



Hall Green Primary School's English spelling, punctuation and grammar

terminology

Letter

A character representing one or more of the sounds used in speech. Written words are made up of letters.

E.g. Gg Ee Ww

Capital letter

A letter of the alphabet that usually differs from its corresponding lowercase letter in form and height; A, B, Q as distinguished from a, b, q. Used as the initial letter of a proper name, the pronoun I and in the first word of a sentence.

E.g. After school Ted plays football in Huntingdon.

Word

A word is a unit of grammar: it can be selected and moved around relatively independently, but cannot easily be split. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word spaces.

E.g. farm girl she on

Root word

A root word is a basic word with no prefix or suffix added to it. By adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word we can change its meaning.

E.g. social- antisocial

Singular

When a word is in singular form it means just one or by itself.

E.g. boy baby goose

Plural

When a word is plural it means more than one.

E.g. boys babies geese





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Sentence

A sentence is a group of words which are grammatically connected to each other but not to any words outside the sentence.

E.g. John was at the farm.

Punctuation

Punctuation includes any conventional features of writing other than spelling and general layout. One important role of punctuation is to indicate sentence boundaries.

E.g. ! " () - ? / . , ; :

Full stop

A punctuation mark (.) used at the end of a sentence or an abbreviation.

Question mark

A punctuation mark (?) indicating a question.

Exclamation mark

A punctuation mark (!) indicating strong feelings, something unusual or high volume (shouting).

Determiner

A determiner is a word that introduces a noun and identifies it in detail.

E.g. Determiners can be articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that), possessives (your, his), quantifiers (some, many), numbers (six, sixty).

Noun

Nouns are sometimes called 'naming words' because they name people, places and things. Nouns may be classified as common (e.g. boy, day) or proper (e.g. Ivan, Monday)

Abstract noun

An abstract noun is a feeling or concept that you cannot touch

E.g. happiness or education





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Noun phrase

A noun phrase is a phrase that plays the role of a noun. The head word in a noun phrase will be a noun or a pronoun. Noun phrases are most often used for description and specification.

E.g. plain flour, foxes with bushy tails

Statement

The form of a sentence's main clause shows whether it is being used as a statement, a question, a command or an exclamation.

A sentence that gives information.

E.g. You are my friend.

Question

A sentence that requires a response.

E.g. Are you my friend?

Exclamation

A sentence that displays emotion.

E.g. What a good friend you are!

Command

A sentence that gives instruction.

E.g. Be my friend!

Suffix

A suffix is an 'ending', used at the end of one word to turn it into another word. Suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word.

E.g. success – successful, teach – teacher, small – smallest





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Adjective

A “describing word”. 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 or after the verb to be, as its complement. Adjectives cannot be modified by other adjectives. This distinguishes them from nouns, which can be.

E.g. The pupils did some really **excellent** work. Their work was **excellent**.

Adverb

Adverbs are sometimes said to describe manner or time. This is often true, but it doesn’t help to distinguish adverbs from other word classes. The surest way to identify adverbs is by the ways they can be used: they can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a whole clause.

E.g. Joshua **soon** started snoring loudly. That match was **really** exciting! We don’t get to play games very **often**.

Fronted adverbials

Fronted adverbials are words or phrases at the beginning of a sentence, used like adverbs to describe the action that follows.

E.g. **Fortunately**, it didn’t rain.

Adverbial phrase

A phrase is a small group of words that does not contain a verb. An adverbial phrase is built around an adverb and the words that surround it.

E.g. very slowly, as fast as possible

Verb

Verbs are sometimes called ‘doing words’ because many verbs name an action that someone does; while this can be a way of recognising verbs, many verbs name states or feelings rather than actions. Verbs can usually have a tense, either present or past (also future).

E.g. He **lives** in Birmingham. The teacher **wrote** a song for the class. He **likes** chocolate. He **knew** my father.



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Tense

Verbs 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 –ed to form their past tense, but many commonly used verbs are irregular. Verbs in the present tense are commonly used to: talk about the present

Past continuous (or progressive)

The past continuous is the verb tense we use to describe actions that continued for a period of time in the past

E.g. (I was walking / I was singing).

Past perfect

The past perfect is the verb tense we use to describe actions that were completed by a particular time in the past.

E.g. The plane had left before I got to the gate.

Present continuous (or progressive)

The present continuous is the verb tense we use to describe actions that continue for a period of time

E.g. I am walking/ I am singing

Present perfect

The present perfect is the verb tense we use to describe actions that are completed by the present.

E.g. She has lived there all her life.

Apostrophe

Apostrophes have two completely different uses. They show the place of missing letters and they mark possessives.

E.g. We're going out and we'll get something to eat. Hannah's mother went to town in Justin's car.





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Contracted words or contractions

Contracted words are short words made by putting two words together. Letters are missed out in the contraction and replaced by an apostrophe.

E.g. I'm (I am) or it's (it is).

Comma

A punctuation mark (,) indicating a pause between parts of a sentence or separating items in a list.

Preposition

Words which show the relationship between two things. They often tell you where one thing is as opposed to another.

E.g. about, above, across, after, against, along, amid, amidst, among, amongst, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, into, near, of, off, on, over, round, since, though, till, to, towards, under, underneath, until, unto, up, upon, with, within, without.

Prepositional phrase

A phrase is a small group of words that does not contain a verb. Prepositional phrases contain a preposition.

E.g. on the mat, in the morning, under the chair, during the film.

Conjunction

A conjunction links two words or phrases together.

E.g. and, but, when

Prefix

A prefix is added at the beginning of a word in order to turn it into another word.

E.g. **o**vertake, **un**appealing, **dis**appear





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Homophone

Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings. Some homophones are pronounced the same way and spelled the same way but have different meanings; others are pronounced the same way but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

E.g. knew and new, bough and bow

Clause

A clause is a group of words which does contain a verb; it is part of a sentence. A main clause makes sense on its own.

E.g. my sister is older than me.

Complex sentence

A complex sentence is formed when you join a main clause and a subordinate clause with a conjunction.

E.g. Even though my friends begged, I didn't go to the football match.

Compound sentence

A compound sentence is formed by joining two main clauses with a conjunction.

E.g. The children finished lunch and then, they went out to play.

Subordinate clause

A subordinate clause does not make sense on its own.

E.g. My sister is older than me and she is very annoying.

Embedded clause

An embedded clause is a clause used in the middle of another clause. It is usually marked by commas.

E.g. My bike, which is very old, broke yesterday.





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Direct speech

When you write down the words that have been spoken and use speech marks.

E.g. "Who's there?" said Marvin.

Indirect speech

Indirect speech or reported speech is when the general points of what someone has said are reported, without actually writing the speech out in full.

E.g. Bob explained how he had seen the burglar escape.

Consonant

Consonants are specific letters from the alphabet.

E.g. b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, and z.

Vowel

Vowels are specific letters from the alphabet.

E.g. a, e, i, o, u.

Determiner

Determiners are the most frequently used words in English. They are used with nouns to give more information about that noun - which it belongs to, how many, or sometimes to ask questions.

E.g. **This** car is yours.

Pronoun

Words used to avoid repeating a noun.

E.g. I, you, me, he, she, you, him, her, mine, his, hers, its, we, they, us, them, ours, yours, theirs

Adverbial phrase

A fronted adverbial phrase goes at the beginning of a sentence. It describes the verb in the sentence. It describes where, when and how.

E.g. As soon as the train had left the station, Tom jumped from the carriage door.





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Modal verb

Modal verbs are a type of auxiliary verb that expresses degrees of possibility, probability and certainty.

The core modal verbs are: can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must.

Relative pronoun

Relative pronouns introduce a relative clause.

E.g. who, whom, whose, which, that. I enjoy my swimming, which keeps me fit.

Relative clause

A clause which is connected to a main clause by a word such as that, which, who, whose, or where.

E.g. I first saw her in Paris, where lived in the early twenties.

Bracket

Punctuation used for additional information or explanation.

E.g. Jamie's bike was red (bright red) with a yellow stripe.

Dash

Punctuation which indicates a stronger pause than a comma. Can be used like a comma or bracket to add parenthesis.

E.g. The woman –only 25 years old – was the first to win a gold medal for Britain.

Cohesion

How ideas are lined within paragraphs, i.e. within and between sentences using conjunctions, pronouns, vocabulary choices, and punctuation.

E.g. I always save my pocket money whereas my brother spends his straightaway.

Subject

The subject is the noun, pronoun or noun phrase that stands before a verb, and which is involved in subject-verb agreement. It normally expresses the 'do-er' or 'be-er' of the verb.

E.g. We were going shopping.



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Object

The object is a noun that refers to a person or thing, other than the subject, which is involved in or affected by the action of a verb.

The verb's object normally follows it.

E.g. He ate the tomato.

Active

When the subject of the verb carries out an action.

E.g. David Beckham scored the penalty.

Passive

When a subject or verb has an action done to them. Often, the subject is not even mentioned.

E.g. A window was smashed. The window was smashed by Daniel.

Synonym

Words which have the same, or nearly the same meaning as each other.

E.g. Bad - awful, terrible, horrible

Antonym

Words which mean the opposite to each other.

E.g. The antonym of up is down.

Ellipsis

Punctuation used to show a pause in someone's speech or thoughts, and to build tension or show that a sentence is not finished.

E.g. "The sight was awesome... truly amazing."

Hyphen

Punctuation which joins one or more words or adds a prefix to a word.

E.g. Happy-go-lucky





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Colon

Punctuation (:) which indicates that an example, a list, or more detailed explanation follows.

Semi-colon

Punctuation (;) used in place of a conjunction. It separates two sentences which are related and can be used in lists of phrases.

Bullet points

Bullet points are used to draw attention to important information.

Standard English

Standard English is the usual "correct" form of English, taught in schools and used in formal written communication.

Subjunctive

The subjunctive is a verb form used to express things that could or should happen.

E.g. If I were to go... / I demand that he answer!

Superlative

The superlative form of an adjective or adverb is used to compare one person, thing, action or state to all the others in its class.

E.g. saddest, lightest, most famous, worst, most angrily. The superlative is usually formed by adding the suffix -est.

