

Essential Grammar

This is a basic summary for reference and review. It is not exhaustive, but it is a helpful place to begin. If you encounter more complex grammatical issues and an internet search doesn't help, ask your coach. He or she should be able either to help you or to refer you to a relevant resource.

- **Clauses** (have a subject and a verb)
 - Independent or Dependent?
 - An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. Example: *I do not like dragons (independent), which are red (dependent).*
 - If it is dependent, what does it do?
 - Modifies a noun: Answers WHICH? or WHO? *I especially do not like elderly dragons, which are particularly grouchy.*
 - Gives a condition: IF. *If a dragon comes near me, I will scream and run.*
 - Gives a purpose: IN ORDER THAT, SO THAT, THAT. *It has claws in order that it can kill its prey.*
 - Shows a cause: BECAUSE. *I am hiding because I am afraid.*
 - Gives time: Answers WHEN? *I will come out after it is gone.*
 - Shows comparison: AS, LIKE *My sister has claws as though she were a dragon.*
- **Phrases** (no subject and verb)
 - Does it modify a noun? What? Who? Which?
 - Does it modify a verb? When? Why? How? Where?
- **Connectives** (linking words)
 - Coordinating: AND, BUT, OR, FOR, NOR (These can connect multiple independent clauses.)
 - Subordinating: IF, AFTER, AS BEFORE, ALTHOUGH, SINCE, IN ORDER THAT, SO THAT, BECAUSE, WHILE, WHENEVER, ETC. (These are clues to dependent clauses.)
- **Verbs**
 - Participles: -ING -- *Skiing* on powder is an exhilarating experience.
 - Infinitives - usually TO ____ -- *To be* or not *to be*; that is the question.
- **Tenses**
 - PRESENT - *I go to church.*
 - PAST - *I went to church.*
 - FUTURE - *I will go to church.*