

## LOGIC – Lesson 14: Categorematic and syncategorematic terms

The two categorical uses of terms are called categorematic and syncategorematic. A categorematic term can stand by itself as a unit of meaning, like “apple” or “green” and thus can be a subject or predicate. A syncategorematic term (mainly articles, prepositions, and conjunctions, like “the” or “on” or “when”) cannot be a subject or predicate.

The distinction between categorematic and syncategorematic terms was established in ancient Greek grammar. Words that designate self-sufficient entities (i.e., nouns) were called categorematic, and those that do not stand by themselves were dubbed syncategorematic, (i.e., prepositions, logical connectives, etc.). There are a total of ten categories, one substance and nine accidents.

1. Categorematic/Substance: The common nature of a thing, such as “man” or “horse.” **A substance can exist on its own.**
2. Syncategorematic/accidents: They always adhere in a substance. **An accident cannot exist on its own.**
  - Quantity: how much of the substance/subject?
  - Quality: what kind of substance?
  - Relation: what is relation of substance?
  - Place: where is substance?
  - Time: when, temporality of substance?
  - Posture: position of substance (standing, sitting)?
  - Possession of substance.
  - Action of substance.
  - Passion on (being acted upon) the substance.
3. We can see the categories in the structure of language: nouns and pronouns usually express substances, adjectives express qualities and quantities, prepositions and conjunctions express relations, verbs express actions or passions, and adverbs express times or place—or qualities and quantities of actions and passions.

## EXERCISES

Exercises: Identify each categorematic or syncategorematic term in the following sentences.

**1. In the square sat seven skinny soldiers stuck in the stocks at six o'clock.**

Example for #1:

“In”= relation; “square”= a place; “sat”= action; “seven”= quantity; “skinny”= quality; “soldiers”= substance; “stuck”= posture; “in”= relation; “stocks”= substance; “six”= quantity; “o'clock”= time.

**2. Near the blasted heath at midnight, the three Weird Sisters stood, gleefully stirring the round, black witches' pot filled with three tiny broken frogs.**

**3. Politically proper Professor Pete, painted partly pink, proffered puzzling paradoxes of pop psychology of pop psychology, ponderously pontificating.**

**4. Pooping on pieces of pork in the park is proper performance for perky pelicans.**

**Answers to 2-4 are on the next page.**

## ANSWERS

2. Near the blasted heath at midnight, the three Weird Sisters stood, gleefully stirring the round, black witches' pot filled with three tiny broken frogs)

“near = relation; “blasted” = passion; “heath” = substance (or “near the blasted heath” = place); “midnight” = time; “three” = quantity; “weird” = quality; “sisters” = substance (but in relation); “stood” = posture; “gleefully” = quality; “stirring” = action; “round” = quality; “black” = quality; “witches” = possession; “pot” = substance; “filled” = passion; “three” = quantity; “tiny” = quantity; “broken” = passion; “frogs” = substance.

3. Politically proper Professor Pete, painted partly pink, proffered puzzling paradoxes of pop psychology of pop psychology, ponderously pontificating.

“Politically” = quality; “proper” = quality; “Professor” = substance (it would be relation if it said “*their* professor”); “Pete” = substance; “painted” = passion; “partly” = quantity; “pink” = quality; “proffered” = action; “puzzling” = quality; “paradoxes” = substance; “pop” = quality; “psychology” = substance; “ponderously” = quality; “pontificating” = action.

4. Pooping on pieces of pork in the park is proper performance for perky pelicans.

“Pooping” = action; “on” = relation; “pieces” = quantity; “pork” = substance; “in the park” = place; “is” = no category but a copula that comes between the subject and predicate; “proper” = quality; “performance” = action; “perky” = quality; “pelicans” = substance.

Advancing in the Logos,

*Pastor Don*