



Grammar Glossary for Parents

Please find below a glossary of the terminology that children are expected to know and use by the end of Key Stage 2.

Some of this you may already feel confident with, but some of it does get rather technical, so please don't worry. This is a guide to help you support your child at home.

Term	Explanation	Example	Year Group
Active Voice	When the subject of the verb carries out an action.	David Beckham scored the penalty.	Y6
Adjective	<p>A 'describing word.' The surest way to identify adjectives is by the ways they can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before a noun, to make noun's meaning more specific. • After the verb to be, as its complement. <p>Adjectives cannot be modified by other adjectives. This distinguishes them from nouns, which can.</p>	<p>The pupils did some really <u>excellent</u> work. [adjective used before a noun, to modify it]</p> <p>Their work was <u>excellent</u>. [adjective used after the verb to be, as its complement]</p>	Y2-6
Adverb	Adverbs are sometimes said to describe the manner or time. This often true, but it doesn't help distinguish adverbs from other word classes. The surest way to identify adverbs is by the ways they can be used: they can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a whole clause.	<p>Joshua <u>soon</u> starting snoring <u>loudly</u>. [adverbs modifying the verb started and snoring]</p> <p>That match was <u>really</u> exciting! [adverb modifying the adjective exciting]</p> <p>We don't get to play games <u>very</u> often. [adverb modifying the other adverb, often]</p> <p><u>Fortunately</u>, it didn't rain. [adverb modifying the whole clause 'it didn't rain' by commenting on it]</p>	Y2-6
Ambiguity	Anything that is said to be ambiguous is open to more than one interpretation. Statements of headlines or notices can be ambiguous.	<p>Police shot man with knife.</p> <p>Baby changing room.</p>	Y5,6
Antonyms	Words which mean the opposite to each other.	<p>The antonym of up is down. The antonym of tall is short. The antonym of add is subtract.</p>	Y3-6
Apostrophe	<p>Apostrophes have two completely different uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing the place of missing letters (omission) • Marking possession 	<p>We're going out and we'll get something to eat. [showing missing letters] Hannah's mother went to town in Justin's car. [marking possession]</p>	Yr2-6

Brackets (Parenthesis)	Punctuation used for additional information or explanation.	Jamie's bike was red (bright red) with a yellow stripe. His first book (The Colour Of Magic) was written in 1989.	Y5,6
Capital Letter	A letter of the alphabet that usually differs from its corresponding lowercase letter in form and height. Used as the initial letter of a proper name, the pronoun I and in the first word of a sentence.	After school Ted plays football in Royston.	Y1-6
Clauses	A clause is a group of words which does contain a verb; it is part of a sentence. There are two kinds of clauses: 1. A main clause is a group of words that can be used as a complete sentence. All clauses have a verb. 2. 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.	Main clause My sister is older than me. Subordinate clause My sister is older than me <i>and she is very annoying.</i>	Yr2-6
Cohesion	A text has cohesion if it is clear how the meanings of its parts fit together. Various cohesion devices can be used such as the determiner 'the' which refers back to something already mentioned.	Julia's dad bought her a football. The football was expensive.	Y5,6
Colon :	Punctuation which indicates that an example, a list, or a more detailed explanation follows.	On the school trip, you will need to bring: a waterproof coat, wellies, warm jumpers and any medication. Marvin was stunned: he had never seen a firework display like it!	Y6
Comma ,	A punctuation mark indicating a pause between parts of a sentence or separating items in a list. In KS1, we focus on commas to separate items in a list.	Tony went to the supermarket and bought tomatoes, onions, mushrooms and potatoes. [note no comma before and]	Y2-6
Command	See sentence. It is usually written in the imperative and the verb is the first word in the sentence.	Take these seeds away!	Yr2-6

Compound	A compound word contains at least two root words in its make-up. Compounding is very important in English.	Blackbird, blow-dry, inkjet, daydream, whiteboard, superman	Yr1-6
Consonant	Letters that are not vowels	b,c,d,f,g,h,j,k,l,m,n,p,q,r,s,t,v,w,x,y,z	Y2-6
Conjunction/ Connective	A conjunction links two words or phrases together. There are two main types of conjunctions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-ordinating conjunctions, link two words or phrases together as an equal pair. 2. Subordinating conjunctions introduce a subordinate clause. 	James bought a bat <u>and</u> ball. [links the words bat and ball as an equal pair] Kylie is young <u>but</u> she can kick the ball hard. [links two clauses as an equal pair] Everyone watches <u>when</u> Joe does back-flips. [introduces a subordinate clause]	Y2-6
Co-ordination	Words or phrases are co-ordinated if they are linked as an equal pair by a co-ordinating conjunction. In the examples given, the co-ordinated elements are shown in bold, and the conjunction is underlined.	Susan <u>and</u> Amra met in a café. [links the words Susan and Amra as an equal pair] Susan got a bus <u>but</u> Amra walked. [links two clauses as an equal pair]	Y3-6
Dash -	Punctuation which indicates a stronger pause than a comma. Can be used like a comma or bracket to add parenthesis.	The woman – only 25 years old – was the first to win a gold medal for Britain.	Y5,6
Determiner	Determiners are the most frequently used words in English. They are used with nouns to give more information about the noun – who it belongs to, how many, or sometimes to ask questions.	This car is yours. What colour do you prefer? Some new cars.	Y3-6
Dialogue	A conversation between two or more people.	"Who's there?" asked Marvin. "Doctor," replied the mysterious man behind the door. "Doctor Who?" Marvin enquired. "Exactly..." came the ominous response.	Y3-6
Direct Speech " "	When you write down the words that have been spoken and use speech marks.	"Who's there?" said Marvin.	Y3-6

Ellipsis ...	Punctuation used to show a pause in someone's speech or thoughts, and to build tension or show that a sentence is not finished.	"The sight was awesome... truly amazing."	Y6
Exclamation	See 'Sentence'		Y1-6
Exclamation Mark !	A punctuation mark indicating strong feelings, something unusual or high volume (shouting)	Stop that now!	Yr1-6
First Person	When the writer speaks about himself or herself. Only I/we/me/us are used as pronouns when writing in the first person.	My family all went to the park. We all loved it, me especially. I always love the slide.	Y3-6
Fronted Adverbial Phrase	A fronted adverbial phrase goes at the beginning of a sentence. It describes the verb in the sentence. It describes where, when and how.	As soon as the train arrived at the station, Tom rushed through the carriage door. [describing where] After my tooth fell out, I went to the dentist to get a false one! [describing when]	Y3-6
Full Stop .	A punctuation mark used at the end of a sentence or an abbreviation.	English grammar has many rules and exceptions.	Y1-6
Future Tense	Writing about what will happen. We usually place the word will in front of verbs when writing in the future tense.	Next week, Emma will be going to secondary school. She will have to wear a blazer and a tie!	Y2-6
Homophones	Words which sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings.	Their, there, they're I, eye Our, are To, too, two	Y2-6
Hyphen	Punctuation which joins one or more words or adds a prefix to a word.	Happy-go-lucky Re-emphasise	Y6
Imperative Verbs	Imperative verbs are verbs that create an imperative sentence (e.g. a sentence that give an order or command). When reading an imperative sentence, it will always sound like the speaker is bossing someone around.	Brush your teeth!	Y2-6
Inverted Commas " "	Also known as speech marks, show the actual words spoken by a character.	Martha said, "I like cats."	Y3-6

Letter	A character representing one or more of the sounds used in speech. Written words are made up of letters.	In KS1, children have been able to identify letters from <i>phonemes</i> or sounds. The word 'cat' has three letters and three phonemes. The word 'catch' has five letters and three phonemes. The word caught has six letters and three phonemes.	Y1-6
Metaphors	Describing different things by saying one thing is something it is not.	Wow! Brilliant answers, you are on fire! Thunderous silence	Y3-6
Modal Verbs	Modal verbs are used to change the meaning of other verbs.	Will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must and ought	Y5,6
Noun	Nouns are sometimes called 'naming words' because they name people, places or things. A noun can almost always be used after determiners, Nouns may be classified as common (e.g. boy, day) or proper (e.g. Ivan, Monday).	Our <u>dog</u> bit the <u>burglar</u> ! The <u>boy</u> ran across the <u>zebra-crossing</u> to get to <u>school</u> . These are common nouns. <u>Harry</u> loves <u>Fridays</u> ! <u>Sarah's</u> birthday is in <u>August</u> . These are proper nouns.	Y2-6
Noun Phrase	A noun phrase is a small group of words which contains a noun but doesn't contain a verb. A noun phrase usually contains a noun plus other word to describe it.	He knows <u>the back streets</u> . I've met <u>the last remaining chief</u> . [nouns are in bold, the noun phrases are underlined]	Y2-6
Object	An object is normally a noun or pronoun that comes straight after the verb and shows what the verb is acting upon.	Year 2 designed puppets .	Y6
Paragraph	'chunks' of related thoughts or ideas. They make reading easier to understand. A new paragraph usually means a change of topic, idea, time, place or argument.		Y3-6
Parenthesis	A remark that is added to a sentence, often to provide an explanation or extra information, that is separated from the main part of the sentence by commas, brackets or dashes.	My sister – who lives in Australia – is coming to visit next summer.	Y5,6

Passive Voice	When a subject or verb has an action done to them. Often, the subject is not even mentioned.	A window was smashed.	Y6
Personification	Giving human qualities to animals or objects.	The sun smiled on the world. The trees danced in the wind.	Y3-6
Plural	A plural noun normally has a suffix -s or -es and means 'more than one'.	Three bikes Some nouns ending in -o are made into plural by adding -es: two mangoes 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 pupp <i>ies</i> Most nouns ending in -f or -fe change to -ves in the plural. Six cal <i>ves</i> There are a few nouns with different morphology in the plural Mouse – mice Formula – formulae Nouns with the same plural and singular form: deer, fish, sheep, moose	Y1-6 The rules are taught by the end of KS1.
Prefix	A prefix is added at the beginning of a word in order to turn it into another word and meaning.	O vertake U nappealing D isappear M isread	Yr1-6
Preposition	Words which show the relationship between two things. They often tell you where one thing is as opposed to another.	about, above, across, after, against, along, amid, amidst, among, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, from, in, into, near, off, on, over, round, since, till, towards, under, until, up, upon, with, within, without. Tom jumped over the cat. The monkey is in the tree.	Y3-6
Pronoun	Words used to avoid repeating a noun.	I, you, me, he, she, it, you, him, her, mine, your, his, her(s), its, we, they, us, them, our(s), your(s), their(s)	Y3-6
Punctuation ? ! , . ` " " -	Punctuation includes any conventional features of writing other than spelling and general layout. One important role of punctuation is to indicate sentence boundaries.		Y1-6

Question	See 'sentence'		Y1-6
Question Mark ?	A punctuation mark indicating a question.	How do we know who to call?	Y1-6
Relative Clause	A relative clause is a special type of subordinate clause that modifies a noun. It often does this by using a relative pronoun such as <i>who</i> or <i>that</i> to refer to that noun.	That's the boy who lives near school. The prize that I won was a book. [relative pronoun in bold, relative clause is underlined]	Y5,6
Second Person	When the writer speaks to the reader. The word 'you' is often placed before verbs.	You are reading a SPAG Glossary and I hope you are finding it useful.	Y3-6
Semi Colon ;	Punctuation used in place of a connective. It separates two complete sentences which are closely related and can be used in lists or phrases.	The children came home today; they had been away for a week.	Y6
Sentence	A sentence is a group of words which are grammatically connected to each other but not to any words outside the sentence. The form of a sentence's main clause shows whether it being used as a statement, a question, a command or an exclamation. A sentence may consist of a single clause or it may contain several clauses held together by subordination or co-ordination.	You are my friend. [statement] Are you my friend? [questions] Be my friend! [command] What a good friend you are! [exclamation]	Y1-6
Simile	Compares two or more things, usually the words 'like' or 'as'.	The water was as hot as lava. He was as scared as a mouse. Bob slept like a log.	Y2-6
Singular	A word or form denoting or referring to just one person or thing.	I had one dress but Jane gave me another so now I have two dresses.	Yr1-6
Statement	See 'sentence'		Yr1-6
Subject	The subject of a verb is normally the noun, the noun phrase or pronoun.	The children will study the animals.	Y6

Subordination	<p>A subordinate word or phrase tells us more about the meaning of the word it is subordinate to.</p> <p>Subordination can be thought of as an unequal relationship between a subordinate word and a main word.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adjective is subordinate to the noun it modifies • Subjects and objects are subordinate to their verbs. 	<p>big dogs [big is subordinate to dogs]</p> <p>We can watch TV when we've finished. [when we've finished is subordinate to watch]</p>	Y3-6
Suffix	<p>A suffix is an 'ending' used at the end of one word to turn it into another word. Suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word.</p>	<p>success – successful teach – teacher small – smallest</p>	Y1-Y6
Synonym	<p>Words which have the same, or nearly the same meaning as each other.</p>	<p>Bad – awful, terrible, horrible Happy – content, joyful, pleased Look – watch, stare, gaze Walk – stroll, crawl, tread</p>	Y3-6
Tense (past, present)	<p>Verbs in the past tense are commonly used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the past • Talk about imagined situations • Make a request sound more polite. <p>Most verbs take a suffix -ed to form their past tense, but many commonly used verbs are irregular.</p> <p>Verbs in the present tense are commonly used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the present • Talk about an event in the future <p>They may take a suffix -s (depending on the subject)</p>	<p>Antonio <u>went</u> on holiday to Brazil. [an event in the past]</p> <p>I wish I had a puppy. [imagined situation]</p> <p>I was hoping you were able to help tomorrow. [makes an implied request to sound polite]</p> <p>She <u>can</u> swim. [describe a state that is true now]</p> <p>Her friends <u>are</u> coming to join her. [describes a plan in progress now]</p>	Y2-6
Third Person	<p>When the writer speaks about someone or something else. The pronouns he/she/it/they/him/her/it/them are used when writing in the third person.</p>	<p>He walked to the shops because he wanted to taste the new chocolate bar.</p>	Y3-6

Verb	<p>Verbs are sometimes called 'doing words' because many verbs name an action that someone does; while this can be a way to recognise verbs, many verbs name states or feelings rather actions.</p> <p>Verbs have a tense, either present or past and can be made into the future simple tense by using will + verb.</p>	<p>He <u>lives</u> in Birmingham. [present tense]</p> <p>The teacher <u>wrote</u> a song for the class. [past tense]</p> <p>He <u>likes</u> chocolate. [present tense; not an action]</p> <p>He <u>knew</u> my father. [past tense; not an action]</p> <p>He <u>will go</u> the zoo on Saturday. [future tense; will + verb]</p>	Y2-6
Word	<p>A word is a unit of grammar: it can be selected and moved around relatively independently, but cannot easily be split. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word spaces (finger spaces when learning)</p>		Y1-6
Vowel	The letters a,e,i,o,u		Y2-6