



Grammar and punctuation guide
for parents
September 2013

Introduction

The Department for Education introduced a new grammar, punctuation and spelling test in May 2013 for year 6 children. The reason for introducing this test was because the government wanted to ensure that primary schools placed a stronger emphasis on these skills than in previous years. The ability to read and write in Standard English is a key life skill and learning about our language is of high importance. When your children leave school in Year 6 you will now receive information about how they perform in reading, writing, maths *and* grammar punctuation and spelling.

The grammar of our first language is learnt naturally and implicitly through interactions with speakers and from reading. Explicit knowledge of grammar is, however very important as it gives us more control and choice in our language. Building this knowledge is best achieved through a focus on grammar within the context of reading, writing and speaking. Some grammar rules need to be taught explicitly however before they can apply it to their writing and speaking.

Each section in the booklet highlights what children will be taught in terms word structure, sentence structure, text structure and the terminology they will be using. Words in italics are explained in the glossary at the end of each section.

It is very important that children are given the opportunity to practise grammar and punctuation at home and it is vital that all children speak Standard English both at home and at school.

Year 1

Word structure

The children will be taught how to make words *plural* by adding regular *plural noun suffixes* 's' or 'es' e.g. 's' to dog to become dogs, and 'es' to wish to become wishes.

They will be taught to add *suffixes* to *verbs* eg 'ing' to help to become helping, and 'ed' to work to become worked.

They will learn how the *prefix* 'un' changes the meaning of *verbs* and *adjectives* e.g. in unkind, or undo.

Text structure

Children will sequence sentences to form short *narratives*.

Punctuation

Children in Year 1 will be expected to separate their words using spaces (sometimes called 'finger spaces'). They will be taught how to use:

- capital letters for the beginning of sentences and *proper nouns*
- full stops
- question marks
- exclamation marks

Terminology for pupils

By the end of Year 1 children should know the meaning of the following:

- word
- sentence
- capital letter
- full stop
- singular
- plural
- question mark
- exclamation mark

Glossary of terms for Year 1

Plural noun suffixes = 's' or 'es' is added to the end of words to make them plural.

Suffixes = These are added to the end of words to change the tense or meaning of the word e.g. *playing, player, played*.

Prefix = these are added to the beginning of an existing word in order to create a new word with a different meaning e.g. unhappy, multicultural.

Verbs = these describe actions e.g. *run, jump, play*.

Adjectives = these are words to describe nouns eg *beautiful, shiny*.

Proper nouns = these are names of places or people and require a capital letter at the start.

Singular = only one e.g. *cat*.

Plural = more than one e.g. *cats*.

Year 2

Word structure

Children will be taught to add *suffixes* such as 'ness' and 'er' to *nouns*. They will add suffixes to adjectives such as 'ful' and 'less'. They will also use the suffixes 'er' and 'est' to form comparisons of *adjectives* and *adverbs*.

Sentence structure

Children will be taught to use *expanded noun phrases* for description and specification eg the blue butterfly, the man in the moon. They will also write sentences in different forms e.g. statements, questions or commands.

Text structure

Children will be taught to use the same *tense* consistently throughout a piece of writing.

Punctuation

Children will be expected to use:

- capital letters
- full stops
- exclamation marks
- question marks

They will be taught to use:

- commas to separate items in a list
- apostrophes to mark *contractions* in spelling.

Terminology for pupils

By the end of Year 2 children should understand the following terms:

- verb
- tense (past and present)
- adjective
- noun
- suffix
- apostrophe
- comma

Glossary of terms for Year 2

Suffixes = these are word endings e.g. 'ed', 'ing'.

Nouns = these are names of things, objects, people, places, emotions or qualities.

Expanded noun phrases = these are used to add detail to the noun.

Tense = past or present tense.

Contractions = words that have been shortened e.g. isn't, wasn't, shouldn't.

Year 3

Word structure

Children will be taught to add a range of *prefixes* to *nouns* such as ‘super’, ‘anti’, ‘auto’. They will be taught to use the correct *determiner* ‘a’ or ‘an’ according to whether the next word begins with a *vowel* or a *consonant*. Finally they will use *word families* to help with spellings of common words.

Sentence structure

Children will use *conjunctions* to express time and cause e.g. afterwards, because, however.

Text structure

Children will be taught how to use paragraphs to organise their writing. They will use headings and subheadings to aid presentation and will use the *present perfect form* of *verbs* to mark relationships of times and cause eg *I have written it down as we can check what we said.*

Punctuation

Children will be expected to use the punctuation taught in Year 1 and 2. They will be taught to use speech marks to punctuate *direct speech*.

Terminology for pupils

- word family
- conjunction
- adverb
- preposition
- direct speech
- speech marks
- prefix
- consonant
- vowel
- main clause
- subordinate clause

Glossary of terms

Prefixes = letters added to the start of words e.g. 'pre', 'un'.

Determiner = these are used to clarify the noun e.g. 'the', 'a', 'an'.

Vowel = a, e, i, o, u words which start with a vowel must use the determiner 'an' e.g. *an apple*.

Consonant = letters which are not vowels

Word families = words that are related to each other e.g. *family, familiar, unfamiliar, familiarity, familiarise* and contain the same root word.

Present perfect form = we use the present perfect to say that an action happened at an unspecified time before now e.g. You have seen that movie many times. Have you seen that movie many times? You have not seen that movie many times.

Verbs = these describe actions.

Direct speech = the spoken words in a text. They require speech marks eg "Can I play with you?" asked Dan.

Main clause = a sentence containing a subject and a verb. It makes sense on its own e.g. The children went inside.

Subordinate clause = adds detail to the main clause but does not make sense on its own e.g., The children went inside, because it was raining.

Year 4

Word structure

Children will learn the grammatical difference between the plural and possessive 's. The use of correct Standard English will be a big focus and children will be taught the importance of verb tense agreement e.g. *we were going to the park*, not *we was going to the park*, and *I have done my homework*, not *I done my homework*.

Sentence structure

Children will be taught to use appropriate choices of *pronoun* or *noun* within a sentence. They will be taught to use *fronted adverbials* (or *adverbial starts*) to make their sentences more interesting.

Text structure

Children will use paragraphs to organise their writing and will be taught to use appropriate choices of pronouns or nouns across their sentences.

Punctuation

Children will use speech marks to punctuate *direct speech*. They will use apostrophes to mark singular and plural possession eg *the girl's name*, *the boy's boots*. Children will be taught to use commas after fronted adverbials e.g. *later that day, I heard the news. Slowly, he entered the room*.

Terminology for pupils

Children will be expected to know the terminology taught in years 1 to 3.

They will learn:

- pronoun
- possessive pronoun
- adverbial

Glossary of terms

Nouns = names. There are different types of nouns: common nouns – names of things e.g. *house, table*; proper nouns eg names of people, places also months of the year and abstract nouns eg *sadness, intelligence* – emotions, feelings or ideas, things you can't see or touch.

Pronoun = most of the time, a pronoun is used to replace a noun. The following are all pronouns: *he, she, they, none, and which*.

Possessive pronoun = The possessive pronouns are the words *my, your, his, her, its, our and their*. They are used to indicate who owns something.

Fronted adverbials or adverbial starts = this is when you begin your sentence with an adverb eg *Cautiously, he turned the corner. Quickly, the runner won the race*. They are always followed by a comma.

Year 5

Word structure

Children in Year 5 will be taught how to convert *nouns* or *adjectives* into verbs by using *suffixes* e.g. 'ate', 'ise', 'ify'. They will use verb prefixes e.g. 'dis', 'mis', 'over' and 're'.

Sentence structure

Children will learn to use *relative clauses*. They will learn to use *modal verbs* to indicate degrees of possibility e.g. *might, should, could, must*.

Text structure

Children will learn about *cohesion* and how to use appropriate *conjunctions* e.g. *then, after that, firstly* to achieve this in a sentence. They will also link ideas across paragraphs using *adverbials* of time, place and number e.g. *later, nearby, secondly*.

Punctuation

Children will use brackets, dashes and commas to indicate *parenthesis*.

Terminology for pupils

- relative clause
- modal verb
- relative pronoun
- parenthesis
- bracket
- dash
- determiner
- cohesion

Glossary of terms

Adverbials = adverbs to indicate time, place or number e.g. *later, nearby, firstly*.

Relative clause = a type of subordinate clause starting with a relative pronoun.

Relative pronoun = used to introduce a relative clause – *who, whom, which, whose and that*.

Parenthesis = a word or phrase inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete without it, in writing usually marked off by brackets, dashes, or commas.

Modal verb = We use modal verbs to show if we believe something is certain, probable or possible (or not) eg *could, should, can, will*.

Determiner = Determiners are words like *the, an, my, some*. They all come at the beginning of noun phrases, and usually we cannot use more than one determiner in the same noun phrase.

Cohesion = this refers to linking sentences together logically, often with the use of conjunctions.

Year 6

Word structure

The children will learn the difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing.

Sentence structure

Children will use the *passive voice* to affect the presentation of information in a sentence eg *I* broke the chair versus *the* chair was broken.

They will use *expanded noun phrases* to convey complicated information concisely eg *the boy who jumped over the fence* is over there, or *the fact that it was raining* meant the end of sports day.

Finally, they will learn the difference between structures typical of informal and formal speech and writing.

Text structure

Children will link ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of *cohesive devices* such as *conjunctions*, repetition of a word, or the use of *adverbials*.

Punctuation

Children will learn when to use a semi-colon, colon and dash to indicate a stronger subdivision of a sentence than a comma.

They will use bullet points for lists.

They will use hyphens for certain words eg *man-eating shark*.

Terminology for pupils

- active and passive voice
- subject and object
- hyphen
- synonym
- colon
- semi-colon
- bullet points

Glossary of terms

Active voice = A sentence is written in **active voice** when the subject of the sentence performs the action in the sentence eg *I threw the ball. The girl was washing the dog.*

Passive voice = the passive voice is used when the focus is on the action. It is not important or not known, who or what is performing the action eg *The ball was thrown. Too much noise is being made.*

Subject = The **subject of a sentence** is the person, place, thing, or idea that is doing or being something.

Object = the object receives the action performed by the subject.

Synonym = words with similar meanings *e.g. shouted, called, replied, responded* are all synonyms for said.