

Grammar and Punctuation

Be ready for SATs



Hints and tips



The grammar and punctuation test is designed to assess pupils' understanding of key vocabulary and how the English language 'works'. Examples of the tests that have been released ask children to highlight specific functions of a sentence or find examples of certain kinds of technical vocabulary within a sentence. Listed below is a glossary of terms related to grammar that they may be asked questions about.



Active voice / Passive voice: A sentence following the pattern – subject, verb, object e.g. The man ate the chocolates. A sentence following the pattern – object, verb, subject e.g. the chocolates were eaten by the man.

Adjective: A word that describes a noun e.g. the cat is very happy.

Adverb: A word that describes a verb, an adjective or another adverb e.g. the cat is extremely small / the cat moved stealthily.

Alliteration: A number of words close together which begin with the same consonant sound e.g. ten tired teddies.

Compound sentence: A sentence consisting of two main clauses joined by a connective.

Complex sentence: A sentence consisting of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Connective: A word or group of words which joins sentences or parts of sentences e.g. and, then, but, so.

Main clause: A sentence that functions independently e.g. I'll feed the dog.

Subordinate clause: A part of the sentence that is dependent upon another part e.g. I'll feed the dog [main clause] when he barks [subordinate clause]!

Conjunction: A word that joins a group of words e.g. and / or.

Imperative verbs: A verb that commands or tells the reader or listener to do something e.g. Write neatly!

Irregular verb: Verbs that don't follow a set pattern of rules.

Infinitive: The basic form of the verb, as it is found in the dictionary (nothing has been added or taken away). e.g. to drink / to sleep.

Metaphor: A direct comparison without the use of like or as e.g. the clouds were cotton wool, drifting in the sky.

Modal verb: An auxiliary verb that is used with another verb to express a certain mood or intention. e.g. I can't swim / I have to do my work.

Mood: The form a verb can take. There are three types of mood:

- **Indicative:** used with statements/facts
- **Imperative:** instructions/directions
- **Subjunctive:** expresses doubt/possibility

Noun: A naming word e.g. giraffe / telephone.

Singular: One thing.

Plural: More than one thing.

Direct object: The phrase directly affected by the action of the verb. e.g. I gave him the present (the present is being given).

Indirect object: The person or thing that receives the object e.g. I gave him the present (him – he is receiving the object).

Passive: e.g. the thief was caught by the police.

Active: e.g. the police caught the thief.

Personal pronoun: Refers to people e.g. I / you / he / she / we / you / they.

Possessive: Indicates possession e.g. mine / yours / his.

Prefixes: Letters added to the beginning of the word which change the meaning e.g. un, pre, dis.

Preposition: information, such as time, location or direction e.g. on, at, between.

Pronoun: A word that replaces a noun e.g. he / she / it.

Reflexive pronoun: Myself / yourself / himself.

Reflexive verb: An action that can be done to oneself e.g. I hurt myself.

Simile: Where something is compared to something else using like or as e.g. She is as tall as a giraffe.

Subject: The person doing the action e.g. the monkey eats banana.

Suffixes: Letters added to the end of a word to change the meaning e.g. -ed, -ing, -er.

Verb: An action word.

Past tense: Says what happened in the past.

Present tense: What is happening now.

Future tense: What will happen in the future.

Conditional tense: What could/ would happen.

Continued over...

Children also need to use a wide range of punctuation. Listed below are the types of punctuation marks that a typical child working in Y6 should be using.

Apostrophe: An apostrophe is a mark used to show that a letter has been left out. Example: he is can be written he's. Apostrophes are also used to show ownership. Examples: the cat's bowl, the cats' bowls.

Brackets: A punctuation mark used instead of commas when including extra information in a sentence.

Capital letter: A larger letter used at the beginning of sentences and for naming specific people, places and things.

Colon: A punctuation mark to introduce a list.

Comma: A punctuation mark used to break up sentences so that they are easier to understand. They can be used in lists.

Ellipsis: ... Used to create suspense or to show omission.

Exclamation mark: A punctuation mark used at the end of a sentence to show strong feelings e.g. Help! Wow!

Full stop: A mark used to end a sentence, when the sentence is not a question or exclamation e.g. Miss Marina likes cake.

Question mark: Used at the end of a question e.g. Where is my bag?

Semi-colon: Punctuation used to separate larger phrases in a list or can be used to replace a connective in a compound sentence.

Speech marks: Punctuation marks that go around the words that are actually spoken in a piece of writing " ".

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