii. Second Person Personal Pronoun - You, Yours, Your, etc.
- iii. Third Person Personal Pronoun - He, She, It, (They) Them, Their, etc. The following table itemizes personal pronouns and their usages.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Person	Subject	Object	Possessive	Reflexive
Singular	1 I	me	mine	myself
	2 you	you	yours	yourself
	3 he, she	him, her	his, hers	himself
	it	it	its	herself
				itself
Plural	1 we	us	ours	ourselves
	2 you	you	yours	yourself
	3 they	them	theirs	themselves

The above table simply demonstrates that different forms of pronouns function in different positions in sentence structure. Take for instance, the first person singular pronoun 'I' has 'me' as its variant. Both cannot function in the same position; hence 'I' is subjective while 'me' is objective.

This view can be illustrated with the following sentences

I saw the man = (I - subject)

The man saw me = (me - object)

It would be wrong to say *Me saw the man Or

*The man saw I.

The same could be said of other personal pronouns as shown on the above table.

(b) Relative Pronouns: These are pronouns which refer to persons or things already mentioned in a preceeding clause in a sentence. They also introduce relative clauses. Relative pronouns include who, whose, whom, which and that. Relative pronouns can be personal or non-personal. Personal relative pronouns are the ones that refer to persons. They include who, whom and whose. Example:

He has seen the *man who* stole his car.

He is the *man whose* house was burnt.

She gave the parcel to the *boy whom* she loves.

On the other hand, non-personal relative pronouns are ones that refer to non-human nouns. They include

which and 'whose'. Example:

The *book which* he gave me is not mine.

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The *car whose* owner is missing has been impounded by the police. Note that 'that' is a general purpose relative pronoun. It can be used to refer to both personal and non-human nouns.

Example:

The *man that* came was not invited.

He is the *player that* scored the winning goal.

The *shirt that* I bought is a superior one.

(c) **Demonstrative Pronouns:** These are pronouns which point out certain nouns. They either make near or distant reference:

	Singular	Plural
near reference	this	these
distance reference	that	those

Example:

This is mine.

These are in my class.

That is my friend.

Those across the road have been suspended.

(b) **Interrogative Pronouns:** These are pronouns used to ask questions. They include who, what, whom whose and which.

Example:

What is your name?

Who gave you the address?

(e) **Possessive Pronouns:** Are pronouns that indicate ownership. They include mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, and theirs.

Possessive pronouns are at times wrongly written by ill-informed users of English. Note that the following are wrongly written and should be discarded wherever they are found:

your's	-	yours'
her's	-	hers'
their's	-	theirs'
it's		its'

However, 'it's' can be correct if it is used as a contracted form of "it is"

(f) **Reflexive Pronouns:** Are pronouns which refer back to the subject of the sentence or clause. They include myself, yourself, ourselves, himself, themselves, yourselves and herself. Example:

John deceived *himself*.

They gave *themselves* more than necessary.

Reflexive pronouns should not be confused with reciprocal pronouns.

Take for instance, we can have:

Every member of the group took care of *himself herself*

The members of the group were fighting one another.

In the above examples 'himself' is a reflexive pronoun while "one another" is reciprocal pronoun. Therefore it is wrong to say:

* The members of the group were fighting themselves.

(c) **Indefinite Pronouns:** These are pronouns that refer to people or things that are not specific with regard to number. Examples of indefinite pronouns are something, somebody, everything, everybody, anyone, someone, no one, nothing, etc.

Indefinite pronouns are usually written as one word except "no one" and they take singular verbs. Example:

Everybody does as he pleases.

Everything is alright.

Somebody cares for you.

3. VERB

We often say that a verb is a doing word or action word. But experience has shown that verb means more than that. Hence a more comprehensive definition says that "verb is the name given to that group of words which denote either the action performed by a noun or its equivalent or the state of being of a noun or its equivalent". Example:

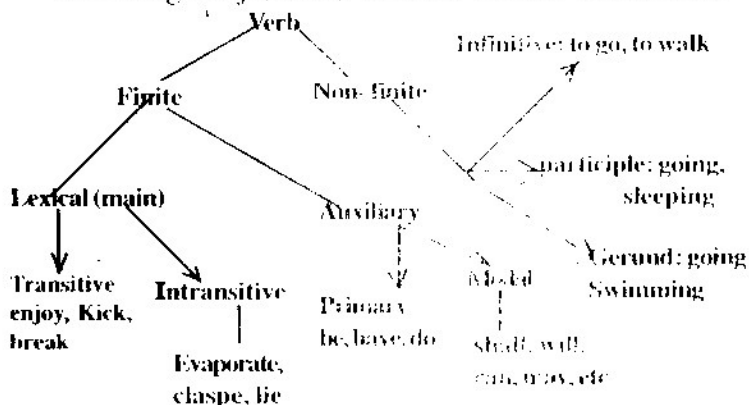
The goat *jumped* over the fence.

The man *is* sad.

It should be pointed out that verb is an obligatory element of a sentence.. That is to say that to a large extent no sentence can exist meaningfully without a verb unless in

CLASSIFICATION OF VERBS

According to Oji (1988), verbs are classified as follows:



Finite Verb: A verb is finite when it is complete. A verb is complete when it has a subject, a number and a tense.

Example:

He *comes* here always.

The boys *are* irresponsible.

John *eats* too much.

The verbs in the above sentences are finite verbs because they have subject, number and tense.

Finite verbs are further sub-divided into two, namely, lexical or main verbs and auxiliary or helping verbs.

A. Lexical or Main Verbs: A Lexical verb is a verb which indicates the action performed by a noun or the state of being of a noun or its equivalent. Example:

The student has *gone* home.

Though there are two verbs in the above sentence, 'has' and 'gone', it is 'gone' that actually indicates the action performed by 'the student', hence

“gone” is said to be a lexical or main verb.

Lexical Verbs are further sub-divided into transitive and intransitive verbs

(i) Transitive Verbs: These are verbs that take an object.

Example: The man *bought* a car

She *has* some money.

In the above sentences, “bought” and “has” are transitive verbs because they co-occur with object, “a car” and “some money” respectively.

(ii) **Intransitive Verbs:** These are verbs that do not take object.

the *plays* well.

She *sings*.

The above verbs are intransitive verbs because they did not co-occur with object.

It is possible for a verb to be transitive in one context and intransitive in another context. Example:

She sings a song

She *sings* well.

“Sings” in the first sentence is a transitive verb because it co-occurs with object. But in the second sentence “sings” is intransitive verb because it did not co-occur with object.

2. Auxiliary or Helping Verbs: These are verbs that complement main verbs. They usually help the main verb to form tense and number.

Example:

The man *will* travel tomorrow.

She *has* taken her turn.

The verbs in italics above are auxiliary verbs.

There are two kinds of auxiliary verbs:

(i) **Primary Auxiliary Verbs:** These are auxiliary verbs that can also function as main or Lexical verbs. They include “have”, “be” and “do” and their variants. Notice that “have” has “has” as its variant, “be” has seven other variants which include is, are, am, was, were, been, being, and “do” has “does” as its variant.

In the following examples the primary auxiliaries would be used to function as both auxiliary and lexical verbs:

The boy *has done* very well.

She *does not work* very hard.

He *is working* hard.

The boy *has* some money.

She *does* very well.

He *is* here.

In the first three sentences, “has”, “does”, and “is” are used as auxiliary verbs while in the last three sentences they are made to function as lexical verbs.

(ii) **Modal Auxiliary Verbs:** These include can, may, shall, will, could, might, should, would, must, ought to, used to, need and dare.

The use of *shall* and *will*: When used to indicate future tense, “shall” goes with first person while “will” goes with

second and third persons.

Example:

I shall visit you next week.

We shall do very well in the examination.

You will bring your books.

He will disappoint you.

The use of *should* and *would*: It should be noted that "should" and "would" are the past forms of "shall" and "will" respectively. However, they have other special uses.

"Should" is used in the three persons to express comparison or obligation.

Example:

You *should* respect your elder.

They *should* pay their fees before they are registered.

On the other hand, *would* is used to show

(a) habit:

He *would* take his bath every night.

She *would* always clear her throat before she speaks.

(b) Probability:

I *would* see you at the party.

If you come early, you *would* see me.

(c) Polite request:

Would you tell me your name, please

Would you give me a cup of water

Non-Finite Verbs: A verb is said to be non-finite, that is incomplete, when it has no subject, no definite number and no certain tense. For instance:

the case of verbless clauses.

Waiting for the bus ...

“Waiting” in the above context has no subject, no number and no tense. It is therefore non-finite verb.

Non finite verbs are further classified into two, namely, infinitive and participle.

Infinitive. The infinitives are either full infinitives which is usually preceeded by “to” as in: to eat, to sleep, to write, to run, etc. or bare infinitives which are not proceeded by “to” as in

I heard him *say* it.

Let him *go* away.

You dare not *do* it.

Participles: Are words that are verb in form but adjective in function. They are otherwise described as adjectives derived from verbs. There are two kinds of participles.

(a) Present Participles: These are Participles that end “ing” Example:

What help can you render to a *drowning* man?

I saw him *waiting*

He has a *walking* stick

(b) Past Participles: These are participles that end in “-ed” and “-en”

Examples:

There is no joy in a *broken* home.

The boss wants his secretary *sacked* immediately.

What is the fate of the *down-trodden* individuals in

the society?

Gerund or Verbal Nouns: These are words that are verb in form but noun in function. Example:

Smoking is dangerous

She *likes dancing*.

Seeing is believing.

Tense: Is the form of verb that indicates the time an action takes place.

Example:

He *comes* here - present

He *came* here - past

He *will come* here - future.

The above examples highlight three tenses, namely, present tense, past tense and future tense.

Other tenses include present perfect tense, (past participle), Past perfect tense and future perfect tense, etc

The Present Tense Or Simple Present Tense: It is used to indicate:

- (a) Present time: He *plays* football.
She *drives* carefully.
- (b) Habitual action:
The students *go* to the cinema always.
The old man *likes* reading novel.
- (c) It also states an established truth:
The earth *goes* round the sun.
Man *is* mortal.

Simple Past tense:

(i) **Past Tense:** The simple past tense is used to express any action that took place in the past.

I *visited* her yesterday.

He *ran* into armed robbers.

She *did* very well in the exam.

(ii) **The Future Tense:** Is used to express future action, that is, an action that is yet to take place.

We *shall* round off lecture tomorrow.

John *will* be at the party.

I *shall* travel home after the exam.

It should be recalled that in expressing future tense, “shall” goes with first person while “will” goes with second and third persons.

(iii) **The present Perfect Tense:** It is used to indicate completed action. The present tense is formed by combining the past participle of the main verb with the auxiliary verb “has” or “have”.

We *have done* our best.

The man *has driven* home.

He *has finished* his project.

(iv) **The past perfect tense:** It is used to express action that was completed before some specific time in the past and is formed by combining “had” with the past participle of the main verb.

I *had finished* eating before she came.

The robbers *had run* away before the

police arrived.

(v) **The Future Perfect Tense:** It is used to indicate action that will be completed at a future time. It is formed by combining "shall have" or "will have" with the past participle of the main verbs.

By next year, *I shall have finished* my Ph.D. programme.

Before he comes tomorrow, we *shall have concluded* the discussion.

Regular and Irregular Verbs: Regular verbs are the verbs that form their past tense and past participle by adding "-ed", "-d" or "-t" to the present form of a verb. For the regular verb, it is easy to predict the past and past participle forms. Example:

Present	Past	Past Participle
Play	Played	Played
Stop	Stopped	Stopped
Love	Loved	Loved
Build	Built	Built.

Irregular verbs on the other hand are verbs that the past and past participle forms are not easily predicted like the regular verbs. Example:

Present	Past	Past Participle
go	went	gone
eat	ate	eaten
write	wrote	written

see	saw	seen
come	came	come
sing	sang	sung

Present	Past	Past Participle
choose	chose	chosen
break	broke	broken
draw	drew	drawn
do	did	done
cut	cut	cut
hit	hit	hit
cost	cost	cost
hurt	hurt	hurt
bring	brought	brought
fight	fought	fought
sit	sat	sat
find	found	found, etc

Students should endeavour to learn the past and past participle forms of various verbs as that would go a long way in enabling them to use tenses correctly. To be able to achieve this goal, a good English dictionary would be of immense help.

4. ADJECTIVE

Adjective is a word that qualifies a noun or noun equivalent. Put differently, what we mean is that an adjective is a word **that** describes or gives more informa-

tion about a noun or noun equivalent. Example:

tall man

young lady.

beautiful house

lucky boy.

Kinds of Adjective

(a) **Demonstrative Adjectives:** These are adjectives that point to the noun they qualify. They are the same thing as demonstrative pronouns.

Example:

this book

that man

these students

those boys

such skill

(b) **Possessive Adjective:** These are adjective that show possession.

Example:

My wife

your friend

their parents

its colour.

(c) **Interrogative Adjective:** These include *which* as in: Which house is yours? Whose as in: *Whose* car is this?

(d) **Numerical Adjectives:** These are adjectives that indicate number of the noun they qualify. Example:

seven birds

each person

ten students

(e) **Indefinite Adjectives:** As the name suggests, these are adjectives that do not specify the quantity of the noun they qualify. Examples :

some students

several people

few attempts

(f) **Adjective that indicate Order:** They include
first attempt
second approach
final decision.

(g) **Descriptive Adjective:** These are adjectives that really describe the noun they qualify. Example:

lazy man

brilliant student

blue moon.

(h) **The Article:** They include:

(i) **definite article:** "the" as in : *the* school, *the* scene, etc.

(ii) **Indefinite article:** *a* and *an* as in a boy, a book, a car, an idiot, an aeroplane, an apple etc.

Comparison of Adjectives: Adjectives have three degrees of comparison. They include positive, comparative and

superlative.

(a) **comparative Degree:** We have positive degree when the base form of adjective is used. Example: *old* is used when only one noun is being described.

old man

small house

good behaviour.

(b) **Comparative Degree:** This is the form of the adjective used when two nouns are compared. Example:

older - John is *older* than Mary.

smaller - My house is *smaller* than yours.

better - Her behaviour is *better* than yours.

(c) **Superlative Degree:** This is the form of adjective used when three or more nouns are compared. Example:

oldest - John is the *oldest* of the three boys.

smallest - My house is the *smallest* of the three.

best - Her behaviour is the *best* in the class.

Study the following table.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
old	older	oldest
small	smaller	smallest
tall	taller	tallest
big	bigger	biggest
happy	happier	happiest
short	shorter	shortest
large	larger	largest
dry	drier	driest
fat	fatter	fattest

ugly uglier ugliest.

Adjective with irregular comparison

positive	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
many	more	most
ill	worse	worst
little	less	least
bad	worse	worst
evil	worse	worst
well	better	best.

Comparison of Adjective of two or more syllables

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
stupid	more stupid	most stupid
difficult	more difficult	most difficult
complementary	more complementary	most complementary
logical	more logical	most logical
honest	more honest	most honest

Attributive and Predicative: Adjective is said to be attributive when it is placed before the noun it qualifies.

Example:

brilliant scholar

sunny day

concrete bridge.

On the other hand predicative adjective is the one that comes after a linking verb. Example:

She looks *hungry*

The boy is *clever*

The woman is *good*.

Order of Adjectives: When two or more **adjectives** qualify a given noun, the adjectives should take the following order:

1. Quantity or Determiner
2. Quality
3. Size
4. Shape
5. Age
6. Colour
7. Nationality
8. Noun head.

Study the following Table

Quantity of Determiner	Quantity	Size	Shape	Age	Colour	Nationality	Noun Head
an	ugly	fat		old		American	Lady
a	beautiful	small	rectangular	new	blue	Japanese	can
The	expensive	large	triangular		new	Nigerian	bag

5. ADVERB

Adverb is a word that modifies or gives more information about verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, phrases or even whole sentences and make their meaning clearer and more exact.

Examples:

He drives *slowly*.

She is a *very* brilliant scholar.

The athlete runs *fast*.

Note that it is not every word that ends in " -ly" that is an

adverb and also there are adverbs that do not end in “-ly”.

Example:

Thank you for your *friendly* gesture.

The book is *there*.

In the above examples, ‘*friendly*’ is an adjective even though it ends in “-ly”. On the other hand, “*there*” is an adverb even though it does not end in “-ly”.

Kinds of Adverbs:

(i) **Adverbs of manner:** These answer the questions:

How?, In what manner: Example:

She writes *slowly*.

He behaves *rudely*.

(ii) **Adverbs of Place:** These are adverbs that answer the question:

where?

The Visitor is *outside*.

I saw him *there*.

(iii) **Adverb of Reason:** Are Adverbs which answer the question why?

I did not come *because* of rain.

He was *therefore* suspended.

(iv) **Adverbs of Time:** These are adverbs that answer the question: When?

She visits me *occasionally*.

He saw me *yesterday*.

(v) **Adverbs of Negation:** The words “not” and “neither...”

nor" are sometimes used as adverb. Example:

She neither *sweeps* nor cooks.

(iv) **Adverbs of Degree:** These are adverbs that answer the question:

How much? Example:

The work was *well* done

The man is *highly* responsible.

Comparison of Adverbs: like adjectives, adverbs are also compared in three degrees, positive, comparative and superlative.

Study the following table:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
far	farther	farthest
late	later	latest
little	less	least
near	nearer	nearest
soon	sooner	soonest
slowly	more slowly	most slowly
positively	more positively	most positively
quickly	more quickly	most quickly
awkwardly	more awkwardly	most awkwardly
secretly	more secretly	most secretly

Some adverbs are not compared and they include:

before	very	where
even	so	very
here	then	past
never	there	whenever
no	thus	back

when too by etc.

6. PREPOSITION

A preposition is a word or group of words which show the relationship between two nouns or noun equivalents.

Example:

The book is *on* the table
I found it *by* the roadside
The ball went *over* the bar.

Some prepositions are compound in structure. Such prepositions include:

apart from, because of, due to, in front of, etc:-

The types of relationship between two nouns which preposition indicates can be any of the following:

time relationship	-	at, during
direction	-	to, toward
source	-	from, to
position/reason	-	under, on, near
cause/reason	-	despite, because of
limit	-	till, within.

Note that some words can be used as both preposition and adverb. When a word is used as a preposition it must be followed by a noun or pronoun but when used as adverb, noun or pronoun may not follow it.

Example:

He tied rope *round* the log (preposition)

He walked *round* (adverb)

When the preposition “for” and “since” are followed by noun expressing time, the following rules should be applied:

- (a) Use ‘for’ to indicate period of time. Example:
She did not attend lecture *for* three weeks
I worked there *for* ten years.
- (b) Use “since” to indicate point in time. Example:
She has not visited *since* last year.
It has been raining *since* last Sunday.

7. CONJUNCTION

Conjunctions are words used to join words, phrases, clauses or sentences together. They include words like and, but, or, because, for, however, since, until, yet, etc.

Example:

The student *and* his father are here.
I visited him *but* I didn’t see him.
Do you want water *or* wine?
She failed *because* she did not work hard.

Classification of Conjunction:

(a) **Co-ordinating Conjunctions:** These are conjunctions used to join units of equal status. Example:

The book *and* the pen are mine.
John is reading *but* Mary is sleeping.

(b) **Subordinating Conjunctions:** These are conjunc-

tions used to link units that are not of equal status.

This is usually the case when a main clause is linked with a subordinate clause. Example:

I did not come *because* it rained.

Although he played, he did not make any impact.

He saw me *when* he came.

(c) Correlative Conjunctions: Are conjunctions that are used in pairs. They include either... or, neither... nor, not only... but also, so... as, both---and, etc.

Example:

He did not *only fail* the election *but* also lost his deposit.

He is *neither* here nor there.

8. INTERJECTION

Interjection is a word used to express strong feeling and sudden exclamation of joy, disgust, enthusiasm or surprise. Such words include Ha! Oh! Shew! Shame! O dear! Drat! Example:

Oh! what a nice gesture.

Hey! who goes there?

Alas! we are here.



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