

Grammar and punctuation

The grammar of our first language is learnt naturally and implicitly through interactions with other speakers and from reading. Explicit knowledge of grammar is, however, very important, as it gives us more conscious control and choice in our language. Building this knowledge is best achieved through a focus on grammar within the teaching of reading, writing and speaking. Once pupils have been introduced to a grammatical concept, they should be encouraged to apply their learning by using that grammar in their own speech and writing and noting where it is used in the speech and writing of others. Young pupils, in particular, use more complex language in speech than in writing, and teachers should build on this, aiming for a smooth transition to sophisticated writing.

The table below focuses on Standard English and should be read in conjunction with the programme of study as it sets out statutory requirements. The table shows when concepts should be introduced first, not necessarily when they should be completely understood. It is very important, therefore, that the content in earlier years be revisited in subsequent years to consolidate knowledge and build on pupils' understanding. Teachers should also go beyond the content set out here if they feel it is appropriate.

The grammatical terms that pupils should learn are set out in the final column. They should learn to recognise and use the terminology through discussion and practice. All terms in **bold** should be understood with the meanings set out in the glossary.

Grammar Years 1 to 6

Year	Word structure	Sentence structure	Text structure	Punctuation	Terminology for pupils
1	<p>Regular plural noun suffixes –s or –es (e.g. <i>dog, dogs; wish, wishes</i>)</p> <p>Suffixes that can be added to verbs (e.g. <i>helping, helped, helper</i>)</p> <p>How the prefix un– changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives (negation, e.g. <i>unkind</i>, or undoing, e.g. <i>untie the boat</i>)</p>	<p>How words can combine to make sentences</p> <p>Joining words and joining sentences using <i>and</i></p>	<p>Sequencing sentences to form short narratives</p>	<p>Separation of words with spaces</p> <p>Introduction to capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences</p> <p>Capital letters for names and for the personal pronoun I</p>	<p>word, sentence, letter, capital letter, full stop, punctuation, singular, plural, question mark, exclamation mark</p>
2	<p>Formation of nouns using suffixes such as –ness, –er</p> <p>Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as –ful, –less (A fuller list of suffixes can be found in the Year 2 spelling appendix.)</p> <p>Use of the suffixes –er and –est to form comparisons of adjectives and adverbs</p>	<p>Subordination (using <i>when, if, that, or because</i>) and co-ordination (using <i>or, and, or but</i>)</p> <p>Expanded noun phrases for description and specification (e.g. <i>the blue butterfly, plain flour, the man in the moon</i>)</p> <p>Sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation, command</p>	<p>Correct choice and consistent use of present tense and past tense throughout writing</p> <p>Use of the continuous form of verbs in the present and past tense to mark actions in progress (e.g. <i>she is drumming, he was shouting</i>)</p>	<p>Use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences</p> <p>Commas to separate items in a list</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark contracted forms in spelling</p>	<p>verb, tense (past, present), adjective, noun, suffix, apostrophe, comma</p>
3	<p>Formation of nouns using a range of prefixes, such as <i>super–, anti–, auto–</i></p> <p>Use of the determiners a or an according to whether the next word begins with a consonant or a vowel (e.g. <i>a rock, an open box</i>)</p> <p>Word families based on</p>	<p>Expressing time and cause using conjunctions (e.g. <i>when, so, before, after, while, because</i>), adverbs (e.g. <i>then, next, soon, therefore</i>, or prepositions (e.g. <i>before, after, during, in, because of</i>)</p>	<p>Introduction to paragraphs as a way to group related material</p> <p>Headings and sub-headings to aid presentation</p> <p>Use of the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause (e.g. <i>I have written it down so we</i></p>	<p>Introduction to inverted commas to punctuate direct speech</p>	<p>word family, conjunction, adverb, preposition, direct speech, inverted commas (or “speech marks”), prefix, consonant, vowel, consonant letter, vowel letter, clause, subordinate clause</p>

Year	Word structure	Sentence structure	Text structure	Punctuation	Terminology for pupils
	common words		<i>can check what he said.)</i>		
4	<p>The grammatical difference between plural and possessive -s</p> <p>Standard English forms for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms (e.g. <i>we were</i> instead of <i>we was</i>, or <i>I did</i> instead of <i>I done</i>)</p>	<p>Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun within a sentence to avoid ambiguity and repetition</p> <p>Fronted adverbials (e.g. <i>Later that day, I heard the bad news.</i>)</p>	<p>Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme</p> <p>Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun across sentences to aid cohesion and avoid repetition</p>	<p>Use of inverted commas to punctuate direct speech</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark singular and plural possession (e.g. <i>the girl's name, the boys' boots</i>)</p> <p>Use of commas after fronted adverbials</p>	<p>pronoun, possessive pronoun, adverbial</p>
5	<p>Converting nouns or adjectives into verbs using suffixes (e.g. <i>-ate; -ise; -ify</i>)</p> <p>Verb prefixes (e.g. <i>dis-, de-, mis-, over- and re-</i>)</p>	<p>Relative clauses beginning with <i>who, which, where, why, whose, that</i>, or an omitted relative pronoun</p> <p>Indicating degrees of possibility using modal verbs (e.g. <i>might, should, will, must</i>) or adverbs (e.g. <i>perhaps, surely</i>)</p>	<p>Devices to build cohesion within a paragraph (e.g. <i>then, after that, this, firstly</i>)</p> <p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time (e.g. <i>later</i>), place (e.g. <i>nearby</i>) and number (e.g. <i>secondly</i>)</p>	<p>Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis</p> <p>Use of commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity</p>	<p>relative clause, modal verb, relative pronoun, parenthesis, bracket, dash, determiner, cohesion, ambiguity</p>

Year	Word structure	Sentence structure	Text structure	Punctuation	Terminology for pupils
6	The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing (e.g. <i>said</i> versus <i>reported, alleged, or claimed</i> in formal speech or writing)	<p>Use of the passive voice to affect the presentation of information in a sentence (e.g. <i>I broke the window in the greenhouse</i> versus <i>The window in the greenhouse was broken</i>)</p> <p>Expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely (e.g. <i>the boy that jumped over the fence is over there</i>, or <i>the fact that it was raining meant the end of sports day</i>)</p> <p>The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing (such as the use of question tags, e.g. <i>He's your friend, isn't he?</i>, or the use of the subjunctive in some very formal writing and speech)</p>	<p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices: semantic cohesion (e.g. repetition of a word or phrase), grammatical connections (e.g. the use of adverbials such as <i>on the other hand, in contrast, or as a consequence</i>), and ellipsis</p> <p>Layout devices, such as headings, sub-headings, columns, bullets, or tables, to structure text</p>	<p>Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses (e.g. <i>It's raining; I'm fed up.</i>)</p> <p>Use of the colon to introduce a list</p> <p>Punctuation of bullet points to list information</p> <p>How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity (e.g. <i>man eating shark</i> versus <i>man-eating shark</i>, or <i>recover</i> versus <i>re-cover</i>)</p>	active and passive voice, subject and object, hyphen, colon, semi-colon, bullet points, synonym and antonym

