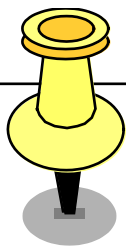


Useful glossary of grammar and
punctuation vocabulary





Click on the link below to get to the page you need.

Contents

Different word classes

Verbs	Pages 3,4,5,6
Nouns and Pronouns	Page 7
Subject and Object	Page 8
Adverbs	Page 8
Adjective/comparative/superlative	Page 9
Prepositions	Page 9
Conjunctions	Page 10
Determiners	Page 11

Sentence types

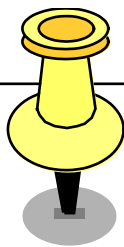
Phrases	Page 12
Clauses	Page 13
Simple sentences	Page 14
Compound sentences	Page 14
Complex sentences	Page 15
Statements	Page 15
Question, command, exclamation	Page 16
Active and Passive sentences	Page 17

Vocabulary

Homophones and Homonyms	Page 18
Synonyms and Antonyms	Page 18

Punctuation

Capital Letters	Page 19
Full stops, Question marks, Exclamation marks	Page 20
Commas	Page 21
Apostrophes	Page 22
Inverted commas	Page 23
Bracket and Dashes	Page 24
Hyphens and Ellipsis	Page 24
Semi colons and Colons	Page 25



Different word classes

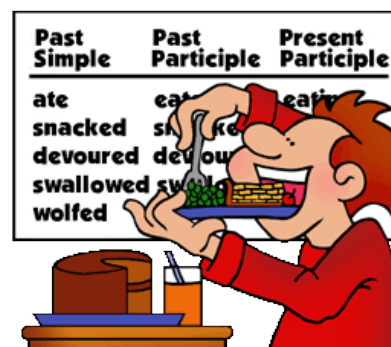
Words in the English language can be classified into different word classes according to what they do in the sentence.

The basic word classes are known as verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions prepositions, determiners and nouns, including pronouns.

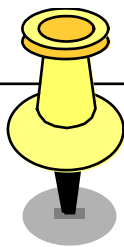
Verbs

Verbs express an action or a statement of being: they are a doing or being word (formed from the verb to be. For more information on ['to be'](#) click on the blue link)

There are lots of different ways that we use verbs in the English language and they take many different forms.



Verb form	Definition	Examples
Infinitive	This is the verb in its most basic form. It is the verb family name and has had no suffixes or prefixes added to the word.	to run, to dance, to read, to be
The Past Tense		
Past simple	The past simple is usually made by adding the suffix -ed/d but some verbs (irregular ones) do not follow this pattern.	to chatter becomes chattered I write becomes I wrote
Past progressive	This verb form is made up of the past tense form of <u>to be</u> and a verb ending with the -ing suffix	My friends <u>were watching</u> the TV. It <u>was raining</u> .
Present perfect	Even though this is called the present perfect, it's actually a past tense verb form. It is made of the present tense form of <u>to be</u> and a past tense verb.	We <u>have found</u> the book! He <u>has bought</u> the new car.
Past perfect	This is like the present progressive but shows that something happened before something else. It is made of the past tense form of <u>to be</u> and a past tense verb.	I <u>had looked</u> high and low. I <u>had remembered</u> to pick up my lunch.



The present tense		
Present simple	These verbs tell us that the action is happening now.	The children <u>walk</u> to school. He <u>plants</u> a flower.
Present progressive	This verb form is made up of the present tense form of <u>to be</u> and a verb ending with the -ing suffix	My friends <u>are watching</u> the TV. It <u>is raining</u> .
Future		
Future tense	This tells you that something is going to happen.	It <u>is going to rain</u> tomorrow. I <u>will visit</u> the class later. You <u>shall go</u> to the ball!

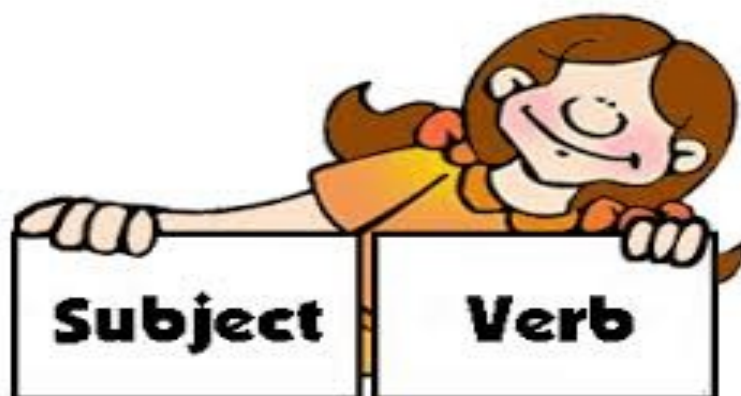
Verb subject agreement

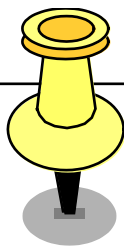
When we write sentences we have to make sure that the verb we use matches the subject of the sentence. The subject is who or what is doing the verb. We have to work out how people or things are doing the verb and alter it accordingly.

Example:

- The cat eats dinner.
- The cats eat dinner.
- The man runs to the car.
- The men run to the car.
- I was late for the party.
- We were late for the party.

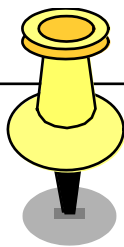
Remember that 'we was' is not grammatically correct.





Other verb forms		
Modal verbs	These express degrees of possibility and certainty	<i>I <u>should</u> clean the car. I <u>will</u> go out tonight. Peter <u>must</u> take you to the ballet tonight.</i>
Imperative verbs	These are sometimes called 'bossy words'. They are the verbs that tell someone what to do.	<i><u>Pick</u> that up! <u>Go</u> and <u>wash</u> your hands. After you have finished your homework, <u>clean</u> your room.</i>
Active voice	When the thing/person doing the verb is before the verb it is called the active voice.	<i>He <u>turned off</u> the computer.</i>
Passive voice	When the thing/person doing the verb is after the verb it is called the passive voice. Sometimes we might even know who did the action. This is often used if we are trying to avoid blame for an action!	<i>The computer <u>was turned off</u> by him. The book <u>was stolen</u>.</i>
The subjunctive form.	This is mostly used in very formal writing. It uses the infinitive form but without 'to'. The subjunctive remains the same even if the sentence is past or present tense.	<i>He asks that the people <u>stay quiet</u>. He asked that the people <u>stay quiet</u>.</i>





The Verb 'to be'

The verb 'to be' is the most irregular verb in the English language. It is normally used as a linking verb that shows that the thing or the person in the sentence exists.

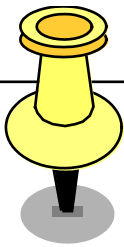
The verb 'to be' is made of words such as am, is, were, was, are, being, been

	Present	Past	Present progressive	Past progressive	Present progressive	Past progressive	Future
I	am	was	have been	had been	am + verb ending with -ing	was + verb ending with -ing	will be
he/she/it	is	was	has been	had been	is + verb ending with -ing	was + verb ending with -ing	will be
you/we/they	are	were	have been	had been	are + verb ending with -ing	were + verb ending with -ing	will be

Sentences including the verb 'to be'

- She **is** angry because she lost her pencil case.
- We **have been** very busy preparing this party.
- I **was** swimming on Friday night.
- After dinner, I **will be** full.
- I **am** getting cold; can you turn the radiator on?
- We **had been** arguing when we heard the car alarm.





Nouns

Nouns are a thing or item such as a person, place or idea. There are lots of different types of nouns and some have special rules attached to them.

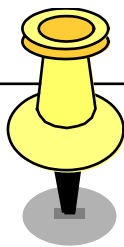


Noun type	Definition	Examples
Common Noun	These are ordinary objects.	dog, car, house, potato, elephant
Proper noun	Names of specific things and individual things. The names of places and people are the most common examples. They begin with capital letters.	Cameron, January, Monday, Diwali, Kent
Abstract noun	Names of ideas or concepts.	sadness, love, boredom
Collective nouns	Names for groups of people, animals, items.	pride of lions, parliament of owls, class of pupils.
Pronouns	Words that can be used to replace other nouns.	<u>She</u> ran for the bus. I put <u>it</u> in the fridge. Please pass <u>me</u> <u>my</u> pencil.

Pronouns

Whilst pronouns are short words that can be used to replace other nouns, they can be further subcategorised. By the end of KS2, children need to know what relative pronouns, possessive pronouns and personal pronouns are.

Pronoun type	Definition	Examples
Personal pronoun	A word that replaces a noun. It doesn't always refer to a person; it can refer to a thing as well.	it, we, they, us, them, her, him <u>She</u> remembered where <u>it</u> was.
Possessive pronoun	These are used to show that something belongs to someone.	mine, yours, ours, its (no apostrophe) Is this pencil <u>yours</u> ? That's <u>mine</u> !
Relative pronoun	These pronouns help to add more information to a sentence about another noun.	who, which, that, whom, whose This is my sister. She lives in Shrewsbury. This is my sister <u>who</u> lives in Shrewsbury.



Subject and Object

In a sentence, the subject is the person or thing that does the verb.

Example:

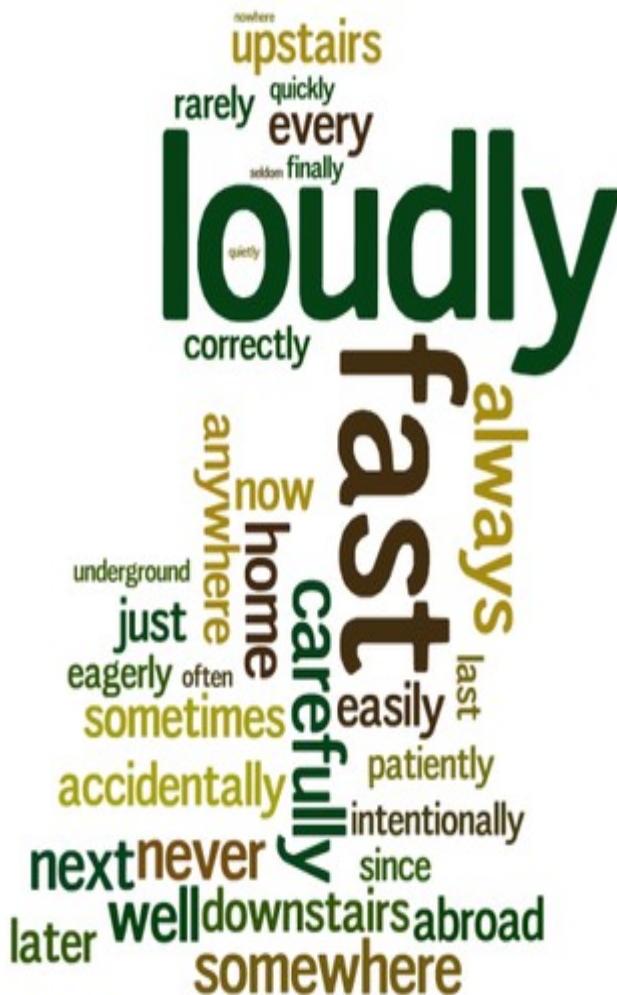
- The dog caught the ball.
- The beanstalk was grown by the gardener.
- After dinner, I had to wash up.

The object is the person or thing that has the verb done to it.

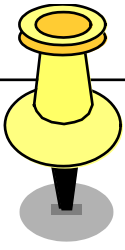
- The dog caught the ball.
- The pizza was eaten by the people.
- The computer was switched off.

Adverbs

Adverbs describe how, when, where and how often a verb is done. Sometimes they can also add more information to other adverbs and adjectives. Often people say that adverbs end in the suffix '-ly'. This is not actually true and can cause some confusion with words such as lovely and ugly which are actually adjectives.



Adverb type	Definition	Examples
Adverb of manner	How something happens	quickly, slowly, suddenly, well
Adverbs of place	Where something happens	in, at, under, on
Adverbs of time	When something happens	yesterday, tomorrow, later, now
Adverbs of frequency	How often something happens	never, rarely, often, sometimes
Modifying adverbs	Used to emphasise a point or add more information to an adjective or another adverb.	Rashid was <u>very</u> happy. The car drove <u>extremely</u> quickly.



Adjective/comparatives/superlatives

Adjectives add more information to a noun. They describe them.

- The wooden table.
- The sky was blue.
- There are five bananas.
- The red car drove quickly.

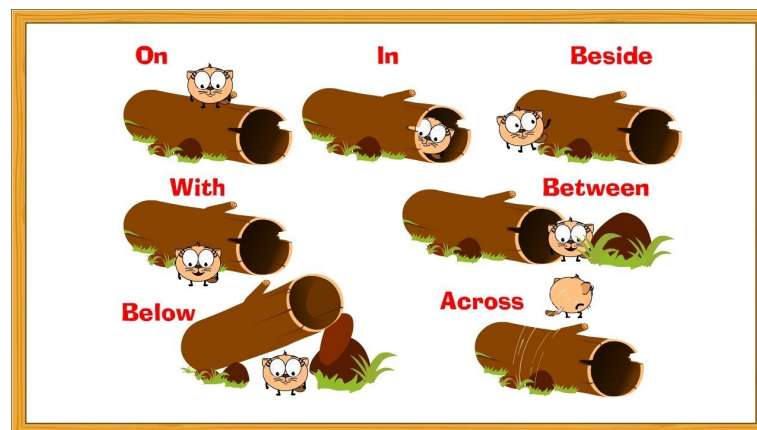
Comparative adjectives describe the difference between two things. They compare.

- My niece is younger than my cousin.
- My snail was slower than yours.



Superlative adjectives show that someone or something has the most or the least of a particular quality.

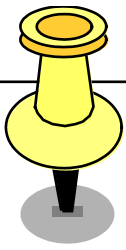
- That star is the brightest in the sky.
- My dinner is the biggest.
- This is the worst dinner ever!
- This is the most fantastic grammar guide ever!



Prepositions

Prepositions show the relationship between a noun (or pronoun) to another word in the sentence. They can tell us where something is or when something happened.

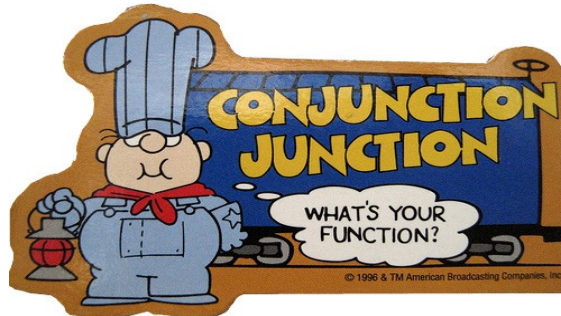
- The cat is on the table. (where)
- It would be best if we met on Wednesday. (when)
- I will meet you at the park. (where)
- I will meet you at seven o'clock. (when)



Conjunctions

Conjunctions are joining words. We use them to add more information in sentences. There are two different types of conjunctions: co-ordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions.

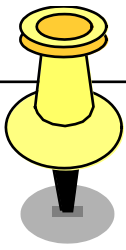
Conjunction type	Definition	Example
co-ordinating conjunctions	Co-ordinating conjunctions are the joining words that link two main clauses (two clauses that make sense by themselves).	The cat jumped on the tree <u>and</u> it scared the pigeon away.
subordinating conjunctions	Subordinating conjunctions are the joining words that link a main clause and a subordinate clause (the subordinate clause doesn't make sense without the main clause)	<i>I went to bed early</i> <u>because</u> <i>I was very tired.</i> <i>Although</i> it was sunny outside, <i>I took my coat with me.</i>



Conjunctions also do different jobs in sentences and so they are used for different reasons. They can be used to add more information, show the consequences of an action, compare, contrast and they can do much more.

Some books that you might have, might discuss conjunctions that show time. These are actually adverbs of time and not conjunctions.

Conjunction type	Examples
To add more information	also, and, as well as, moreover, furthermore
To give examples	for example, as revealed by, such as, in the case of
To compare	like, similarly, in the same way, equally
To contrast	whereas, alternatively, however, but, on the other hand
To emphasise	above all, especially, notably, significantly
To show consequences	because, therefore, thus, so, consequently
To show conditions (conditionals)	if, unless, provided, on condition that, assuming that



Determiners

Determiners are words that introduce a noun, such as - a/an, the, this, those, every, many

Examples:

- a cat;
- the cat;
- this cat;
- those cats;
- every cat;
- many cats.



Articles

There are special determiners that can also be called articles.

The determiner 'the' is known as the definite article.

The determiner 'a' (or an) is known as the indefinite article.

Possessive determiners

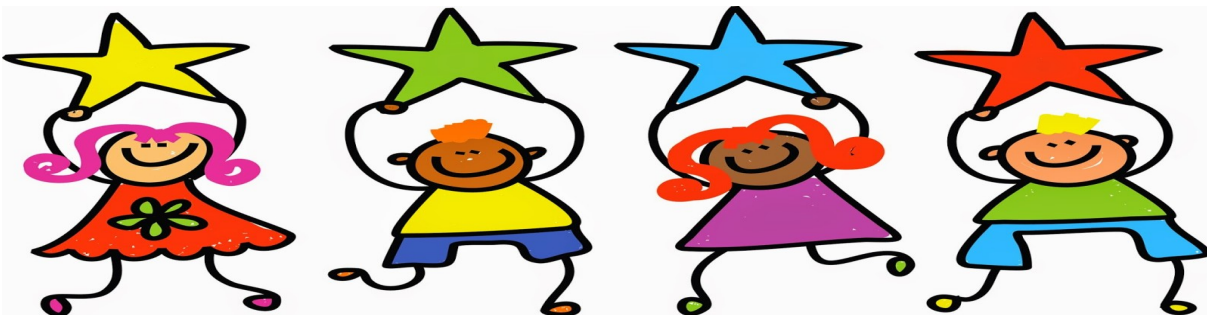
Words like my, our, your, his, her, its and their are known as possessive determiners. They come before nouns and show who owns the thing.

- My leg hurts.
- Aaron swapped his bike.
- Take your children to the zoo.

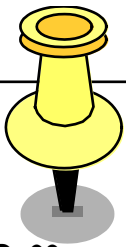
Be careful not to mix possessive determiners with possessive pronouns.

Determiner - These are our books.

Pronoun - These books are ours.



[Back to contents page](#)

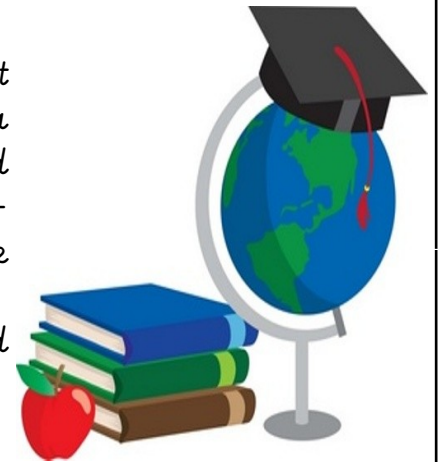


Different parts of sentences

What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words that make complete sense. It must contain a main verb and begin with a capital letter. It ends in a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark. We do not add a full stop to a sentence so that we can breathe; we breathe because a full stop has been added. The full stop is used to end the idea in the sentence and show that a new idea has started.

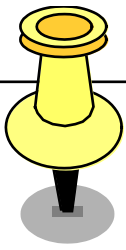
Sentences can be split into lots of different parts and categorised in different ways.



Phrases

A phrase is a small group of words that forms a meaningful part of a clause. It does not contain any verbs. There are several different types that do different things, as follows:

Phrase type	Definition	Example
Noun phrase	A noun phrase is built around a single noun.	<u>A vase of roses</u> stood on the table. She was reading <u>a book about the emancipation of women.</u>
Adjective phrase	An adjective phrase is built around an adjective and adds more description to a noun.	He has led <u>a very interesting</u> life. These are <u>unbelievably expensive</u> shoes.
Adverbial phrase	An adverbial phrase is built round an adverb. The phrase gives more information about how, when, where or how often an action occurs.	They wanted to leave the country <u>as fast as possible.</u> <u>In the afternoon,</u> Laura watched the T.V.
Prepositional phrase	In a prepositional phrase the preposition always comes at the beginning. The phrase says where something happens.	I wanted to live <u>near the sea.</u> The dog was hiding <u>under the kitchen table.</u>



Clauses

What is a clause?

A clause is a group of words containing a verb, which makes up part of a sentence.

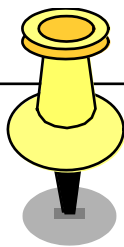
Examples:

- They arrived early because everyone was really excited.
- The man wanted to sneeze and he got his handkerchief out.

Notice that each of the clauses above have got a verb in them - 'arrived', 'was', 'wanted', 'got out'.



Types of clauses	Definition	Examples
Main clause	These make sense on their own and have a <u>subject</u> and a <u>verb</u> in them.	<u>I eat</u> a lot of bread. <u>He took</u> my umbrella because it was raining. Although it was Easter, <u>Pete didn't eat</u> any chocolate.
Subordinate clause	These clauses do not make sense by themselves. They need a main clause to be understood.	<u>I took my umbrella because it was raining.</u> <u>Although it was Easter, I didn't eat any chocolate.</u>
Relative clause	A <u>relative clause</u> is a special type of subordinate clause. It starts with a <u>relative pronoun</u> and tells us more information about a person or thing. They can be placed at the end of the sentence or embedded within the main clause and separated with a pair of commas.	We have met the people <u>who have moved in across the road.</u> The dog, <u>that had been missing for a week,</u> was found in the woods.
Adverbial clause	An adverbial clause is a special type of subordinate clause. It gives the reader more information about when, where, how and how often the verb takes place. They can come at the end of the sentence or at the front. If they are at the front of the sentence, it is separated with a comma.	The lights went out <u>because a tree had fallen on the power line.</u> <u>Because a tree had fallen on the power line,</u> the lights went out.
Conditional clause	A conditional clause is a special type of subordinate clause. We use them when something in a sentence depends on something else. They start with <u>conditional conjunctions</u> .	<u>Unless you reduce the number of sweets you eat,</u> you will need fillings. Our plan would be successful <u>as long as</u> we are quiet.



Types of sentences

We classify sentences according to the number and types of clauses that are used and the type of conjunctions that are used

Simple sentences

These are made of one main clause; they only express one idea. They are the first type of sentence that we learn how to write.

Examples:

- The shops are on the other street.
- We often go to France.

Sometimes they are described as being quite short but simple sentences can be extended as long as a conjunction is not used.

Examples:

- The teacher set up the resources.
- The fresh face, excited teacher set up all of the newly photocopied resources.

Compound sentences

These are made of two or more main clauses. Each one of the clauses will make sense by itself. The clauses are joined together by a **co-ordinating conjunction**. No comma is needed to separate the two clauses.

Examples:

- The rain has been heavy **and** we have decided not to go out.
- The child in the green shirt won the race **but** her horse was bigger than the rest.

Be careful of sentences that include 'and', 'or' if they have been used in a list; they could be a simple sentence.

Example:

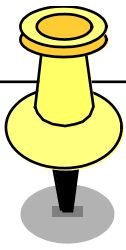
- I got the apples and oranges.

In the above sentence, there is only one main clause. The 'and' is used to separate two nouns in a list. The sentence above is a simple sentence.

- I don't know if I need the sugar or the honey.

In the above sentence, there is only one main clause. The 'or' is used to separate two nouns in a list. The sentence above is a simple sentence.





Complex sentences

These sentences are made of two or more clauses. They are a mixture of main and subordinate clauses.

Examples:

- Teachers often spend whole evenings marking even when they are very tired.
- If you'd like to learn to play guitar this term, you will need to sign up for lessons.
- The village, which was normally very peaceful, had a huge festival in August.

Punctuating complex sentences:

Example 1: The sentence starts with the main clause. No comma is needed to separate the two different clauses.

Example 2: The sentence starts with the subordinate clause. A comma is needed to separate the two different clauses.

Example 3: In this sentence, the subordinate clause is embedded in the middle. It is separated from the main clause with a pair of commas.

Statement, questions, commands and exclamations

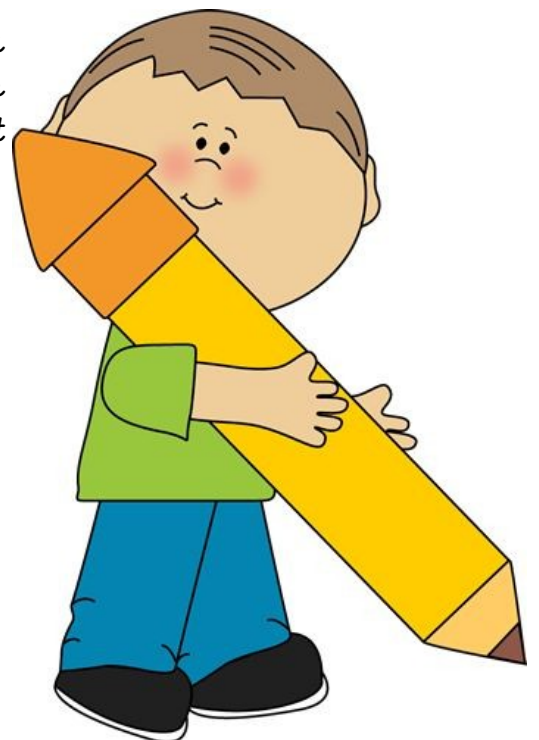
We can also categorise sentences in different ways according to their purpose and how they are used.

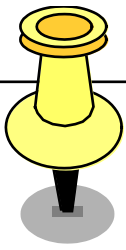
Statement

A statement is simply a sentence that tells the reader a piece of information. They end with full stops. They can sometimes end with an exclamation mark if the statement shows something with surprise or is forceful.

Examples:

- The dog is dirty.
- The dog is absolutely filthy!





Questions

A question is a sentence that asks for information. They can be formed in many different ways but they always end with a question mark.

Examples:

- Where are the biscuits?
- How are you feeling now?

You can also create a question by switching the subject and the verb in a statement.

Example:

- 'He is running.' This changes to 'Is he running?'
- 'The teacher can go home now.' This changes to 'Can the teacher go home now?'

You can also form questions using question tags. This is where the sentence seems to start with a statement and then a short question is tagged on the end separated with a comma.

Example:

- Grammar isn't too hard, is it?
- He can't do that, can he?

We do not say that questions start with question words. For example, 'when' can often start a sentence but it can also start a statement.

Examples:

- When can I come over?
- When I get home, I have to feed the cat.

Commands

A command is a sentence that tells someone what to do. It always has an imperative verb in it. They end with a full stop. They can end with an exclamation mark if the command is particularly forceful. Commands can also start with a subordinate clause.

Examples:

- Get the milk, please.
- Pick that up now!
 - After you have taken out the rubbish, go to the Co-op and buy some bacon.

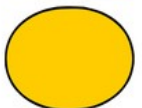


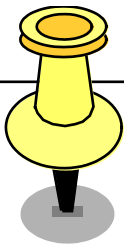
Exclamations

An exclamation is a type of sentence that expresses surprise or outcry. They end with an exclamation mark and start with 'how' and 'what'. Be careful not to mix the 'how' and 'what' up with questions.

Examples:

- How ridiculous!
- What a joke!





Active and Passive sentences

In order to identify these two different sentences, you have to find the subject, the verb and the object. Where they are placed in the sentence will determine if the sentence is active or passive.

Active voice

In the active voice, the **subject** goes before the **verb** and the **object** goes after the verb.

Examples:

- **The dog** caught the ball.
- After dinner, **I** washed up the dishes.
- **The thief** stole the car.

Passive voice

In the passive voice, the **object** goes before the **verb** and the **subject** goes after the verb.

Examples:

- **The ball** was caught by **the dog**.
- After dinner, **the dishes** were washed up by **me**.
- **The car** was stolen by **the thief**.

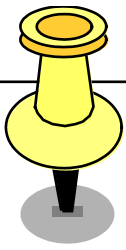
Sometimes though, a sentence written in the passive voice might not have a subject in it. Consider the second example above. It doesn't really sound right. It could be written 'After dinner, the dishes were washed up'.

We use this form of passive voice if we want to avoid blame or if we don't know who did the action.

Examples:

- **The car** was stolen.
- **The greenhouse** was broken.





Vocabulary

The vocabulary that we use in our writing is very important. It can completely change the feel of the writing.

Example:

- The boy walked down the road.
- Humming, the smiling boy skipped merrily down the road waving at people.
- Growling, the scowling boy trudged wearily down the road in the rain.

Homophones

These are words that sound the same but are spelt differently. Their meanings are also different.

Examples:

- He hammered the stake into the ground.
- I had steak for dinner.

We use homophones frequently in the English language.

Common ones include:

- There/their/they're
- Your/you're
- Here/hear



Homonyms

These are words that are spelt the same and sound the same but their meaning is different because they are different word classes.

Examples:

- I have to look for the map. look = verb
- She gave me a puzzled look. look = noun
- The bulb in the light shone brightly. light = noun
- The feather was very light. light = adjective
- I have to light the candle. light = verb

Synonyms

These are words that mean the same thing. They can replace each other in sentences and must be the same word class.

Examples:

- That's a big spider. That's a massive spider!
- I'm cross. I'm furious!

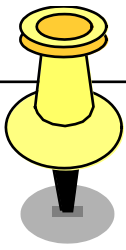


Antonyms

These are words that are the opposite to each other.

- It's through that wide tube. It's through that narrow tube.
- This knife is really sharp. This knife is really dull.

[Back to contents page](#)



Punctuation

Punctuation marks are small symbols that alter the way that we read the sentence. They can completely alter the meaning of the sentence.

Capital Letters

There are a number of ways that we use capital letters.

1. Every sentence should start with a capital letter. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. We use capital letters for any proper nouns. This means the actual name of something or someone. We give capitals to all the main words that are part of the name.

Examples:

- Chatham
- Kent
- Horsted Primary School

3. We give capital letters to all the main words in titles, including in books, films, and pieces of work. Small words (such as of, the, a, an) are not given capitals unless they are the first word of the title.

Examples:

- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
- The Return of the Jedi
- The History of Kent

4. When a word is abbreviated, a capital letter should be used.

Examples:

- GCSE
- BBC

5. Whenever you use the pronoun 'I' to represent yourself, you must use a capital. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Common confusions

1. Common nouns used as names. People are often tempted to write 'My Mum', or 'My Dog' thinking that it is a proper noun. However 'mum' and 'dog' are not their names and so you shouldn't use a capital letter.

The exception to this is if or when the common noun is used as their name

Examples

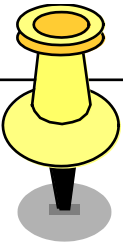
- I loved the way that Mum was always laughing.
- We named him Dog because we couldn't think of another name for him.

2. Importance. Some people are tempted to use capital letters just to suggest that something is important.

Examples:

- You must always do your Homework.
- At the school, Football is a popular sport.

This is wrong. Football and Homework are not proper nouns and should not have capital letters.



Full stops

We use full stops to end our sentences. We do not add a full stop to a sentence so that we can breathe; we breathe because a full stop has been added.

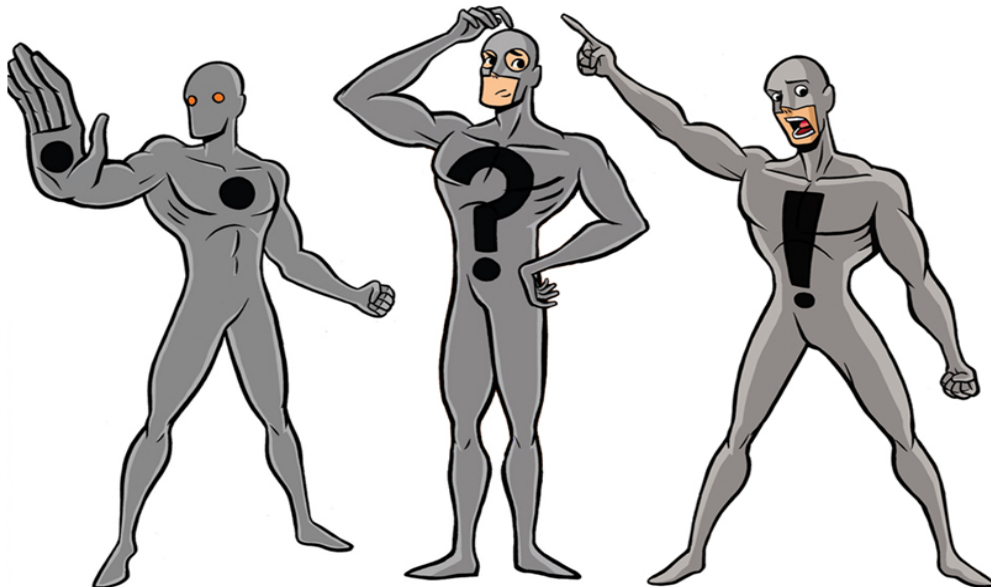
Examples:

- This sentence ends with a full stop.
- Please get the milk.

We also use full stops at the end of some abbreviations.

Examples:

- Dr. Singh prescribed rest and relaxation so Mrs. Smith went on holiday.



THE SENTENCE ENDING TEAM!

Question marks

A question mark is used to show when someone has asked for information.

Examples:

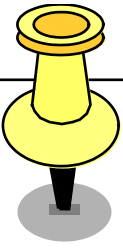
- Are we going on holiday next week?
- It's getting dark, isn't it?

Exclamation marks

An exclamation mark is used to show when something is surprising or forceful.

Examples:

- You shouldn't be here!
- Clean your room now!



Commas

The comma is a much misused piece of punctuation. This is partly because there are several different situations in which the comma is the correct piece of punctuation to use. The trick is to identify those situations so as not to use the comma in places where it really should not be.

The following are when commas should be used.

1. To separate words in a list of three or more items or three or more adjectives.

Examples:

- I need to buy milk, bread, eggs and cheese.
- I'll need a hammer, a chisel and a saw.
- The old, ramshackle, dilapidated house had a charm of its own.
- That rather dull-looking, badly-dressed, clumsy man is actually a university professor.

2. They can also be used to separate a subordinate clause from the main clause when the subordinate clause comes first in a sentence.

Examples:

- After being caught in the rain, Michael was lucky not to catch a terrible cold.
- As the evening drew to a close, the children wandered home.

3. Commas are also used to separate subordinate clauses that are embedded in the main clause.

Examples:

- Sam, the youngest pupil in the class, was always on time for school.
- The Thames, one of the greatest rivers in Great Britain, passes right through London.

4. Commas are used to separate date and years, and towns and countries

Examples:

- His home was in Chatham, Kent.
- My father was born on March 13, 1949.

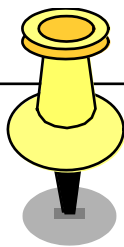
Where we place commas is extremely important. Commas that are misused can completely alter the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

"Let's eat Grandma," said the kids. This sentence means that children want to eat their Grandma.

"Let's eat, Grandma," said the kids. This sentence means that the children are hungry and they are letting their grandma know that they would like to eat some food.





Apostrophes

Apostrophes are another piece of punctuation that are commonly misused. The apostrophe is used for two purposes.

1. They are used to show that there is a letter missing when two words have been combined to make one.

Examples:

- He is = He's
- I am = I'm
- They have = They've
- It is = It's

It's important to remember that we never say *should of*, *could of*, *would of* etc. What we actually say is a combination of two words that have been combined to make one - *should have* = *should've*, *could have* = *could've*, *would have* = *would've*

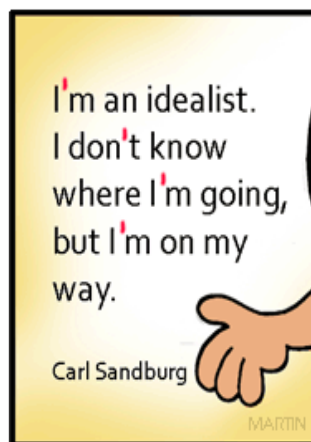
2. They are also used to show possession. There are lots of things to remember when using apostrophes of possession.

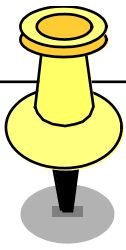
- a. If there is only one person or thing doing the owning, then you have to add an apostrophe and an s after the name.
 - Fred's cat was hungry.
 - The boy's pocket was full of sweets.
- b. That is unless the name of the person or thing ends with an s. Then, you only need to add the apostrophe after the s.
 - James' chocolate had raisins in it.
- c. If there is more than one person or thing doing the owning, then you turn the noun into a plural by adding an s and then adding an apostrophe.
 - The cats' whiskers twitched when they saw each other.
 - That dogs' tails wagged.
- d. Sometimes though, when you make the noun plural, you don't just add an s; the spelling changes e.g. *woman* becomes *women*. When you show possession using an apostrophe in this case, you change the noun to a plural and then add an apostrophe and then an s.
 - 'The woman's bag had a diary in it' would become 'The women's bags had diaries in them' if there were more than one woman.
 - 'The child's school education was outstanding' would become 'The children's school education was outstanding' if there were more than one child.

Common errors

We do not need to use apostrophes in years i.e. The 1980's had some questionable fashion. It should be 1980s.

We also do not need to use apostrophes in abbreviations such as CD's or DVD's. It should simply be CDs or DVDs.





Inverted commas

Inverted commas are used to show when someone is speaking. They can also be called speech marks but at school, we will refer to inverted commas. Other punctuation has to be used to ensure that the speech is punctuated properly. Another thing to remember when writing speech is that whenever there is a new speaker, we always start writing their speech on a new line.

Possible ways of writing speech:

1. Putting the speaker after the speech:

- "I'm going to the park," said Rashid.

Notice the comma after the word 'park' and the full stop at the end.

2. Putting the speaker before the speech:

- Jane said, "This is great!"

This time, the comma goes after said because it introduces the sentence that Jane said. Because Jane has said a sentence, her speech has to start with a capital letter. Her sentence is then closed with an exclamation mark within the inverted commas.

3. Putting the speaker in the middle of the speech (1):

- "I'm going to the shops," Fred informed. "Does anybody want anything?"

Here, what Fred is saying is two separate sentences so each time he starts speaking it has to start with a capital letter. There is also a full stop after informed to show that the first sentence has ended.

4. Putting the speaker in the middle of continuous speech (2)

- "That car is going to crash," shrieked the mother, "straight into that wall!"

In this example, what the mother is saying is one sentence and so a comma is needed after mother to reintroduce the speech and a capital letter is needed only at the beginning.

5. If a person is retelling the words that another person has said:

- Homer Simpson said, "Maybe, just once, someone will call me 'Sir' without adding 'you're making a scene'."

Here, Homer Simpson is speaking all of the words in the double inverted commas but because he is saying the words that someone else has said, we need to indicate where they are. This has been done with the single inverted commas around their words. Notice at the end of the sentence that the full stop goes inside the double inverted commas.

The difference between direct and reported (indirect) speech.

When we write exactly what a person says, this is direct speech and it is when we would use the rules listed above. Inverted commas and other speech punctuation is needed in order to make it grammatically correct.

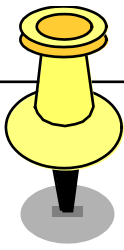
However, we might be reporting what has been said. In this instance we can paraphrase what has been said and give the general idea. The sentence has to be written in the third person (he, she, they) and the word 'that' introduces what has been said.

Example:

Direct: "I'm going to the shop to buy some milk," said Lola.

Reported: Lola said that she was going to the shop to buy some milk.

[Back to contents page](#)



Brackets and dashes

These pieces of punctuation are similar to the way that a pair of commas can be used. They are used to add extra information into a sentence. When the extra information that is included within the punctuation is taken out of the sentence, it would still make sense.

Example:

The team pulled off an amazing victory.

The team, a man down after twenty minutes, pulled off an amazing victory.

The team - a man down after twenty minutes - pulled off an amazing victory.

The team (a man down after twenty minutes) pulled off an amazing victory.

Hyphens

A hyphen is used between words. They can be used to make compound words and are used when we write numbers. Additionally, they can be used with prefixes if the prefix ends with the same letter that the word starts with, any word that starts with the prefix re- if it means again, any word that starts with the prefix ex- if it means no longer.

Examples:

Film-maker, thirty-four, two-fifths, co-ordinate, ex-wife, re-enter.

Where we place hyphens in words can alter what they mean.

Recover means to get better

Re-cover means to cover something again

There are thirty-seven year olds in Class Two. This means that Class Two has thirty-seven children in it who are a year old.

There are thirty seven-year-olds in Class Two. This means that Class Two has thirty children in it who are seven.

There are thirty-seven-year-olds in Class Two. This means that Class Two has an unspecified number of people in it who are thirty-seven.

Ellipsis

An ellipsis is three dots that can be used to show an omission of a word or words (including whole sentences) from a text, to create a pause for effect, to show an unfinished thought, to show a trail off into silence.

Example:

1. Omitted text

The brochure states: "The atmosphere is tranquil ... and you cannot hear the trains."

2. Pause for effect

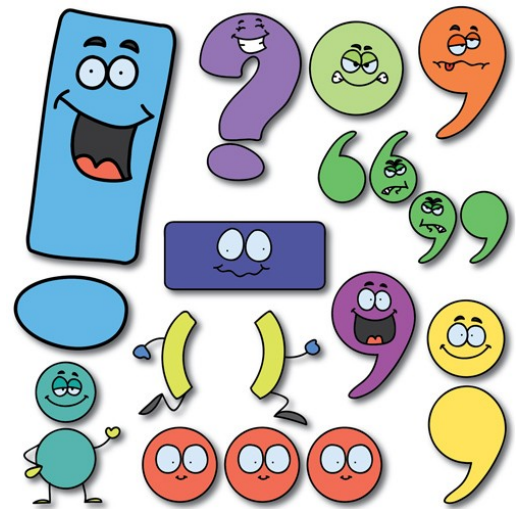
A credit card stolen in London was used to pay for a Chinese meal five hours later ... in Bangkok.

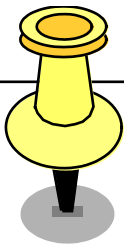
3. Unfinished thought

"Yeah? Well, you can just ..."

4. Trail off into silence

Standing tall and with the Lord's Prayer mumbling along our lips, we entered the chamber ...





Semi-colons

The semi-colon can be used in two different ways.

1. They can be used to separate two or more statements which are related to each other making them one sentence. The information before and after the semi-colon must make sense without each other.

Example:

- The band walked onto the stage; the crowd cheered.
- I took my coat with me; it was raining.

2. They can also be used to separate information in a list if commas have to be used to separate smaller lists of adjectives.

Example:

- On Sports Day, the pupils carried large, colourful hoops; a box of old, worn egg and spoons; piles of old, holey sacks; baskets of bean bags; and well-used, frayed skipping ropes.

Remember that after the semi-colon, we use a lower case letter.



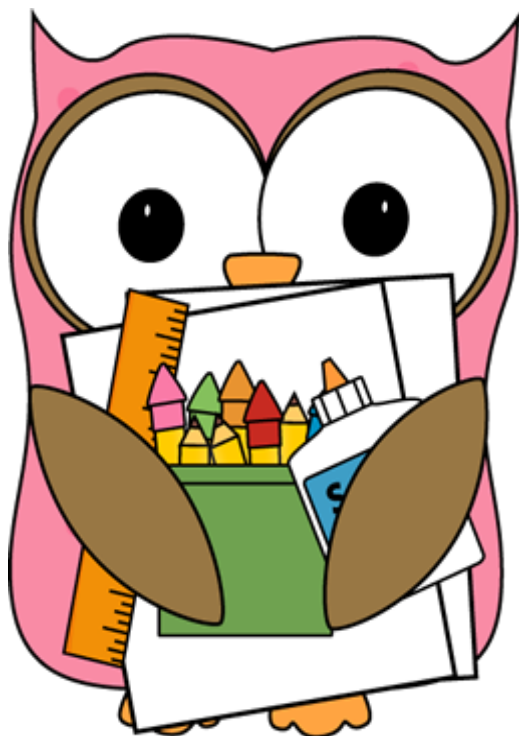
Colons

The colon can be used in three different ways:

They introduce a list.

Example:

Please bring: a coat, an umbrella, a packed-lunch, wellington boots and a water bottle.



They introduce a result or can be used instead of 'for example'.

Example:

He had decided: he would buy the house he had just looked round.

They balance one statement against another.

Example:

We were in favour of keeping our school uniform: they were against it.

Remember that after the colon, we use a lower case letter.