

Grammar terms beginning with letter N

Neologism

The label neologism refers to a word which has been recently coined. An example is 'eco-friendly' which means 'not harmful to the environment'.

Nominative

In languages with CASE, the case-form used to mark a grammatical subject. Only a few pronouns distinguish case in English. For example, in the normative case, the first person singular noun has the form I. In the objective case, its form is me. Similarly, the nominative case form of the third person plural pronoun is they; its objective case form is them.

Non-finite

A label applied to a verb form which cannot be the only verb in a clause. There are four types of non-finites in English: the present participle, the past participle, the infinitive and the gerund.

Non-finite verbs are not marked for tense. That means they have the same form in all tenses.

Study the following sentences. You will notice that the non-finite 'to smoke' does not change its form according to the change in tenses.

I want to smoke. (Simple present)

I have wanted to smoke. (Present perfect)

I wanted to smoke. (Simple past)

I had wanted to smoke. (Past perfect)

I will want to smoke. (Simple future)

Now study the following sentences. You will notice that the present participle 'swimming' does not change its form according to the change in tenses.

I enjoy swimming in the sea. (Simple present)

I have enjoyed swimming in the sea. (Present perfect)

I enjoyed swimming in the sea. (Simple past)

I will enjoy swimming in the sea. (Simple future)