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Primary Curriculum

**Understanding**

**Grammar**

This booklet was put together as guide to grammar in line with the New 2014 Primary Curriculum. It has been created to help you understand the new statutory requirements for Grammar for your child’s year group. These are core requirements that all children should be able to achieve by the end of year. There are, of course, individual circumstances that might prevent your child from achieving these statutory requirements, but in general we would expect all children to be confident with these fundamental skills, and using the correct grammatical terms, by the end of the academic year.

In the new Primary Curriculum there is a much stronger emphasis on vocabulary development, grammar, punctuation and spelling (for example, the use of commas and apostrophes will now be taught in KS1).

These requirements will link closely with the Reading and Writing Key Skills for your child’s year group.

Also included in this booklet is a glossary, to help you to understand the technical terms used. It is intended as an aid for children and parents, **not** as the body of knowledge that should be learnt by your children.

**Year 1**

Children should understand:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | * Regular plural noun suffixes *–s* or *–es*, including the effects of these suffixes on the meaning of the noun

Example: dog, dogs; wish, wishes* Suffixes that can be added to verbs where no change is needed in the spelling of root words

Example: help › helping, helped, helper* How the prefix *un-* changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives

Example: the opposite › unkind or undoing › untie the boat |
| **Sentence** | * How words can be combined to make sentences
* Joining words and joining clauses using *and*
 |
| **Text** | * Sequencing sentences to form short narratives
 |
| **Punctuation** | * Separation of words with spaces
* Introduction to capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences
* Capital letters for names and for the personal pronoun *I*
 |
| **Terminology****for the children** | letter, capital letterword, singular, pluralsentencepunctuation, full stop, question mark, exclamation mark |

**Year 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | * Formation of nouns using suffixes such as *–ness*, *-er* and by compounding

Example: teach › teacher (turns a verb into a noun)Example: whiteboard, bluebird (two root words combined)* Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as *–ful*, *-less*

Example: hurt › hurtful* Use of the suffixes *–er, -est* in adjectives

Example: big › bigger, biggest* Use of *–ly* to turn adjectives into adverbs

Example: slow › slowly |
| **Sentence** | * Subordination (using *when, if, that, because*) and co-ordination (using *or, and, but*)
* Expanded noun phrases for description and specification

Example: the blue butterfly; plain flour; the man in the moon* Identifying the function of a sentence (statement, question, exclamation or command) by looking at grammatical patterns
 |
| **Text** | * Correct choice and consistent use of present tense and past tense throughout writing
* Use of the progressive form of verbs in the present and past tense to describe actions that are still in progress

Example: The cake is baking slowly; The trees were swaying in the wind.  |
| **Punctuation** | * Use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences
* Commas to separate items in a list
* Apostrophes to mark where letters are missing in spelling and to mark singular possession in nouns

Example: do not › don’t; the girl’s bag |
| **Terminology****for the children** | noun, noun phrasestatement, question, exclamation, commandcompound, suffixtense (past, present)apostrophe, comma |

Children should understand:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | * Formation of nouns using a range of prefixes *super-, anti-, auto-* (see spelling lists)
* Use of the forms *a* or *an* according to whether the next word begins with a consonant or vowel

Example: a rock; an open box* Word families based on common words, showing how words are related in form and meaning

Example: solve, solution, solver, dissolve, insoluble |
| **Sentence** | * Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions (*when, before, after, while, so, because*), adverbs (*then, next, soon, therefore*), or prepositions (*before, after, during, in, because of*)
 |
| **Text** | * Introduction to paragraphs as a way to group related material
* Headings and subheadings to aid presentation
* Use of the present perfect form of verbs instead of the simple past

Example: *He has gone out to play* contrasted with *He went out to play* |
| **Punctuation** | * Introduction to inverted commas to punctuate direct speech
 |
| **Terminology****for the children** | preposition, conjunctionword family, prefixclause, subordinate clausedirect speechconsonant, consonant letter vowel, vowel letterinverted commas (or ‘speech marks’) |

**Year 3**

Children should understand:

**Year 4**

Children should understand:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | * The grammatical difference between plural and possessive *–s*
* Standard English forms for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms

Example: *we were* instead of *we was* or *I did* instead of *I done* |
| **Sentence** | * Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases

Example: the strict maths teacher with curly hair* Fronted adverbials

Example: Later that day, I heard the bad news |
| **Text** | * Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme
* Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun within and across sentences to avoid repetition

Example: Roald Dahl was born in Llandaff, Wales. He had three children. |
| **Punctuation** | * Use of inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech (comma after the reporting clause; end punctuation within inverted commas)

Example: The conductor shouted, “Sit down!”* Apostrophes to mark plural possession

Example: the girl’s name, the girls’ name |
| **Terminology****for the children** | determinerpronoun, possessive pronounadverbial |

**Year 5**

Children should understand:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | * Converting nouns or adjectives into verbs using suffixes (*-ate, -ise, -ify*)
* Verb prefixes (*dis-, de-, mis-, over-, re-*)
 |
| **Sentence** | * Relative clauses beginning with *who, which, where, when, whose, that* or an omitted relative pronoun.

Example: That’s the boy who lives near school; Tom broke the game, which annoyed Ali.Example: The prize I won was a book (the pronoun *that* is omitted)* Indicating degrees of possibility using adverbs (e.g. *perhaps, surely*) or modal verbs (e.g. *might, should, will, must*)
 |
| **Text** | * Devices to build cohesion within a paragraph (e.g. *then, after that, firstly*)
* Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time (e.g. *later*), place (e.g. *nearby*) and number (e.g. *secondly*) or tense choices (he *had* seen her before)
 |
| **Punctuation** | * Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis (an afterthought)
* Use of commas to clarify meaning or to avoid ambiguity
 |
| **Terminology****for the children** | modal verb, relative pronounrelative clauseparenthesis, bracket, dashcohesion, ambiguity |

**Year 6**

Children should understand:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | * The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing

Example: find out › discover; ask for › request; go in › enter* How words are related by meaning as synonyms and antonyms

Example: big, large, little |
| **Sentence** | * Use of the passive to affect the presentation of information in the sentence

Example: I broke the window in the greenhouse versus The window in the greenhouse was broken (by me)* The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing

Example: He’s your friend, isn’t he? (question tags in informal writing)Example: *If I were* or *Were they to come* (subjunctive forms in very formal writing) |
| **Text** | * Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices: repetition of a word or phrase, grammatical connections (*on the other hand*, *in contrast* or *as a consequence*) and ellipsis.
* Layout devices to structure text: headings, subheadings, columns, bullets or tables
 |
| **Punctuation** | * Use of the semi colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses

Example: It’s raining; I’m fed up.* Use of the colon to introduce a list and use of semi colons within lists
* How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity

Example: *man eating shark* versus *man-eating shark*  |
| **Terminology****for the children** | subject, objectactive, passivesynonym, antonymellipsis, hyphen, colon, semi colon, bullet points |

**Glossary**

This glossary includes all of the technical grammatical terms which have been covered in this booklet. It is intended as an aid for parents, **not** as the body of knowledge that should be learnt by your children.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Term | Guidance | Example |
| **active voice** | An active verb has its usual pattern of subject and object (in contrast with passive) | Active: The school arranged a visit.Passive: A visit *was* arranged by the school. |
| **Adjective** | The surest way to identify adjectives is by the ways they can be used:* Before a noun to make the noun’s meaning more specific (i.e. to modify the noun)
* After the verb *be*, as its complement

Adjectives are sometimes called ‘describing words’ because they pick out single characteristics such as size or colour. This is often true, but it doesn’t help to distinguish adjectives from other word classes, because verbs, nouns and adverbs can do the same thing.  | The pupils did some really good work.(adjective used before a noun, to modify it)Their work was good.(adjective used after the verb *be*, as its complement)Not adjectives:The lamp glowed*.* (verb)It was such a bright red! (noun)He spoke loudly*.* (adverb)It was a French grammar book. (noun) |
| **Adverb** | The surest way to identify adverbs is by the ways they can be used: they can [modify](#modifymodifier) a [verb](#verb), an [adjective](#adjective), another adverb or even a whole clause.Adverbs are sometimes said to describe manner or time.  | Usha soon started snoring loudly. (adverbs modifying the verbs started and snoring)That match was really exciting! (adverb modifying the adjective exciting)We don’t get to play games very often. (adverb modifying the other adverb, often)Fortunately, it didn’t rain. (adverb modifying the whole clause ‘it didn’t rain’ by commenting on it) |
| **Adverbial** | An adverbial is a word or phrase that is used, like an adverb, to modify a verb or clause.  | The bus leaves in five minutes. (preposition phrase as adverbial: modifies leaves)She promised to see him last night. (noun phrase modifying either promised or see, according to the intended meaning)She worked until she had finished. (subordinate clause as adverbial) |
| **Antonym** | Two words are antonyms if their meanings are opposites. | hot – coldlight – darklight – heavy |
| **apostrophe** | Apostrophes have two completely different uses:* showing the place of missing letters (e.g. *I’m* for *I am*)
* marking [possessives](#possessive) (e.g. *Hannah’s mother*).
 | I’m going out and I won’t be long. (showing missing letters)Hannah’s mother went to town in Justin’s car. (marking possessives) |
| **Article** | The articles *the* (definite) and *a* or *an* (indefinite) are the most common type of [determiner](#determiner). | The dog found a bone in an old box. |
| **auxiliary verb** | The auxiliary [verbs](#verb) are: *be*, *have*, *do* and the [modal verbs](#modalverb). They can be used to make questions and negative statements. In addition:* *be* is used in the [progressive](#progressive) and [passive](#passive)
* *have* is used in the [perfect](#perfect)
* *do* is used to form questions and negative statements if no other auxiliary verb is present
 | They are winning the match. (be used in the progressive)Have you finished your picture? (have used to make a question, and the perfect)No, I don’t know him. (do used to make a negative; no other auxiliary is present)Will you come with me or not? (modal verb will used to make a question about the other person’s willingness) |
| **Clause** | A clause is a special type of [phrase](#phrase) whose [head](#head) is a [verb](#verb). Clauses can sometimes be complete sentences. Clauses may be [main](#mainclause) or [subordinate](#subordinateclause). | It was raining. (single-clause sentence)It was raining but we were indoors. (two clauses)If you are coming to the party, please let us know. (subordinate clause inside a main clause) |
| **Cohesion** | A text has cohesion if it is clear how the meanings of its parts fit together. [Cohesive devices](#cohesivedevice) can help to do this.In the example, there are repeated references to the same thing (shown by the different style pairings), and the logical relations, such as time and cause, between different parts are clear. | **A visit** has been arranged for **Year 6**, to the Mountain Peaks Field Study Centre, leaving school at 9.30am. **This** is **an overnight visit**. The centre has beautiful grounds and a nature trail. During the afternoon, **the children** will follow the trail. |
| **cohesive device** | Cohesive devices are words used to show how the different parts of a text fit together. In other words, they create [cohesion](#cohesion).Some examples of cohesive devices are:* [determiners](#determiner) and [pronouns](#pronoun), which can refer back to earlier words
* [conjunctions](#conjunction) and [adverbs](#adverb), which can make relations between words clear
* [ellipsis](#ellipsis) of expected words.
 | Julia’s dad bought her a football. The football was expensive! (determiner; refers us back to a particular football)Joe was given a bike for Christmas. He liked it very much. (the pronouns refer back to Joe and the bike)We’ll be going shopping before we go to the park. ([conjunction](#conjunction); makes a relationship of time clear)I’m afraid we’re going to have to wait for the next train. Meanwhile, we could have a cup of tea. ([adverb](#adverb); refers back to the time of waiting)Where are you going? (…) To school! (ellipsis of the expected words I’m going; links the answer back to the question) |
| **compound, compounding** | A compound word contains at least two [root words](#rootword): e.g. *whiteboard, superman*. Compounding is very important in English. | blackbird, blow-dry, bookshop, ice-cream, English teacher, inkjet, one-eyed, bone-dry, baby-sit, daydream, outgrow |
| **conjunction** | A conjunction links two words or phrases together.There are two main types of conjunctions:* [co-ordinating](#coordinatecoordination) conjunctions (e.g. *and*) link two words or phrases together as an equal pair
* subordinating conjunctions (e.g. *when*) introduce a [subordinate clause](#subordinateclause).
 | James bought a bat and ball. (links the words bat and ball as an equal pair)Kylie is young but she can kick the ball hard. (links two clauses as an equal pair)Everyone watches when Kyle does back-flips. (introduces a subordinate clause)Joe can’t practise kicking because he’s injured. (introduces a subordinate clause) |
| **Consonant** | A sound which is produced when the speaker closes off or obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract, usually using lips, tongue or teeth.Most of the letters of the alphabet represent consonants. Only the letters a, e, i, o, u and y can represent [vowel](#vowel) sounds.  | /p/ (flow of air stopped by the lips, then released)/t/ (flow of air stopped by the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, then released)/f/ (flow of air obstructed by the bottom lip touching the top teeth)/s/ (flow of air obstructed by the tip of the tongue touching the gum line) |
| **co-ordinate, co‑ordination** | Words or phrases are co-ordinated if they are linked as an equal pair by a co‑ordinating [conjunction](#conjunction) (i.e. *and, but, or*).In the examples on the right, the co-ordinated elements are shown in bold, and the conjunction is underlined.The difference between co‑ordination and [subordination](#subordinatesubordination) is that, in subordination, the two linked elements are not equal. | **Susan** and **Amra** met in a café. (links the words Susan and Amra as an equal pair)**They talked** and **drank tea** for an hour. (links two clauses as an equal pair)**Susan got a bus** but **Amra walked**. (links two clauses as an equal pair)Not co-ordination: They ate before they met. (before introduces a subordinate clause) |
| **determiner** | A determiner specifies a noun as known or unknown, and it goes before any modifiers (e.g. adjectives or other nouns).Some examples of determiners are:* [articles](#article) (*the*, *a* or *an*)
* demonstratives (e.g. *this, those*)
* [possessives](#possessive) (e.g. *my, your*)
* quantifiers (e.g. *some, every*).
 | the home team (article, specifies the team as known)a good team (article, specifies the team as unknown)that pupil (demonstrative, known)Julia’s parents (possessive, known)some big boys (quantifier, unknown)Contrast: home the team, big some boys [both incorrect, because the determiner should come before other modifiers] |
| **Digraph** | A type of [grapheme](#grapheme) where two letters represent one [phoneme](#phoneme).Sometimes, these two letters are not next to one another; this is called a split digraph. | The digraph ea in each is pronounced /i:/.The digraph sh in shed is pronounced /ʃ/.The split digraph i–e in line is pronounced /aɪ/. |
| **Ellipsis** | Ellipsis is the omission of a word or phrase which is expected and predictable. | Frankie waved to Ivana and ~~she~~ watched her drive away.She did it because she wanted to ~~do it~~. |
| **Etymology** | A word’s etymology is its history: its origins in earlier forms of English or other languages, and how its form and meaning have changed. Many words in English have come from Greek, Latin or French. | The word school was borrowed from a Greek word ó÷ïëÞ (skholé) meaning ‘leisure’.The word verb comes from Latin verbum, meaning ‘word’.The word mutton comes from French mouton, meaning ‘sheep’. |
| **finite verb** | Every sentence typically has at least one verb which is either past or present tense. Such verbs are called ‘finite’. The imperative verb in a command is also finite.Verbs that are not finite, such as participles or infinitives, cannot stand on their own: they are linked to another verb in the sentence. | George does the dishes every day. ([present tense](#presenttense))Even Emily did the dishes yesterday. ([past tense](#pasttense))Do the dishes, Adam! (imperative)Not finite verbs:* I have done them. (combined with the finite verb have)
* I will do them. (combined with the finite verb will)
* I want to do them! (combined with the finite verb want)
 |
| **fronting, fronted** | A word or phrase that normally comes after the [verb](#verb) may be moved before the verb: when this happens, we say it has been ‘fronted’. For example, a fronted adverbial is an [adverbial](#adverbial) which has been moved before the verb.When writing fronted phrases, we often follow them with a comma. | Before we begin, make sure you’ve got a pencil.(Without fronting: Make sure you’ve got a pencil before we begin.)The day after tomorrow, I’m visiting my granddad.(Without fronting: I’m visiting my granddad the day after tomorrow.) |
| **Future** | Reference to future time can be marked in a number of different ways in English. All these ways involve the use of a [present-tense](#presenttense) [verb](#verb).Unlike many other languages (such as French, Spanish or Italian), English has no distinct ‘future tense’ form of the verb comparable with its [present](#presenttense) and [past](#pasttense) tenses.  | He will leave tomorrow. (present-tense will followed by infinitive leave)He may leave tomorrow. (present-tense may followed by infinitive leave)He leaves tomorrow. (present-tense leaves)He is going to leave tomorrow. (present tense is followed by going to plus the infinitive leave) |
| **Grapheme** | A letter, or combination of letters, that corresponds to a single [phoneme](#phoneme) within a word. | The grapheme t in the words ten, bet and ate corresponds to the phoneme /t/.The grapheme ph in the word dolphin corresponds to the phoneme /f/. |
| **grapheme-phoneme correspondences** | The links between letters, or combinations of letters ([graphemes](#grapheme)) and the speech sounds ([phonemes](#phoneme)) that they represent. | The grapheme s corresponds to the phoneme /s/ in the word see, but……it corresponds to the phoneme /z/ in the word easy. |
| **Homonym** | Two different words are homonyms if they both look exactly the same when written, and sound exactly the same when pronounced. | Has he left yet? Yes – he went through the door on the left.The noise a dog makes is called a bark. Trees have bark. |
| **Homophone** | Two different words are homophones if they sound exactly the same when pronounced. | hear, heresome, sum |
| **Infinitive** | A verb’s infinitive is the basic form used as the head-word in a dictionary (e.g. walk, be).Infinitives are often used:* after *to*
* after [modal verbs](#modalverb).
 | I want to walk.I will be quiet. |
| **Inflection** | When we add -ed to walk, or change mouse to mice, this change of [morphology](#morphology) produces an inflection (‘bending’) of the basic word which has special grammar (e.g. [past tense](#pasttense) or [plural](#plural)).In contrast, adding -er to walk produces a completely different word, walker, which is part of the same [word family](#wordfamily). Inflection is sometimes thought of as merely a change of ending, but, in fact, some words change completely when inflected. | dogs is an inflection of dog.went is an inflection of go.better is an inflection of good. |
| **intransitive verb** | A verb which does not need an object in a sentence to complete its meaning is described as intransitive. See ‘[transitive verb’](#transitiveverb). | We all laughed.We would like to stay longer, but we must leave. |
| **main clause** | A [sentence](#sentence) contains at least one [clause](#clause) which is not a [subordinate clause](#subordinateclause); such a clause is a main clause. A main clause may contain any number of subordinate clauses. | It was raining but the sun was shining. (two main clauses)The man who wrote it told me that it was true. (one main clause containing two subordinate clauses.)She said, “It rained all day.” (one main clause containing another.) |
| **modal verb** | Modal [verbs](#verb) are used to change the meaning of other [verbs](#verb). They can express meanings such as certainty, ability, or obligation. The main modal verbs are *will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must and ought.*A modal verb only has [finite](#finiteverb) forms and has no [suffixes](#suffix) (e.g. I sing – he sings, but not I must – he musts). | I can do this maths work by myself.This ride may be too scary for you!You should help your little brother.Is it going to rain? Yes, it might.Canning swim is important. [not possible because *can* must be finite; contrast: Being able to swim is important (where *being* is not a modal verb] |
| **modify, modifier** | One word or phrase modifies another by making its meaning more specific.Because the two words make a [phrase](#phrase), the ‘modifier’ is normally close to the modified word. | In the phrase primary-school teacher:* teacher is modified by primary-school (to mean a specific kind of teacher)
* school is modified by primary (to mean a specific kind of school).
 |
| **Noun** | The surest way to identify nouns is by the ways they can be used after [determiners](#determiner) such as the: for example, most nouns will fit into the frame “The \_\_ matters/matter.”Nouns are sometimes called ‘naming words’ because they name people, places and ‘things’; this is often true, but it doesn’t help to distinguish nouns from other [word classes](#wordclass). For example, [prepositions](#preposition) can name places and [verbs](#verb) can name ‘things’ such as actions.Nouns may be classified as **common** (e.g. boy, day) **proper** (e.g. Adam, Wednesday) **abstract** (love, hope) **collective** (flock of sheep), and also as **countable** (e.g. thing, boy) or **non-countable** (e.g. stuff, money). These classes can be recognised by the determiners they combine with. | Our dog bit the burglar on his behind!My big brother did an amazing jump on his skateboard.Actions speak louder than words.Not nouns:* He’s behind you! (this names a place, but is a preposition, not a noun)
* She can jump so high! (this names an action, but is a verb, not a noun)

common, countable: a book, books, two chocolates, one day, fewer ideascommon, non-countable: money, some chocolate, less imaginationproper, countable: Marilyn, London, Wednesday |
| **noun phrase** | A noun phrase is a [phrase](#phrase) with a noun as its [head](#head), e.g. some foxes, foxes with bushy tails.  | Adult foxes can jump. (adult modifies foxes, so adult belongs to the noun phrase)Almost all healthy adult foxes in this area can jump. (all the other words help to modify foxes, so they all belong to the noun phrase) |
| **Object** | An object is normally a [noun](#noun), [pronoun](#pronoun) or [noun phrase](#nounphrase) that comes straight after the [verb](#verb), and shows what the verb is acting upon.Objects can be turned into the [subject](#subject) of a [passive](#passive) verb, and cannot be [adjectives](#adjective) (contrast with [complements](#complement)). | Year 2 designed puppets. (noun acting as object)I like that. (pronoun acting as object)Some people suggested a pretty display. (noun phrase acting as object) |
| **Participle** | Verbs in English have two participles, called ‘present participle’ (e.g. walking, taking) and ‘past participle’ (e.g. walked, taken). | He is walking to school. (present participle in a [progressive](#progressive))He has taken the bus to school. (past participle in a [perfect](#perfect))The photo was taken in the rain. (past participle in a [passive](#passive)) |
| **Passive** | The sentence *It was eaten by our dog* is the passive of *Our dog ate it.* Contrast [active](#activevoice). | A visit was arranged by the school.Our cat got run over by a bus.Active versions:* The school arranged a visit.
* A bus ran over our cat.
 |
| **past tense** | [Verbs](#verb) in the past tense are commonly used to:* talk about the past
* talk about imagined situations
* make a request sound more polite.

Most verbs take a [suffix](#suffix) –ed, to form their past tense, but many commonly-used verbs are irregular.See also [tense](#tense). | Tom and Chris showed me their new TV. (names an event in the past)Antonio went on holiday to Brazil. (names an event in the past; irregular past of go)I wish I had a puppy. (names an imagined situation, not a situation in the past)I was hoping you’d help tomorrow. (makes an implied request sound more polite) |
| **Phoneme** | A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that signals a distinct, contrasting meaning. For example:* /t/ contrasts with /k/ to signal the difference between tap and cap
* /t/ contrasts with /l/ to signal the difference between bought and ball.

It is this contrast in meaning that tells us there are two distinct phonemes at work. | The word cat has three letters and three phonemes: /kæt/The word catch has five letters and three phonemes: /kaʧ/The word caught has six letters and three phonemes: /kɔ:t/ |
| **Phrase** | A phrase is a group of words that are grammatically connected so that they stay together, and that expand a single word, called the ‘head’. The phrase is a [noun phrase](#nounphrase) if its head is a noun, a [preposition phrase](#prepositionphrase) if its head is a preposition, and so on; but if the head is a [verb](#verb), the phrase is called a [clause](#clause). Phrases can be made up of other phrases. | She waved to her mother. (a noun phrase, with the noun *mother* as its head)She waved to her mother. (a preposition phrase, with the preposition *to* as its head)She waved to her mother. (a clause, with the verb *waved* as its head) |
| **Plural** | A plural [noun](#noun) normally has a [suffix](#suffix) –s or –es and means ‘more than one’.There are a few nouns that do not follow regular rules (e.g. mice, formulae). | dogs (more than one dog); boxes [more than one box]mice (more than one mouse) |
| **Possessive** | A possessive can be:* a [noun](#noun) followed by an [apostrophe](#apostrophe), with or without ­s
* a possessive [pronoun](#pronoun).

A possessive may act as a [determiner](#determiner). | Emily’s book (Emily has the book)The boys’ arrival (the boys arrive)His obituary (the obituary is about him)That essay is mine. (I wrote the essay) |
| **Prefix** | A prefix is added at the beginning of a [word](#word) in order to turn it into another word.Contrast [suffix](#suffix). | overtake, disappear |
| **preposition** | A preposition links a following [noun](#noun), [pronoun](#pronoun) or [noun phrase](#nounphrase) to some other word in the sentence. Prepositions often describe locations or directions, but can describe other things, such as relations of time.Words like *before* or *since* can act either as prepositions or as [conjunctions](#conjunction). | Tom waved goodbye to Christy. She’ll be back from Australia in two weeks.I haven’t seen my dog since this morning.Contrast: I’m going, since no‑one wants me here! (conjunction: links two clauses) |
| **preposition phrase** | A preposition phrase has a preposition as its head followed by a noun, pronoun or noun phrase. | He was in bed.I met them after the party. |
| **present tense** | [Verbs](#verb) in the present tense are commonly used to:* talk about the present
* talk about the [future](#future).

They may take a suffix –s (depending on the [subject](#subject)).See also [tense](#tense). | Eleanor goes to the pool every day. (a habit that exists now)He can swim. (describes a state that is true now)The bus arrives at three. (scheduled now)My friends are coming to play.(describes a plan in progress now) |
| **Pronoun** | Pronouns are normally used like [nouns](#noun), except that:* they are grammatically more specialised
* it is harder to [modify](#modifymodifier) them

In the examples, each sentence is written twice: once with nouns, and once with pronouns (underlined). Where the same thing is being talked about, the words are shown in bold. | **Amanda** waved to **Michael**.**She** waved to **him**. **John’s** mother is over there. **His** mother is over there.The **visit** will be an overnight **visit**. **This** will be an overnight **visit**. **Simon** is the person: **Simon** broke it. **He** is the one **who** broke it. |
| **punctuation** | Punctuation includes any conventional features of writing other than spelling and general layout: the standard punctuation marks . , ; : ? ! - – ( ) “ ” ‘ ’ , and also word-spaces, capital letters, apostrophes, paragraph breaks and bullet points. One important role of punctuation is to indicate [sentence](#sentence) boundaries. | “I’m going out, Usha, and I won’t be long,” Mum said. |
| **register** | Classroom lessons, football commentaries and novels use different registers of the same language, recognised by differences of vocabulary and grammar. Registers are ‘varieties’ of a language which are each tied to a range of uses, in contrast with dialects, which are tied to groups of users. | I regret to inform you that Mr Joseph Smith has passed away. (formal letter)Have you heard that Joe has died? (casual speech)Joe falls down and dies, centre stage. (stage direction) |
| **relative clause** | A relative clause is a special type of [subordinate clause](#subordinateclause) that modifies a [noun](#noun). It often does this by using a relative [pronoun](#pronoun) such as *who* or *that* to refer back to that noun, though the relative pronoun that is often omitted.A relative clause may also be attached to a [clause](#clause). In that case, the pronoun refers back to the whole clause, rather than referring back to a noun.In the examples, the relative clauses are underlined, and the pairs the pronouns with the words they refer back to are in bold. | That’s the **boy who** lives near school. (*who* refers back to *boy*)The **prize that** I won was a book. (*that* refers back to *prize*)The **prize** I won was a book. (the pronoun *that* is omitted)**Tom broke the game**, **which** annoyed Ali. (*which* refers back to the whole clause) |
| **root word** | [Morphology](#morphology) breaks words down into root words, which can stand alone, and [suffixes](#suffix) or [prefixes](#prefix) which can’t. For example, *help* is the root word for other words in its [word family](#wordfamily) such as *helpful* and *helpless*, and also for its [inflections](#inflection) such as *helping.*When looking in a dictionary, we sometimes have to look for the root word (or words) of the word we are interested in. | played (the root word is *play*)unfair (the root word is *fair*)football (the root words are *foot* and *ball*) |
| **Standard English** | Standard English can be recognised by the use of a very small range of forms such as *those books, I did it* and *I wasn’t doing anything* (rather than their non-Standard equivalents); it is not limited to any particular accent. It is the variety of English which is used, with only minor variation, as a major world language. The aim of the national curriculum is that everyone should be able to use Standard English as needed in writing and in relatively formal speaking. | I did it because they were not willing to undertake any more work on those houses. (formal Standard English)I did it cos they wouldn’t do any more work on those houses. (casual Standard English)I done it cos they wouldn’t do no more work on them houses. (casual non-Standard English) |
| **stress** | A [syllable](#syllable) is stressed if it is pronounced more forcefully than the syllables next to it. The other syllables are unstressed. | *about**visit* |
| **subject** | The subject of a verb is normally the [noun](#noun), [noun phrase](#nounphrase) or [pronoun](#pronoun) that names the ‘do-er’ or ‘be-er’. The subject’s normal position is:* just before the [verb](#verb) in a statement
* just after the [auxiliary verb](#auxiliaryverb), in a question.

Unlike the verb’s [object](#object) and [complement](#complement), the subject can determine the form of the verb (e.g. *I am*, *you are*). | Emily’s mother went out.That is uncertain.The children will study the animals.Will the children study the animals? |
| **subordinate, subordination** | A subordinate word or phrase tells us more about the meaning of the word it is subordinate to. Subordination can be thought of as an unequal relationship between a subordinate word and a main word. For example:* an adjective is subordinate to the noun it [modifies](#modifymodifier)
* [subjects](#subject) and [objects](#object) are subordinate to their [verbs](#verb).

Subordination is much more common than the equal relationship of [co-ordination](#coordinatecoordination).See also [subordinate clause](#subordinateclause). | big dogs (*big* is subordinate to *dogs*)Big dogs need long walks. (*big dogs* and *long walks* are subordinate to need)We can watch TV when we’ve finished. (*when we’ve finished* is subordinate to *watch*) |
| **subordinate clause** | A clause which is [subordinate](#subordinateclause) to some other part of the same [sentence](#sentence) is a subordinate clause; for example, in *The apple that I ate was sour*, the clause *that I ate* is subordinate to *apple* (which it [modifies](#modifymodifier)).However, clauses that are directly quoted as direct speech are not subordinate clauses. | That’s the street where Ben lives. ([relative clause](#relativeclause); modifies *street*)He watched her as she disappeared. ([adverbial](#adverbial); modifies *watched*)What you said was very nice. (acts as [subject](#subject) of *was*)She noticed an hour had passed. (acts as [object](#object) of *noticed*)Not subordinate: He shouted, “Look out!” |
| **suffix** | A suffix is an ‘ending’, used at the end of one word to turn it into another word. Unlike [root words](#rootword), suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word.Contrast [prefix](#prefix). | call – calledteach – teacher (turns a [verb](#verb) into a [noun](#noun))terror – terrorise (turns a noun into a verb)green – greenish (leaves [word class](#wordclass) unchanged) |
| **syllable** | A syllable sounds like a beat in a [word](#word). Syllables consist of at least one [vowel](#vowel), and possibly one or more [consonants](#consonant). | Cat has one syllable.Fairy has two syllables.Hippopotamus has five syllables. |
| **synonym** | Two words are synonyms if they have the same meaning, or similar meanings. Contrast [antonym](#antonym). | talk – speakold – elderly |
| **tense** | In English, tense is the choice between [present](#presenttense) and [past](#pasttense) [verbs](#verb), which is special because it is signalled by [inflections](#inflection) and normally indicates differences of time. The simple tenses (present and past) may be combined in English with the [perfect](#perfect) and [progressive](#progressive). | He studies. (present tense – present time)He studied yesterday. (past tense – past time)He studies tomorrow, or else! (present tense – future time)He may study tomorrow. (present tense + infinitive – future time)He plans to study tomorrow. (present tense + infinitive – future time)If he studied tomorrow, he’d see the difference! (past tense – imagined future) |
| **trigraph** | A type of [grapheme](#grapheme) where three letters represent one [phoneme](#phoneme). | High, pure, patch, hedge |
| **verb** | The surest way to identify verbs is by the ways they can be used: they can usually have a [tense](#tense), either [present](#presenttense) or [past](#pasttense) (see also [future](#future)).Verbs are sometimes called ‘doing words’ because many verbs name an action that someone does; while this can be a way of recognising verbs, it doesn’t distinguish verbs from [nouns](#noun) (which can also name actions). Moreover many verbs name states or feelings rather than actions.Verbs can be classified in various ways: for example, as [auxiliary](#auxiliaryverb), or [modal](#modalverb); as [transitive](#transitiveverb) or [intransitive](#intransitiveverb); and as states or events. | He lives in Birmingham. (present tense)The teacher wrote a song for the class. (past tense)He likes chocolate. (present tense; not an action)He knew my father. (past tense; not an action)Not verbs:* The walk to Halina’s house will take an hour. (noun)
* All that surfing makes Morwenna so sleepy! (noun)
 |
| **vowel** | A vowel is a speech sound which is produced without any closure or obstruction of the vocal tract.Vowels can form [syllables](#syllable) by themselves, or they may combine with [consonants](#consonant).In the English writing system, the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* and *y* can represent vowels. |  |
| **word class** | Every [word](#word) belongs to a word class which summarises the ways in which it can be used in grammar. The major word classes for English are: [noun](#noun), [verb](#verb), [adjective](#adjective), [adverb](#adverb), [preposition](#preposition), [determiner](#determiner), [pronoun](#pronoun), [conjunction](#conjunction). Word classes are sometimes called ‘parts of speech’. |  |
| **word family** | The [words](#word) in a word family are normally related to each other by a combination of [morphology](#morphology), grammar and meaning. | teach – teacherextend – extent – extensivegrammar – grammatical – grammarian |