Glossary

Words in bold are cross-referenced in this glossary. Parentheses indicate the section of the book where a more detailed description of the term can be found.

**action verb** (1.5): a verb that describes what people and things do (e.g., perform, study, design). Action verbs can be transitive, intransitive, or ditransitive.

**active voice** (4.6): a clause in which the agent of the main verb is the subject of the clause (e.g., we mixed the compounds).

**agent** (1.5): the person or thing that does, causes, or is responsible for the main verb. The agent is the subject of an active clause. A passive sentence may not have an agent.

**article** (5.2): see definite article and indefinite article.

**aspect** (4.1): an element of the verb tense that tells the reader whether the verb should be seen as factual (simple), connected to a previous time (perfect), or ongoing (progressive).

**auxiliary verb** (1.1): a verb such as has/have, a form of be, or do/does/did that is used when the main verb is not the finite verb. See also modal verb.

**bare infinitive** (1.1): the infinitive form of a verb without to (e.g., write, suggest, have).

**binary adjective** (6.5): an adjective that is either true or not, such as employed or stationary.

Binary adjectives cannot logically be modified with adverbs such as very, somewhat, quite, and they do not have comparative forms. However, some adjectives that could be considered binary by their meaning (unique, pregnant) are often made gradable in actual use.

**boost** (6.1): increase the strength of claims, for example, with certain modal verbs or adverbs or by word choices.

**classifying adjective** (5.7): an adjective that indicates the type of noun in the head noun position—for example, a political party. See also noun modifier and describing adjective.

**clause** (1.1): a group of words connected by a verb. Clauses can be divided into independent and dependent clauses. All independent clauses are finite clauses; dependent clauses may be finite or non-finite clauses.

**collocation** (7.1): the tendency of words to occur together (e.g., heavy rain, strong tea).

**complement** (1.1, 1.7): a word, phrase, or clause that comes after a verb and is controlled by the verb. Complements can take many forms, depending on the type and meaning of the verb. See also direct object, indirect object, subject complement, finite clause, noun clause, and non-finite clause.

**complement clause** (3.4): an embedded clause that completes the meaning of a noun or adjective (e.g., the fact that . . . or it is important to . . .).

**complex sentence** (2.2): a combination of one or more independent and dependent clauses.
compound sentence (2.2): see equal clauses.

conditional clause (6.4): see real conditional and unreal conditional.

conjunction (2.2): see coordinating conjunction and subordinating conjunction.

coordinating conjunction (2.2): a conjunction that can join two independent clauses as equal clauses (also called a compound sentence). The coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so and can be remembered by the acronym FANBOYS.

corpus (7.1): a large collection of electronic texts that can be searched to discover patterns about particular uses of language (e.g., academic writing).

count noun (5.1): a noun that can be singular or plural. This means the noun has a shape or boundary, allowing you to count one or more. See also non-count noun and double noun.

definite article (5.5): the. The definite article is only used when both the reader and the writer can identify the specific reference of the head noun.

dependent clause (2.1): any clause that cannot be used as a complete sentence in academic writing. This includes all non-finite clauses and subordinate clauses (clauses with subordinating conjunctions, relative clauses, and noun clauses).

describing adjective (5.7): an adjective that describes the quality of the noun—for example, an important question. See also classifying adjective.

determiner (1.2, 5.2): a word that gives a reference to the head noun in a noun phrase: indefinite, definite, generic, specific, or possessive. The determiner helps the reader to determine what the head noun refers to: a category, any individual, a particular thing, or something belonging to someone.

direct object (1.5): the person or thing that is acted upon by the verb. In an active clause, the direct object is the goal of the verb. Direct objects are usually noun phrases, although they can be clauses with some verbs.

ditransitive verb (1.5): an action verb that requires two objects: an indirect object (functioning as the recipient in an active clause) and a direct object (the goal)—for example, the university gave the team a grant.

double noun (5.1): a noun that is usually non-count that has been made a count noun. In their countable meanings, double nouns can mean types, examples, or instances of the noun (e.g., a wine is a type of wine). In other cases, the count form has a boundary, which the non-count noun does not (e.g., experience is everything you have done until now; an experience is a particular event with a beginning and end).

elaborating clauses (2.5): independent or dependent clauses that describe or comment on the main clause without adding any particularly new information.

embedded clause (3.1): a clause that adds information about an element in another clause. Most embedded clauses are restrictive relative clauses, meaning they identify or define nouns. Sometimes, a noun clause can also be embedded with a noun that means fact or idea, in which case it acts as a complement clause, completing the meaning of the fact or idea.

enhancing clauses (2.5): independent or dependent clauses that add a time, place, manner, cause/effect, concession, or condition to the main clause.

equal clauses (also called compound sentences): two clauses with equal importance in a sen-
tence, joined with the meaning of expansion with a coordinating conjunction or a semi-colon.

**equative (6.6):** a phrase or clause that describes two items (words, ideas, actions, states, etc.) as the same or similar. There are many resources for expressing equatives, including *as . . . as, the same as,* and *as many as.*

**expansion (2.5):** combining clauses by elaborating, extending, or enhancing.

**experiential meaning (1.8):** the event, action, or experience that the clause describes. Writers create experiential meaning through their choices of clause and sentence structure as well as vocabulary. All sections of this book, but especially Units 1–5, describe the resources for controlling experiential meaning. Experiential meaning is one of the three layers of meaning in functional grammar (see also interpersonal meaning and textual meaning).

**extending clauses (2.5):** independent or dependent clauses that add new information to the main clause.

**finite clause (1.1):** a clause with a subject that agrees with a finite verb. All independent clauses are finite; some dependent clauses are finite (e.g., subordinate clauses and full relative clauses).

**finite verb (1.1):** a verb that agrees with its subject (see subject-verb agreement) and can be changed to express different verb tenses.

**fragment (2.7):** a dependent or non-finite clause punctuated as a complete sentence. This is usually an error in formal writing, although proficient writers can use fragments to good effect.

**functional grammar (Unit 1):** a description of how language is used in context. Functional grammar is a way of understanding language not from the perspective of rules but rather from an analysis of how different choices affect the meaning of a sentence and a longer text. Functional grammar is interested in what language *does,* and functional linguists explain that language works by creating three layers of meaning simultaneously: experiential meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning.

**future-in-the-past (4.4):** a verb form describing an action or state that happened after another time in the past. The future-in-the-past is formed with *was/were going to,* or *would.*

**generic reference (5.3):** a head noun that means all of a particular category or group.

**gerund (5.8):** the *–ing* form of a verb; see non-finite verb.

**goal (1.5):** The element of a clause that is acted upon by the verb. In the active voice, the goal is the direct object (*the engineer fixed the network*), whereas in the passive voice, the goal is usually the subject (*the network was fixed by the engineer*).

**gradable adjective (6.5):** an adjective that can have a range of intensity—for example, by modifying it with an adverb such as *very, somewhat, quite.* Only gradable adjectives have comparative forms. See also binary adjective.

**head noun (1.2):** the main noun in a noun phrase. It is the head noun in the subject noun phrase that agrees with the finite verb (see subject-verb agreement).

**hedge (6.1):** reduce the strength of claims out of uncertainty or modesty, or show the source for your ideas—for example, through citation. Hedging resources include modal verbs, adverbs, conditional clauses, and many word choices.
indefinite article (5.4): *a* or *an* (no article is used for indefinite reference with a **non-count noun** or plural noun).

independent clause (2.1): a clause containing a **subject** and a **finite verb**. An independent clause can be a complete sentence in formal writing.

indirect object (1.5): the element of a clause with a **ditransitive** verb that receives the action of the verb. In an active clause, the indirect object is the **recipient** (*the professor sent the class an email*). Indirect objects can be noun phrases but are often prepositional phrases with many **action** and **reporting** verbs (*the teacher talked to the class*).

infinitive: see **non-finite verb**.

–ing verb: see **non-finite verb**.

interpersonal meaning (1.8): the relationship that a text builds between the writer and the reader. This level of meaning includes **hedging**, **boosting**, and evaluative language, as well as choices such as **personal pronouns** (first or third person?) and the use of questions (which directly address the reader). Unit 6 focuses on the resources for controlling interpersonal meaning. Interpersonal meaning is one of the three layers of meaning in **functional grammar** (see also **experiential meaning** and **textual meaning**).

intransitive (1.5): a verb that must have an **agent** (as the **subject**) but cannot take a **direct object**. Most intransitive verbs are usually followed by an adverb or prepositional phrase.

irregular noun (5.1): a noun with a plural form that is not formed by adding –*s* or –*es* (e.g., *children, criteria*).

linking (8.4): a pattern of paragraph organization in which the new information at the end of a sentence (or clause) becomes the old information at the start of the next.

linking verb (1.7): a verb that gives information about what something is or is related to. Describing linking verbs put the **agent** in a particular class or category (*She is a teacher*). Identifying verbs link the agent to its definition or to a statement about its identity, such as a name, example, role, symbol, or translation (*T is the response time*). The **complements** of linking verbs can be adjectives, **noun phrases**, prepositional phrases, and sometimes **clauses**.

main clause (2.1): in a sentence with more than one clause, the main clause is the **independent clause**. If there are two or more independent clauses, the first one is the main clause.

main verb (1.1): the verb in a **clause** that carries the main meaning, as distinct from an **auxiliary verb** or a **modal verb**.

metalanguage (Introduction): language used to talk about language—that is, the terminology used to describe grammar.

modal verb (3.2, 6.1): an **auxiliary verb** used to add **interpersonal meaning** to a **main verb**. The most common modal verbs in academic writing are *may, might, can, could, will, would,* and *should*. Modal verbs are often used for **hedging** and **boosting**.

modifier (1.2): a **determiner**, adjective, or **noun modifier** that appears before the **head noun** in a **noun phrase** and changes its meaning.

nominalization (5.8): changing a verb (or any other part of speech) into a noun phrase (e.g., *the reaction occurred quickly → it was a rapid reaction*).

non-count noun (5.1): a noun that does not have a plural form and cannot be used with **indefinite articles** because it has no shape or boundary and therefore exists as an
uncountable concept. Many non-count nouns can become countable. These are called **double nouns**.

**non-finite clause (1.1)**: a clause with a non-finite verb as its main verb. All non-finite clauses are dependent clauses. Some non-finite clauses are reduced relative (i.e., embedded) clauses or non-restrictive relative clauses.

**non-finite verb (2.4, 3.5)**: a verb in the to infinitive (to do), bare infinitive (do), or –ing (doing) form that has no subject or a subject with which it does not agree in number. See non-finite clause.

**non-restrictive relative clause (2.3)**: a type of unequal clause that elaborates on the meaning of something in the main clause with additional information, clarifications, descriptions, explanations, or comments. Non-restrictive clauses are always separated from the main clause with commas, unlike restrictive clauses, which are embedded.

**noun clause (3.3)**: a dependent clause introduced with that, if, whether, or another wh-word. Noun clauses are usually the direct objects of reporting verbs. See also subjunctive.

**noun modifier (7.4)**: a noun used as a modifier in front of a head noun. The modifier typically describes the type of head noun, for example—a grammar textbook.

**noun phrase (1.2)**: a group of words that describe a main noun.

**object (1.1)**: see complement, direct object, indirect object.

**passive voice (4.6)**: a clause in which the subject is not the agent of the main verb (The research was interrupted).

**past habitual (4.5)**: a verb form describing an action or state that was common or frequent in the past but is no longer so today. The past habitual is formed with used to or would.

**possessive determiner (5.6)**: a word that specifies to whom the head noun belongs (my, your, his, her, its, our, their).

**pronoun (1.3)**: a word that refers to a person or thing without naming it (I, you, he, she, it, we, they).

**proper noun (5.1)**: a noun that is written with a capital letter because it is the name of a person, place, company, or trademark. All other nouns are common nouns.

**qualifier (1.2)**: a prepositional phrase or embedded clause that appears after the head noun and explains or identifies it.

**quantifier (5.6)**: an element of the noun phrase that specifies the quantity of the head noun (how much or how many), such as many, a few, a number of.

**real conditional (6.4)**: a type of enhancing clause meaning that the main clause is true under certain conditions. In a real conditional, the conditions and the main clause are both factual (they happened, are happening, or will/may happen). See also unreal conditional.

**recipient (1.5)**: the person or thing that benefits from the action of the verb. In the active voice, the recipient is usually an indirect object (The experimenter gave the subjects clear directions).

**reduced relative clause (3.2)**: a relative clause can be reduced by omitting the relative pronoun and the verb be in some situations, or by changing the finite verb to an –ing verb in other situations.

**referent (2.3)**: the noun, phrase, or clause that a relative pronoun replaces in a relative clause; in this definition, the referent of that is “noun, phrase, or clause.”
relative clause (2.3, 3.1): a dependent clause in which a relative pronoun takes the place of one of a noun (the subject, complement, or object of a preposition). See embedded clause (for restrictive relative clauses) and non-restrictive relative clauses.

relative pronoun (2.3, 3.1): a subordinator used with a relative clause: that, which, who, whose, and whom. The relative pronoun can be omitted if it is the direct object of the verb in the relative clause, or in a reduced relative clause.

repeated theme (8.4): a pattern of paragraph organization in which the same word or idea is used as the theme of several sentences.

reporting verb (1.6, 6.6): a verb that reports the words, thoughts, or ideas of another person or source (e.g., say, believe, claim). A complete functional grammar would distinguish between verbal processes and mental processes.

restrictive relative clause (3.1): see embedded clause.

run-on sentence (2.7): two independent clauses joined with a comma and no conjunction. This is considered an error in formal writing.

sentence connector (2.2): an adverb or prepositional phrase used to show the logical relationship between sentences or independent clauses—for example, however, therefore, for example.

simple sentence (2.1): a sentence composed of one independent clause.

specific determiner (5.6): words that make the head noun specific (this, that, these, or those) when used in the determiner slot in the noun phrase by pointing to this one or these ones here, or that one or those ones over there. Specific determiners are often used with summary nouns or by themselves as pronouns.

subject (1.1): the element of a finite clause that agrees with the verb (see subject-verb agreement). In an active clause, the subject is the agent of the verb. Most non-finite clauses do not have subjects, but occasionally they may, for example, I wanted the students to participate, where the students can be considered the subject of the infinitive to participate.

subject-verb agreement (4.8): a feature of finite clauses where the verb is changed slightly depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. In the present simple tense, most verbs add an -s or -es with singular subjects. The verb have changes to has. The verb be has more forms: I am, you/you/they are, he/she/it is in the present simple tense, and I/he/she/it was and they/we were in the past simple. When be, have, or do are used as auxiliary verbs, they agree with the subject. Modal verbs do not agree with their subjects.

subjunctive (3.5): a form of the verb used in noun clauses following verbs or adjectives with the meaning of recommendation, advice, or requirement (e.g., recommend, insist, it is essential that). The bare infinitive form of the verb (without to or third person -s) is used.

subordinate clause (3.4): a dependent clause that starts with any subordinator.

subordinating conjunction (2.2): a conjunction that can join a dependent clause to an independent clause in an unequal relationship, such as because, if, although.

subordinator (3.4): any word that introduces a subordinate clause, including subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, and noun clause subordinators (that, if, whether, and wh- words).
**summary noun (8.3):** A general noun with a broad meaning that is often used to create cohesion—for example, difficulty, issue, feature. Summary nouns are often used with specific determiners to create a link to a previous clause or sentence, a form of textual meaning.

**superlative (6.5):** A form of adjective or adverb used to show that an item (word, idea, action, state, etc.) is different from all others in some way. The superlative form of gradable adjectives is –est or the most/least + adjective. The superlative form of adverbs or nouns uses the most/least. Superlative noun phrases always require definite articles.

**super-theme (8.4):** A pattern of paragraph organization in which a main idea (the super-theme) is broken down into smaller parts or aspects in the themes of the following sentences.

**tense (3.2):** The meanings of time (past or present) and aspect that can be marked on a verb. Tenses in this book are described as time + aspect—for example, present simple, past simple, and present perfect.

**textual meaning (1.8):** The organization of the information and the message through an entire text (i.e., a paragraph, an essay, a paper, or a book). The textual function of language holds a text together and makes it coherent. This is done by choosing the theme of a clause and the position of new information. Unit 8 focuses on textual meaning. Textual meaning is one of the three layers of meaning in functional grammar (see also experiential meaning and interpersonal meaning).

**theme (8.2):** The first meaningful element in the clause. Typically, this is the subject plus any sentence connectors or conjunctions in front of it. The theme is “the point of departure of the message” (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004, p. 64), which is usually (but not always) old information. Writers use the theme position to create certain patterns of organization in paragraphs and longer texts (linking pattern, repeated theme, super-theme, theme preview).

**theme preview (8.4):** A pattern of paragraph organization in which the themes of the paragraph are previewed in the first sentence (sometimes called a topic sentence).

**time marker (4.2):** An adverb or prepositional phrase that expresses the time period of the clause, such as today, in 1997, or in three years.

**topic sentence (8.4):** See theme preview.

**transitive (1.5):** A verb that requires an agent (subject) and goal (direct object) in the active voice. Transitive verbs can be used in the passive voice with the goal as the subject.

**unequal clauses (a type of complex sentence) (2.2):** An independent clause joined with a dependent or subordinate clause in a relationship of expansion. The dependent clause often starts with a subordinating conjunction.

**unreal conditional (6.2):** A type of enhancing clause that gives the conditions under which the main clause would happen, even though it is not possible now. Unreal conditionals can be hypothetical (what would happen now or in the future) or counterfactual (what would have happened in the past). See also real conditional.

**voice:** See active voice, passive voice.

**wh- words (2.7):** Subordinators that can introduce noun clauses formed from question words: who, where, when, why, whether, which + noun, and how (+ many / much).