

*A guide to
Grammar,
Punctuation and
Spelling
Part One*



Word Level

Nouns

Noun

Nouns name people, places and things.

Proper noun

A proper noun is used to name a particular person or place and some dates and times. They always begin with a capital letter.

Example: Jim, Tesco, Monday, April, Easter

Common noun

A common noun is used to name everyday things and kinds of people.

Example: car, tree, man, child, cat



Collective noun

A collective noun is used to name a group or collection of people or things.

Example: army, team, swarm

Abstract noun

An abstract noun is used to name feelings and things that cannot actually be seen, heard, smelt, touched or tasted.

Example: bravery, determination, honesty



Pronoun

A pronoun (I, me, he, she, herself, you, it, that, they, each, few, many, who, whoever, whose, someone, everybody, etc.) is a word that takes the place of a noun.

Example:

Joe saw Jill and he waved at her.

The pronouns he and her take the place of Joe and Jill, respectively.

Possessive pronoun

Possessive pronouns show ownership e.g. *my, our, their, his, your* etc.

Countable and uncountable nouns

Nouns can be either countable or uncountable.

Countable nouns (or count nouns) are those that refer to something that can be counted. They have both singular and plural forms (e.g. *cat/cats; woman/women; country/countries*). In the singular, they can be preceded by *a* or *an*. Most nouns come into this category.

A smaller number of nouns do not typically refer to things that can be counted and so they do not regularly have a plural form: these are known as uncountable nouns (or mass nouns). Examples include: *rain, flour, earth, wine, or wood*. Uncountable nouns can't be preceded by *a* or *an*. Many abstract nouns are typically uncountable, e.g. *happiness, truth, darkness, humour*.

Noun phrase (see page 10 for more information)

Often a noun phrase is just a noun or a pronoun e.g. *People like to have money.*

I am tired. It is getting late.

Adjective

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

Example: The *ginger*-cat sat on the *blue* mat behind the *glass* door.



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

Verb

A verb is a word used to describe an action, state or occurrence.

Example: She went to the shops.

Ben ate his food.

Adverb

Adverbs describe a verb. They often end in -ly.

Example: Ben ate his food *quickly*.

Preposition

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship of one thing to another. They often tell you where one thing is in relation to another, or the position that it is in. They are always attached to a noun or pronoun. E.g. on, under, before, after, into, past, down, across etc.

Example: The banana is *on* the table.

Fred goes running *before* breakfast.

Articles

There are just three articles- a, an and the.

A and an are the indefinite articles.

The is the definite article.

Determiners

Determiners are words which come at the beginning of the noun phrase. They tell us whether the noun phrase is specific or general. Determiners are either specific or general.

Specific determiners

The specific determiners are:

the definite article: *the*

possessives: *my, your, his, her, its, our, their, whose*

demonstratives: *this, that, these, those*

interrogatives: *which, whose*

We use a specific determiner when we believe the listener/reader knows exactly what we are referring to:

Can you pass me *the* salt please?

Look at *those* lovely flowers.

Thank you very much for *your* letter.

Whose coat is this?

General determiners

The general/indefinite determiners are:

a, an, any, another, other, what

When we are talking about things in general and the listener/reader does not know exactly what we are referring to, we can use an uncountable noun (we do not use uncount nouns in the plural e.g. *sheep, money*) or a plural noun with no determiner:

Milk is very good for you. (= uncount noun)

Health and education are very important. (= 2 uncount nouns)

Girls normally do better in school than boys. (= plural nouns with no determiner)

...or you can use a singular noun with the indefinite article *a* or *an*:

A woman was lifted to safety by a helicopter.

A man climbing nearby saw the accident.

We use the general determiner *any* with a singular noun or an uncount noun when we are talking about all of those people or things:

It's very easy. *Any* child can do it. (= All children can do it)

With a full licence you are allowed to drive *any* car.

I like beef, lamb, pork - *any* meat.

We use the general determiner *another* to talk about an additional person or thing:

Would you like *another* glass of water?

The plural form of *another* is *other*:

I spoke to John, Helen and a few *other* friends.

Superlatives

These are a type of adjective which describe the most extreme of a group of at least three people or objects. They occur by adding *-est* to a regular adjective. E.g. tallest, happiest, thinnest, largest etc.

Example: She is the *tallest* in her family.



Comparatives

The comparative is usually made by adding *-er* to the adjective. It compares two people or things e.g. harder, prettier, softer, tastier etc.

Example: Sam was *stronger* than his brother.



Synonyms

These are words that have the same or similar meaning to another word.

Example:

Synonyms for:

Bad- awful, terrible

Happy- joyful, content

Look- stare, gaze

Walk- stroll, wander

Antonyms

These are words with the opposite meaning to another word.

Example:

The antonym of up is down.

Tall- short

Narrow- wide

Prefix

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

Example:

Adding 'un' to happy - unhappy

Adding 'dis' to appear - disappear

Adding 're' to try - retry

Suffix

Suffixes are added to the end of an existing word to create a new word with a different meaning.

Example:

Adding 'ish' to child - childish

Adding 'able' to like - likeable

Root words

Root words are words that have a meaning of their own but can be added to, either with a prefix or a suffix, 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.

Example:

Hemi (meaning half, partial in Greek) = hemisphere (one half of the earth)

pent (meaning five in Greek) = pentagon (a shape with 5 angles and 5 sides)

Similes

A simile is a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind using the words 'like' or 'as'. They make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g. *as brave as a lion*).



Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech that identifies something as being the same as some unrelated thing, thus highlighting the similarities between the two (e.g. he is the apple of my eye).

Homophones

Words that sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings.

Example:

their, there, they're

their- belonging to someone

there- a positional place

they're- contraction of they are

to, too, two

to- concerning direction

too- as well as

two- the number

Singular

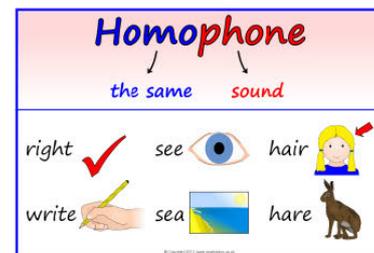
A word referring to one person or thing.

Example: shop, car, hat

Plural

The grammatical category in nouns, pronouns, and verbs that refers to more than one thing. Most nouns become plural with the addition of -s or -es.

Example: shops, cars, hats. Some nouns form the plural in other ways, as in children, feet, geese, and women.



Clauses and Phrases

Main clause

A main clause is a group of words in the sentence that make sense on their own and can be used as a complete sentence. All clauses have a verb

Example: *The green bird pecked the apple.*



Subordinate clause

A subordinate clause helps to give more meaning to the main clause. It cannot exist on its own as it is not a complete sentence. Subordinate clauses can be placed at the beginning of a sentence or within a main clause.

Example: *The bird, who had been building its nest, started to sing a tuneful song.*

Relative clause

A relative clause is one type of subordinate clause. It is connected to the main clause by words such as *which*, *who*, *whose*. In this case the subordinate clause has the same subject as the main clause.

Example: *The farmer took the key, which had been worn with age, and inserted it into the lock.*

Phrase

A phrase is not a whole sentence. It is a group of words which makes sense, does not contain a verb and acts as one unit.

Example: *a colourful rainbow*



Noun phrase

Often a noun phrase is just a noun or a pronoun e.g. *People like to have money.*

I am tired. It is getting late.

Or a determiner and a noun e.g. *Our friends have bought a house in the village.*

An expanded noun phrase can help to describe and give complicated information clearly.

Subordinate phrase

A subordinate phrase acts in the same way as a subordinate clause, but does not contain a verb.

Example: *Bill, a pupil at Lindfield Primary Academy, has been working hard this term.*

Prepositional phrase

A prepositional phrase is a preposition plus the noun that follows it. It can be used to begin a sentence, or in the middle.

Example: *I waited quietly behind the tree, ready to jump out.*

Above the clouds, the aeroplane soared like an eagle.

Sentence Level

Active Voice

In a sentence with an active verb, the subject is doing the action.

Example: The boy ate the sandwich. The boy (subject) is doing the action (eating).

Passive Voice

In a sentence with a passive verb, the subject is being acted on.

Example: The sandwich was eaten by the boy.

The sandwich (subject) is being acted on (being eaten).

Generally, by changing the order of an active sentence and using was (singular) or were (plural), the sentence will become passive.

I or Me?

When deciding if a sentence should support I or me, try taking out the other person and see if it still makes sense.

Example: Last night, Pam and I went to the cinema. This still makes sense when Pam is removed- I went to the cinema.

Grace came with Tom and me to see the film. This still makes sense when Tom is removed- Grace came with me to see the film.



Subject or object

The subject is the person or thing doing something, and the object is having something done to it.

Tenses

The verb in a sentence shows the tense. The tense shows when the action takes place.

Present

The present tense is used to describe something that is happening now. It is usually shown by having no ending, or by adding s.

Example: Dad *climbs* the ladder.

Past

The past tense is used to describe something that has happened earlier. The past tense is normally shown by adding -ed to the root verb.

Example: Dad *climbed* the ladder.

Watch out for the irregular verbs that don't follow the normal rules. Here are just a few!

bring- brought

buy- bought

catch- caught

eat- ate

find- found

go- went

take- took

teach- taught

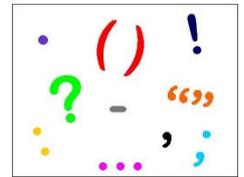
throw- threw

wear- wore

have- had

run- ran

Punctuation



Capital letter

Used to denote the beginning of a sentence or a proper noun (names of particular places, people, dates and things).

Example: Joel has karate training every Monday afternoon at Wells Primary School.
In January, the children will be visiting London Zoo.

Full stop

Placed at the end of a sentence that is not a question or statement.

Example:

Terry Pratchett's latest book is not yet out in paperback.

I asked her whether she could tell me the way to Brighton.

Question mark

Indicates a question/disbelief.

Example:

Who else will be there?

Is this really Thomas?

Exclamation mark

Indicates an interjection, surprise or strong emotion.

Example:

My day at school was fantastic!

I've just about had enough!

Commas in a list

Used between a list of three or more words to replace the word *and* for all but the last instance.

Example: Jenny's favourite subjects are maths, literacy and art.

Joe, Evan and Michael were chosen to sing at the service.

Commas to mark phrases or clauses

To indicate contrast:

The snake was brown, not green, and is quite small.

Where the phrase (embedded clause) could be in brackets:

The recipe, which we hadn't tried before, is very easy to follow.

Where the phrase adds relevant information:

Mr Hardy, aged 68, ran his first marathon five years ago.

To mark a subordinate clause:

If at first you don't succeed, try again.

Though the snake was small, I still feared for my life.

Introductory or opening phrases:

In general, sixty-eight is quite old to run a marathon.

On the whole, snakes only attack when riled.

Ellipsis

Used to indicate a pause in speech or at the very end of a sentence so that words trail off into silence (this helps to create suspense).

A pause in speech:

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

At the end of a sentence to create suspense:

Mr Daily gritted his teeth, gripped the scalpel tightly in his right hand and slowly advanced...

Brackets (also known as parenthesis)

Used for additional information or explanation.

Example:

To clarify information:

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

For asides and comments:

The bear was pink (I kid you not).

To give extra details:

His first book (The Colour of Magic) was written in 1989.

Dash

Used to show interruption (often in dialogue) or to show repetition.

"This girl is my-"

"Sister," interrupted Miles, "She looks just like you."

To show repetition:

"You-you monster!" cried the frightened woman.

Colons

- a) Used before a list, summary or quote
- b) Used to complete a statement or fact

Before a list:

I could only find three of the ingredients: sugar, flour and coconut.

Before a summary:

To summarise: we found the camp, set up our tent, and then the bears attacked.

Before a line of speech:

Tom asked: "May I have another cupcake?"

Before a statement of fact:

There are only three kinds of people: the good, the bad and the ugly.

Semi-colons

Used in place of a connective (conjunction). To show thoughts on either side of it are balanced and connected. It can also separate words or items within a list.

To link two separate sentences that are closely related:

The children came home today; they had been away for a week.

In a list:

Star Trek, created by Gene Roddenberry; Babylon 5, by JMS; Buffy, by Joss Whedon; and Farscape, from the Henson Company.

Inverted commas

Punctuation marks used in pairs (" ") to indicate:

- Quotes
- Direct speech
- Words that are defined, that follow certain phrases or that have special meaning

Example:

For direct speech:

Janet asked, "Why can't we go today?"

For quotes:

The man claimed that he was "shocked to hear the news."

For words that are defined, that follow certain phrases or that have special meaning:

'Buch' is German for book.

The book was signed 'Terry Pratchett'.

The 'free gift' actually cost us forty pounds.

Apostrophes

Used to show that letters have been left out (contractions/ omissions) or to show possession (i.e. 'belonging to')

Example:

Contractions:

is not = isn't

could not = couldn't

it's = it is

Showing possession:

With nouns (plural and singular) not ending in an s add 's:

the girl's jacket, the children's books

With plural nouns ending in an s, add only the apostrophe:

the guards' duties, the Jones' house

With singular nouns ending in an s, you can add either 's or an apostrophe alone:
the witness's lie or the witness' lie (be consistent).

Remember:

Its for possession does not require an apostrophe.

Example-

The tree had lost all of *its* leaves.

Useful Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/spelling&grammar/

www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/7-11-years/spelling-and-grammar

Spelling list for Years 3 and 4

Word list – years 3 and 4

accident(ally)	early	knowledge	purpose
actual(ly)	earth	learn	quarter
address	eight/eighth	length	question
answer	enough	library	recent
appear	exercise	material	regular
arrive	experience	medicine	reign
believe	experiment	mention	remember
bicycle	extreme	minute	sentence
breath	famous	natural	separate
breathe	favourite	naughty	special
build	February	notice	straight
busy/business	forward(s)	occasion(ally)	strange
calendar	fruit	often	strength
caught	grammar	opposite	suppose
centre	group	ordinary	surprise
century	guard	particular	therefore
certain	guide	peculiar	though/although
circle	heard	perhaps	thought
complete	heart	popular	through
consider	height	position	various
continue	history	possess(ion)	weight
decide	imagine	possible	woman/women
describe	increase	potatoes	
different	important	pressure	
difficult	interest	probably	
disappear	island	promise	
