

Grammar Terminology

Helping your child with grammar at home

At the end of KS2, children are assessed on their understanding of how the English language 'works'. Listed below is a glossary of terms related to English grammar that they may be asked questions about.

1. Word Classes

It is important that children begin to think carefully about the vocabulary that they choose and the effect that it has on the reader.

TERM

DEFINITION

Noun -

A noun is a 'naming' word: a word used for naming an animal, a person, a place or a thing: **giraffe, telephone, Rachel...**

Nouns can be further subdivided. Here are some types of noun:

Proper noun

This is a noun used to name particular people and places: **Jim, Betty, London...** and some 'times': **Monday, April, Easter...** It always begins with a capital letter.

Common noun

A common noun is a noun that is used to name everyday things (nonspecific): **cars, toothbrushes, trees...** and kinds of people: **man, woman, child...**

Collective noun

This is a noun that describes a group or collection of people or things: **army, bunch, team, swarm...**

Abstract noun

An abstract noun describes things that cannot actually be seen, heard, smelt, felt or tasted: **sleep, honesty, boredom, freedom, power, love...**

Adjective –

An adjective is a 'describing' word: it is a word used to describe (or tell you more about) a noun.

The burglar was wearing a **black** jacket, a **furry** hat and a **large** mask over his face. (The words in pink tell us more about the noun that follows)

An adjective usually comes before a noun but sometimes it can be separated from its noun and come afterwards: Ben looked **frightened**; the dog was very **fierce**.

Adjectives can be further subdivided. Here are some types of adjective:

Interrogative ('asking') adjectives

These are used to ask questions about a noun: **What? Which?...**

Which hat do you prefer?

Possessive adjectives

Possessive adjectives show ownership: **my, our, their, his, your...**

Sue never brushes **her** hair.

Adjectives of number or quantity

These answer the question: How much? **much, more, most, little, some, any, enough...**

She invited **five** friends for breakfast; she did not have **any** food left.

Demonstrative ('pointing out') adjectives

Demonstrative adjectives answer the question: Which? **This, that, these, those...**

Those apples and **these** pears are bad; **That** man stole **this** handbag.

Verb -

A verb is a word, or a group of words, that tells you what a person or thing is being or doing. It is often called a 'doing' word: **running, eating, sitting...** All sentences have a **subject** and a **verb**. The subject is the person or thing doing the action: **Cats purr** (Cats is the subject and purr is the verb)

Auxiliary verb

A verb is often made up of more than one word. The actual verb-word is helped out by parts of the special verbs: the verb **to be** and the verb **to have**. These 'helping' verbs are called **auxiliary verbs** and can help us to form tenses.

Auxiliary verbs for 'to be' include: **am, are, is, was, were**

Auxiliary verbs for 'to have' include: **have, had, hasn't, has, will have, will not have...**

I **have** arrived ('arrived' is the main verb and 'have' is the auxiliary verb)

We **are** waiting ('waiting' is the main verb and 'are' is the auxiliary verb)

Adverb -

An adverb tells you more about the verb (it 'adds' to the verb). It nearly always answers the questions: **How? When? Where? Why?**

Lots of adverbs in English end in **-ly** and come from adjectives: soft – **softly**; slow – **slowly**. Children also need to be able to identify adverbs that do not end in **-ly** e.g. **today, soon, tomorrow, always**

Adverb or Adjective?

Some words can be either **adverbs** or **adjectives** depending on what they do in a sentence, e.g.

fast, hard...

If they answer the questions: How? When? Where? or Why? – they are adverbs.

If they answer the question: "What is it like?" - they are adjectives, and will be telling you more about a specific noun.

Life is **hard**. (adjective) Kim works **hard**. (adverb)

I took an **early** train. (adjective) The train arrived **early**. (adverb)

Pronoun -

Sometimes you refer to a person or a thing not by its actual name, but by another word which stands for it. The word you use to stand for a noun is called a pronoun (which means 'for a noun')

We use **pronouns** so that we do not have to repeat the same nouns over again:

When Barnaby stroked the cat and listened to **it** purring softly, **he** felt calm and peaceful.

Pronouns can be further subdivided. Here are some types of pronoun:

Singular pronouns

Singular pronouns are used to refer to one person or thing:

e.g. **I, you, me, he, she, it, you, him, her, mine, yours, his, hers, its**

Plural pronouns

Plural pronouns are used to refer to more than one person or thing:

e.g. **we, they, us, them, ours, yours, theirs**

Article -

An article is always used with and gives some information about a noun. There are three articles: **a, an** and **the**

e.g. **the** chair; **a** table; **an** elephant

*There is sometimes confusion about whether to use a or an. The sound of a word's first letter helps us to know which to use: If a word begins with a vowel sound, you should use an; if a word begins with a consonant sound, you should use a.

Prepositions - Prepositions are words which show the relationship of one thing to another. It can be information such as time, location or direction: **up, after, across, into, under, below, above ...**

e.g. Tom jumped **over** the cat.

The monkey is **in** the tree.

These words tell you where one thing is in relation to something else.

Conjunctions - Conjunction is the name for any word that links clauses or sentences together.

There are two main groups of conjunctions:

Conjunctions and **Connecting Adverbs**

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that are used to link clauses **within** a sentence.

There are two main kinds:

Co-ordinating conjunctions – link two main clauses to make compound sentences.

The acronym '**FANBOYS**' can help children to remember coordinating conjunctions:

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so e.g. I was angry **but** I didn't say anything.

Subordinating conjunctions - go at the start of a subordinate clause so they work to link the subordinating clause to the main clause: **when, while, before, after, since,**

until, if, because, although, that... e.g. We were hungry **when we got home.**

Because it was raining, we stayed inside. The acronym '**AWHITEBUS**' can help children to remember subordinating conjunctions.

Connecting adverbs

Connecting adverbs link the ideas in two sentences together but the two sentences still **remain separate**.

Connecting adverbs link ideas in several different ways:

Addition – **also, furthermore, moreover...**

Opposition – **however, nevertheless, on the other hand...**

Reinforcing – **besides, anyway, after all...**

Explaining – **for example, in other words, that is to say...**

Listing – **first(ly), first of all, finally...**

Indicating result – **therefore, consequently, as a result...**

Indicating time – **just then, meanwhile, later...**

2. Types of sentences

Statement These are sentences that state facts.

(Declarative - e.g. **It is hot.**

sentence) **The butter is in the fridge.**

Question These are sentences that ask for an answer.

(Interrogative- e.g. **Are you hot?**

sentence) **Where is the butter?**

Command These are sentences that give orders or requests.

(Imperative – e.g. **Play the movie.**

sentence) **Give me a dinosaur for my birthday.**

Exclamation Exclamatory sentences (exclamations) are sentences which express a strong feeling of emotion. Exclamatory sentences always begin with 'what' or 'how'

(Exclamatory - e.g. **What a lovely day!**

sentence) **What big eyes you have!**

3. Complex sentences

Phrase - A group of words that work together.
e.g. **a big dog**
five minutes ago

NB A phrase doesn't make complete sense on its own. As it doesn't have a verb, it can't be a complete sentence.

Clause - There are two kinds of clause:

Main clause

A clause that makes complete sense on its own.

e.g. **she bought a new dress**

A main clause can be a sentence on its own.

Subordinate clause

A clause that doesn't make sense on its own – it needs to be joined onto a main clause.

e.g. **when she went shopping**

A subordinate clause cannot be a sentence on its own.

Often a subordinate clause will start with a subordinating conjunction (see above)

e.g. **When she went shopping**, she bought a new dress

4. Spelling

Synonyms - These are words that have a similar meaning to another word. We use synonyms to make our writing more interesting.

Synonyms for:

Bad - **awful, terrible, horrible**

Happy - **content, joyful, pleased**

Look - **watch, stare, gaze**

Walk - **stroll, crawl, tread**

Antonyms - These are words with the opposite meaning to another word.

The antonym of **up** is **down**

The antonym of **tall** is **short**

The antonym of **add** is **subtract**

Word groups/ families -

These are groups of words that have a common feature or pattern - they have some of the same combinations of letters in them and a similar sound.

e.g. **at, cat, hat** and **fat** are a family of words with the "**at**" sound and letter combination in common.

bike, hike, like, spike and **strike** are a family of words with the "**ike**" sound and letter combination in common.

blame, came, fame, flame and **game** are a family of words with the "**ame**" sound and letter combination in common.

Prefix - Prefixes are letters added to the beginning of an existing word in order to create a new word with a different meaning.

Adding '**un**' to happy – **unhappy**

Adding '**dis**' to appear – **disappear**

Adding '**re**' to try – **retry**

Suffix - Suffixes are letters added to the end of an existing word to create a new word with a different meaning.
Adding 'able' to like – likeable
Adding 'ion' to act – action

Root words - Root words are words that have a meaning of their own but can be added to either with a prefix (before the root) or a suffix (after the root) to change the meaning of the word. Root words can often be helpful in finding out what a word means or where it is 'derived' from.

help is a root word

It can grow into:

helps
helpful
helped
helping
helpless
unhelpful

Singular - A singular noun names one person, place or thing (a single item).
One bike, One mango, One dress, One fly, One turkey, One half

Plural - Plurals name more than one person, place or thing.
Most nouns are made into plurals by adding –s: Three bikes

Some nouns ending in –o are made into plurals by adding –es: Two mangoes

Most nouns ending in hissing, shushing or buzzing sounds are made into plurals by adding –es:
Ten dresses

For words ending in a vowel and then –y, just add –s: Eight turkeys

For words ending in a consonant and then –y, change -y to -i and add –es: Five flies

Most nouns ending in -f or-fe change to -ves in the plural: Six halves