

# Glossary

This glossary lists and explains terms used in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching* and associated training materials. It is intended for teachers. Examples have been given where possible. Historical or etymological information has been included where this may be useful.

This glossary is also located on The Standards Site: <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy/glossary/>

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## abbreviation

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word or group of words. For example:

*Co. (Company)*  
*approx. (approximately)*  
*PR (public relations)*  
*PTO (Please turn over)*

Some common abbreviations are of Latin terms:

*etc (et cetera = and so on)*  
*eg (exempli gratia = for example)*  
*NB (nota bene = note especially)*  
*ie (id est = that is)*

Names of organisations are often abbreviated using the initial letters of each word. For example:

*the EU (European Union)*  
*the NHS (National Health Service)*  
*IBM (International Business Machines)*

Some such abbreviations (for example, *NATO*, *FIFA* and *UNESCO*) are **acronyms**.

Some words are abbreviated so that only a part of the original word is used. Examples are:

*phone (telephone)*  
*fridge (refrigerator)*  
*bus (omnibus)*  
*exam (examination).*

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## accent

features of pronunciation which vary according to the speaker's regional and social origin. All oral language, including standard English, is spoken with an accent. The term **accent** refers to pronunciation only.

see also **dialect**

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## acronym

An acronym is an **abbreviation** which is made up of the initial letters of a group of words, and is pronounced as a single word. For example:

*laser* (*light amplification by the stimulated emission of radiation*)

*Aids* (*Acquired immune deficiency syndrome*)

*NATO* (*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*)

*RAM* (*Random Access Memory*)

Acronyms are to be contrasted with abbreviations in which the separate letters are pronounced:

*USA* (pronounced as U-S-A)

*POW* (P-O-W)

*EMI* (E-M-I)

### acrostic

a poetic form which is organised by the initial letters of a key word, either at the beginning of lines, or with lines arranged around them:

<b>W</b> histling wildly	Bl <b>o</b> wing
<b>I</b> n a	ra <b>i</b> n
<b>N</b> orthern	rou <b>n</b> d
<b>D</b> irection	an <b>d</b> round.

### active and passive

Many verbs can be active or passive. For example, *bite*:

*The dog bit Ben.* (active)

*Ben was bitten by the dog.* (passive)

In the active sentence, the subject (*the dog*) performs the action. In the passive sentence, the subject (*Ben*) is on the receiving end of the action. The two sentences give similar information, but there is a difference in focus. The first is about what the dog did; the second is about what happened to Ben.

All passive forms are made up of the verb *be* + past **participle**:

active	<i>Somebody <u>saw</u> you.</i>
	<i>We must <u>find</u> them.</i>
	<i>I <u>have repaired</u> it.</i>
passive	<i>You <u>were seen</u>.</i>
	<i>They must <u>be found</u>.</i>
	<i>It <u>has been repaired</u>.</i>

In a passive sentence, the 'doer' (or agent) may be identified using *by* ...:

*Ben was bitten by the dog.*

But very often, in passive sentences, the agent is unknown or insignificant, and therefore not identified:

*The computer has been repaired.*

Passive forms are common in impersonal, formal styles. For example:

*It was agreed that ... (compare *We agreed that ...*).*

*Application forms may be obtained from the address below.*

**adjective**

An adjective is a word that describes somebody or something. *Old, white, busy, careful* and *horrible* are all adjectives. Adjectives either come before a noun, or after verbs such as *be, get, seem, look* (linking verbs):

*a busy day*      *I'm busy*  
*nice shoes*      *those shoes look nice*

Adjectives (and adverbs) can have comparative and superlative forms. The comparative form is adjective + *-er* (for one-syllable adjectives, and some two-syllable) or *more* + adjective (for adjectives of two or more syllables):

*old - older*  
*hot - hotter*  
*easy - easier*  
*dangerous - more dangerous*

The corresponding superlative forms are *-est* or *most* ...:

*small - smallest*  
*big - biggest*  
*funny - funniest*  
*important - most important*

**adverb**

Adverbs give extra meaning to a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a whole sentence:

*I really enjoyed the party.*      (adverb + verb)  
*She's really nice.*      (adverb + adjective)  
*He works really slowly.*      (adverb + adverb)  
*Really, he should do better.*      (adverb + sentence)

Many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to an adjective, for example *quickly, dangerously, nicely*, but there are many adverbs which do not end in *-ly*. Note too that some *-ly* words are adjectives, not adverbs (eg *lovely, silly, friendly*).

In many cases, adverbs tell us:

how (manner)	<i>slowly, happily, dangerously, carefully</i>
where (place)	<i>here, there, away, home, outside</i>
when (time)	<i>now, yesterday, later, soon</i>
how often (frequency)	<i>often, never, regularly</i>

Other adverbs show

degree of intensity:  
*very slow(ly) fairly dangerous(ly) really good/well*

the attitude of the speaker to what he or she is saying:  
*perhaps obviously fortunately*

connections in meaning between sentences (see **connective**):  
*however furthermore finally*

An **adverbial phrase** is a group of words that functions in the same way as a single adverb. For example: *by car, to school, last week, three times a day, first of all, of course*:

*They left yesterday.* (adverb)

*They left a few days ago.*

(adverbial phrase)

*She looked at me strangely.* (adverb)

*She looked at me in a strange way.*

(adverbial phrase)

Similarly, an **adverbial clause** functions in the same way as an adverb. For example:

*It was raining yesterday.* (adverb)

*It was raining when we went out.* (adverbial clause).

## affix

a **morpheme** which is not in itself a word, but is attached to a word. An affix can be a **prefix** (*intolerant, dislike*) or a **suffix** (*kindness, playing*).

## agreement (or concord)

In some cases the form of a verb changes according to its subject (so the verb and subject 'agree').

This happens with the verb *be*:

*I am/he is/they are*

*I was/you were*

and the third person singular (*he/she/it*) of the present tense:

*I like/she likes*

*I don't/he doesn't*

Note that singular collective **nouns** (eg *team, family, government*) can take a singular or plural verb form. For example:

*The team (= it) is playing well.*

*The team (= they) are playing well.*

There are a few cases where a **determiner** must agree with a noun according to whether it is singular or plural. For example:

*this house*

*much traffic*

*these houses*

*many cars*

## alliteration

a phrase where adjacent or closely connected words begin with the same phoneme: *one wet wellington; free phone; several silent, slithering snakes*.

## ambiguity

a phrase or statement which has more than one possible interpretation. This sometimes arises from unclear grammatical relationships. For example, in the phrase: '*police shot man with knife*', it is not specified whether the man had the knife or the police used the knife to shoot the man. Both interpretations are possible, although only one is logical. In poetry, ambiguity may extend meanings beyond the literal.

The sentence: *'Walking dogs can be fun'* has two possible interpretations: *'it is fun to take dogs for walks'* or *'dogs which go walking are fun'*.

Ambiguity is often a source of humour. Ambiguity may be accidental or deliberate.

### analogy

perception of similarity between two things; relating something known to something new; in spelling, using known spellings to spell unknown words: *night-knight-right-sight-light-fright*; in reading, using knowledge of words to attempt previously unseen words.

Emphasis on analogy encourages learners to generalise existing knowledge to new situations.

In their learning of grammar, pupils often apply **affixes** incorrectly by analogy: *goed, comed, mouses*. Analogy may also be used in literature to draw a parallel between two situations, for example using animal behaviour to draw attention to human behaviour.

### anecdote

a brief written or spoken account of an amusing incident, often used to illustrate a point.

### antonym

a word with a meaning opposite to another: *hot - cold, light - dark, light - heavy*. A word may have more than one word as an antonym: *cold - hot/warm; big - small/tiny/little/titchy*.

### apostrophe (')

An apostrophe is a punctuation mark used to indicate either omitted letters or possession.

#### omitted letters

We use an apostrophe for the omitted letter(s) when a verb is contracted (= shortened). For example:

<i>I'm (I am)</i>	<i>who's (who is/has)</i>
<i>they've (they have)</i>	<i>he'd (he had/would)</i>
<i>we're (we are)</i>	<i>it's (it is/has)</i>
<i>would've (would have)</i>	<i>she'll (she will)</i>

In contracted negative forms, *not* is contracted to *n't* and joined to the verb: *isn't, didn't, couldn't* etc.

In formal written style, it is more usual to use the full form.

There are a few other cases where an apostrophe is used to indicate letters that are in some sense 'omitted' in words other than verbs, eg *let's (= let us), o'clock (= of the clock)*.

Note the difference between *its* (= 'belonging to it') and *it's* (= 'it is' or 'it has'):

*The company is to close one of its factories.* (no apostrophe)  
*The factory employs 800 people. It's (= it is) the largest factory in the town.* (apostrophe necessary)

## possession

We use an apostrophe + s for the possessive form :

*my mother's car*  
*Joe and Fiona's house*  
*the cat's tail*  
*James's ambition*  
*a week's holiday*

With a plural 'possessor' already ending in s (eg *parents*), an apostrophe is added to the end of the word:

*my parents' car*  
*the girls' toilets*

But irregular plurals (eg *men*, *children*) take an apostrophe + s:

*children's clothes*

The regular plural form (-s) is often confused with possessive -'s:

*I bought some apples. (not *apple's*)*

Note that the possessive words *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs*, and *its* are not written with an apostrophe.

## appendix

a section added to a document which offers non-essential or illustrative information.

## article

*A*, *an* and *the* are articles. *A* (*an* before a vowel sound) is the indefinite article; *the* is the definite article. Articles are a type of **determiner**.

## ascender

In written or typed script, many letters have the same height: *a*, *c*, *e*, *m*, *n*, *o*, *r*, *s*, *u*, *v*, *w*, *x*, *z*, (although in some scripts, *z* has a **descender**). Some letters have parts which extend beyond this: *b*, *d*, *f*, *h*, *k*, *l*, *t*: These parts are called **ascenders**.

## assonance

repetition of vowel sounds: *crying time*; *hop-scotch*; *great flakes*; *between trees*; *the kind knight rides by*.

## asterisk (\*)

An asterisk is a symbol used to refer the reader to footnotes below the text. It can also be used to replace letters in taboo words.

## audience

the people addressed by a text. The term refers to listeners, readers of books, film/TV audiences and users of information technology.

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**autobiography**

a life story of an individual written by that person. Generally written in the **first person**.

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**auxiliary verbs**

These are verbs that are used together with other verbs. For example:

*we are going*  
*Lucy has arrived*  
*can you play*

In these sentences, *going*, *arrived* and *play* are the main verbs. *Are*, *has* and *can* are auxiliary verbs, and add extra meaning to the main verb.

The most common auxiliary verbs are *be*, *have* and *do* (all of which can also be main verbs).

*Be* is used in continuous forms (*be* + *-ing*) and in passive forms:  
*We are going away. Was the car damaged?*

*Have* is used in perfect verb forms:  
*Lucy has arrived. I haven't finished.*

*Do* is used to make questions and negatives in the simple present and past tenses:  
*Do you know the answer? I didn't see anybody.*

More than one auxiliary verb can be used together. For example:

*I have been waiting for ages. (*have* and *been* are auxiliary verbs)*

The remaining auxiliary verbs are **modal verbs**, eg *can*, *will*.

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**ballad**

a poem or song which tells a story. Characterised by short, regular verses with a rhyme scheme.

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**bibliography**

a list of texts provided for readers. The list may contain:

- a. texts consulted by a writer;
  - b. texts written on a particular subject;
  - c. texts written by a particular author.
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**biography**

a life-story of an individual written by another author. Generally written in the **third person**.

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**blank verse**

poetry written with rhythm and metre, but without rhyme. Especially linked with **iambic** pentameter (ten syllable line)

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with unstressed/stressed syllable pattern) as in the work of Shakespeare.

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### blend

the process of combining phonemes into larger elements such as clusters, syllables and words. Also refers to a combination of two or more phonemes, particularly at the beginning and end of words, *st, str, nt, pl, nd*.

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### blurb

information about a book, designed to attract readers, usually printed on the back or inside flap of book jacket. Informs the prospective reader about genre, setting, etc

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### calligram

a poem in which the calligraphy, the formation of the letters or the font selected, represents an aspect of the poem's subject, as in: thin, ancient, grOwth. A poem about fear might be written in shaky letters to represent trembling.

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### character

an individual in a story, play or poem whose personality can be inferred from their actions and dialogue. Writers may also use physical description of the individual to give readers clues about a character.

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### chronological writing

writing organised in terms of sequences of events.

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### cinquain

a poem with a standard syllable pattern, like a haiku, invented by Adelaide Crapsey, an American poet. Five lines and a total of 22 syllables in the sequence: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2.

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### clause

A clause is a group of words that expresses an event (*she drank some water*) or a situation (*she was thirsty/she wanted a drink*). It usually contains a **subject** (*she* in the examples) and **verb** (*drank/was/wanted*).

Note how a clause differs from a **phrase**:

<i>a big dog</i>	(a phrase - this refers to 'a big dog' but doesn't say what the dog did or what happened to it)
<i>a big dog chased me</i>	(a clause - the dog did something)

A sentence is made up of one or more clauses:

<i>It was raining</i>	(one clause)
<i>It was raining and we were cold.</i>	(two main clauses joined by <i>and</i> )
<i>It was raining <u>when we went out.</u></i>	(main clause containing a subordinate clause - the subordinate clause is underlined)

A main clause is complete on its own and can form a complete sentence (eg *It was raining.*). A subordinate clause (*when we went out*) is part of the main clause and cannot exist on its own. In the following examples, the subordinate clauses are underlined:

*You'll hurt yourself if you're not careful.*  
*Although it was cold, the weather was pleasant enough.*  
*Where are the biscuits (that) I bought this morning?*  
*John, who was very angry, began shouting.*  
*What you said was not true.*

Although most clauses require a subject and verb, some subordinate clauses do not. In many such cases, the verb *be* can be understood. For example:

*The weather, although rather cold, was pleasant enough.*  
 (= although it was rather cold)  
*When in Rome, do as the Romans do.*  
 (= when you are in Rome)  
*Glad to be home, George sat down in his favourite armchair.*  
 (= he was glad to be home)

see also **adverbial clause, noun clause, participle, phrase, relative clause, sentence**

### clerihew

a four line comic verse with two rhyming couplets. Lines may be of any length. The first line is the name of the person about whom the rhyme is written:

*Jeremiah Smith*  
*Is boring to be with*  
*The company he doth keep*  
*Will send a person to sleep*

Named after its inventor E. Clerihew Bentley who died in 1956.

### cliché

an over-used phrase or opinion: *sick as a parrot; her eyes shone like stars; too many cooks spoil the broth*. May be **idiomatic**.

### cloze

an exercise in which certain words are deleted from a text and a gap left. The learner's task is to supply the missing words. The teacher chooses which words to omit, depending on the learning task. Words can be deleted in a specific way, eg adjectives, conjunctions, or randomly (every nth word). Cloze procedure can be used to measure readability.

### coherence and cohesion

An effective text needs to be coherent and cohesive.

The term **coherence** refers to the underlying logic and consistency of a text. The ideas expressed should be relevant to one another so that the reader can follow the meaning.

The term **cohesion** refers to the grammatical features in a text which enable the parts to fit together. One way of creating cohesion is the use of **connectives**:

*I sat down and turned on the television. Just then, I heard a strange noise.*

The phrase *'just then'* relates these events in time.

Cohesion is also achieved by the use of words (such as **pronouns**) that refer back to other parts of the text. In these examples, such words are underlined:

*There was a man waiting at the door. I had never seen him before.*  
*We haven't got a car. We used to have one, but we sold it.*  
*I wonder whether Sarah will pass her driving test. I hope she does. (= I hope Sarah passes her driving test)*

### colloquial

belonging to conversation/language used in familiar, informal contexts. Contrasted with formal or literary language.

### colon (:)

A colon is a punctuation mark used to introduce a list or a following example (as in this glossary). It may also be used before a second clause that expands or illustrates the first:

*He was very cold: the temperature was below zero.*

### comma (,)

A comma is a punctuation mark used to help the reader by separating parts of a sentence. It sometimes corresponds to a pause in speech.

In particular we use commas:

to separate items in a list (but not usually before *and*):  
*My favourite sports are football, tennis, swimming and gymnastics.*  
*I got home, had a bath and went to bed.*

to mark off extra information:  
*Jill, my boss, is 28 years old.*

after a subordinate **clause** which begins a sentence:  
*Although it was cold, we didn't wear our coats.*

with many connecting **adverbs** (eg *however, on the other hand, anyway, for example*):  
*Anyway, in the end I decided not to go.*

### commentary

a set of notes which explain, or give further detail or information on a text. For example, a commentary may explain imagery in a poem or section of prose; alternatively, it may draw viewers' attention to particular aspects of a piece of film. The purpose of a commentary is to deepen **comprehension**.

### complement

In the sentences *Lisa is a fast runner* or *Lisa is very fit*, '*Lisa*' is the **subject** and '*is*' is the **verb**. Neither sentence has an **object**. The rest of the sentence (*a fast runner/very fit*) is called a complement. A complement usually tells you something about the subject of the sentence (especially after the verb *be* but also after other linking verbs such as *seem, look, get, become*). In the examples the complement is underlined:

*These apples are delicious.      Why did you become a teacher?*  
*You don't look very well.      This is John. He's a friend of mine.*

A complement can also refer to the object of a sentence. For example:

*I found the book very interesting. (*very interesting* refers to *the book*, which is the object of *found*)*

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### compound word

a word made up of two other words: *football, headrest, broomstick*.

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### comprehension

the level of understanding of a text.

#### literal

the reader has access to the surface details of the text, and can recall details which have been directly related.

#### inferential

the reader can read meanings which are not directly explained. For example, the reader would be able to make inferences about the time of year from information given about temperature, weather, etc and from characters' behaviour and dialogue.

#### evaluative

the reader can offer an opinion on the effectiveness of the text for its purpose.

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### concrete poem

a poem in which the layout of the words represents an aspect of the subject. In some cases, these poems are presented as sculptures. Concrete poems blur the distinction between visual and linguistic art, as do other shape poems.

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### conditional

A conditional sentence is one in which one thing depends upon another. Conditional sentences often contain the **conjunction** *if*:

*I'll help you if I can.*  
*If the weather's bad, we might not go out.*

Other conjunctions used in conditionals are *unless, providing, provided* and *as long as*.

A conditional sentence can refer to an imaginary situation. For example:

*I would help you if I could. (but in fact I can't)*  
*What would you do if you were in my position?*  
*If the weather had been better, we could have gone to the beach.*

The term 'conditional' is sometimes used to refer to the form *would* + verb: *would go, would help* etc.

see also **auxiliary verb**

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## conjunction

A word used to link **clauses** within a sentence. For example, in the following sentences, *but* and *if* are conjunctions:

*It was raining but it wasn't cold.*  
*We won't go out if the weather's bad.*

There are two kinds of conjunction:

- a. Co-ordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or* and *so*). These join (and are placed between) two clauses of equal weight.

*Do you want to go now or shall we wait a bit longer?*

*And, but* and *or* are also used to join words or phrases within a clause.

- b. Subordinating conjunctions (eg *when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that*). These go at the beginning of a subordinate **clause**:

*We were hungry because we hadn't eaten all day.*  
*Although we'd had plenty to eat, we were still hungry.*  
*We were hungry when we got home.*

see also **clause, connective**

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## connective

A connective is a word or phrase that links clauses or sentences. Connectives can be **conjunctions** (eg *but, when, because*) or connecting adverbs (eg *however, then, therefore*).

Connecting adverbs (and adverbial phrases and clauses) maintain the **cohesion** of a text in several basic ways, including:

addition	<i>also, furthermore, moreover</i>
opposition	<i>however, nevertheless, on the other hand</i>
reinforcing	<i>besides, anyway, after all</i>
explaining	<i>for example, in other words, that is to say</i>
listing	<i>first(y), first of all, finally</i>
indicating result	<i>therefore, consequently, as a result</i>
indicating time	<i>just then, meanwhile, later</i>

**Commas** are often used to mark off connecting adverbs or adverbial phrases or clauses:

*First of all, I want to say ...*  
*I didn't think much of the film. Helen, on the other hand, enjoyed it.*

Connecting adverbs and conjunctions function differently. Conjunctions (like *but* and *although*) join clauses within a sentence. Connecting adverbs (like *however*) connect ideas but the clauses remain separate sentences:

*I was angry but I didn't say anything. (but is a conjunction - one sentence)*  
*Although I was angry, I didn't say anything. (although is a conjunction - one sentence)*  
*I was angry. However, I didn't say anything. (however is an adverb - two sentences)*

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**consonant**

A consonant is a speech sound which obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract; for example, the flow of air is obstructed by the lips in *p* and by the tongue in *l*. The term also refers to those letters of the alphabet whose typical value is to represent such sounds, namely all except *a, e, i, o, u*. The letter *y* can represent a consonant sound (*yes*) or a vowel sound (*happy*).

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**contraction**

see **apostrophe**

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**correspondence**

matching of two separate types of information: for example, letters or letter strings with the phonemes they represent; matching one written with one spoken word.

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**couplet**

two consecutive lines of poetry which are paired in length or rhyme.

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**cue**

a source of information. In reading, children may use contextual, grammatical, graphic and phonological cues to work out unfamiliar words. Fluent readers orchestrate different cues and cross-check.

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**dash (—)**

A dash is a punctuation mark used especially in informal writing (such as letters to friends, postcards or notes). Dashes may be used to replace other punctuation marks (**colons, semi-colons, commas**) or brackets:

*It was a great day out — everybody enjoyed it.*

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**declarative**

see **sentence**.

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**decode**

literally, this means to convert a message written/spoken in code into language which is easily understood. In reading, this refers to children's ability to read words - to translate the visual code of the letters into a word.

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**derivation**

tracing the origin of a word or saying.

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**descender**

In written or typed script, many letters have the same height: *a, c, e, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z*. Some letters have parts which extend below this: *g, j, p, q, y*. These parts are called descenders. In some fonts, *f* and *z* have descenders.

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## determiner

Determiners include many of the most frequent English words, eg *the, a, my, this*. Determiners are used with nouns (*this book, my best friend, a new car*) and they limit (ie determine) the reference of the noun in some way.

Determiners include:

articles	<i>a/an, the</i>
demonstratives	<i>this/that, these/those</i>
possessives	<i>my/your/his/her/its/our/their</i>
quantifiers	<i>some, any, no, many, much, few, little, both, all, either, neither, each, every, enough</i>
numbers	<i>three, fifty, three thousand etc</i>
some question words	<i>which (which car?), what (what size?), whose (whose coat?)</i>

When these words are used as determiners, they are followed by a noun (though not necessarily immediately):

*this book is yours*  
*some new houses*  
*which colour do you prefer?*

Many determiners can also be used as **pronouns**. These include the demonstratives, question words, numbers and most of the quantifiers. When used as pronouns, these words are not followed by a noun - their reference includes the noun:

*this is yours (= this book, this money, etc)*  
*I've got some*  
*which do you prefer?*

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## dialect

A dialect is a variety of a language used in a particular area and which is distinguished by certain features of grammar or vocabulary. Examples of such features in some English dialects are:

non-standard subject + verb patterns, eg *I knows, you was, he like*  
 past tense forms, eg *I done, I seen*  
 various individual words and expressions, eg *owt/nowt* for *anything/nothing*

see also **double negative, standard English**

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## dialogue

a conversation between two parties. May be spoken or written.

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## digraph

two letters representing one phoneme: *bath; train; ch/ur/ch.*

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## diminutive

a term which implies smallness. This may reflect actual physical lack of stature; alternatively, it may be used as a term of endearment. The word may be a recognised word, eg Tiny Tim, Little Dorrit, or may be created by the addition of a suffix to a name or noun: *lambkin, starlet, kitchenette.*

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### direct speech and indirect speech

There are two ways of reporting what somebody says, direct speech and indirect speech.

In direct speech, we use the speaker's original words (as in a speech bubble). In text, speech marks ('...' or "...") — also called inverted commas or quotes) mark the beginning and end of direct speech:

*Helen said, 'I'm going home'.*

*'What do you want?' I asked.*

In indirect (or reported) speech, we report what was said but do not use the exact words of the original speaker. Typically we change pronouns and verb tenses, and speech marks are not used:

*Helen said (that) she was going home.*

*I asked them what they wanted.*

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### discrimination

Discrimination is the ability to perceive the difference between two things, for example **phonemes**. Some pairs of sounds are more difficult for children to discriminate between, for example *k/g*, *t/d*, and *p/b*.

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### discussion text

a text (written or spoken) which presents all sides of an issue. A discussion text typically begins by outlining the issues before making points for and against. These points are backed up with evidence. It often concludes by stating an opinion in favour of one particular side, or by asking the reader/listener to decide. An example of a discussion text would be presenting arguments for and against school uniform, or for and against a new runway at Manchester Airport.

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### double negative

In non-standard English, a double negative may be used. For example:

*We didn't see nobody.*

*I never took nothing.*

Such double negatives are not acceptable in **standard English**. The equivalent standard forms would be:

*We didn't see anybody.*

*I didn't take anything.*

---

### draft

preliminary written form of document: a **text** may develop through a number of drafts before reaching final draft stage, at which time it may be published. The process of working on a document at the composition stage is called drafting.

---

### edit

to modify written work, either own or another's, in preparation for publication. This process takes place after **drafting** (composition), **revising** (major restructuring) and before **proof-reading** (a final check for typographical, spelling errors, etc). It involves checking of facts, minor improvements to style at sentence level, and checking for **accuracy** and **agreement**.

---

**elegy**

a **poem** or song which is a lament, perhaps for someone or something which has died.

---

**ellipsis**

Ellipsis is the omission of words in order to avoid repetition. For example:

*I don't think it will rain but it might.* (= it might rain)  
*'Where were you born?' 'Bradford.'* (= I was born in Bradford)

An ellipsis is also the term used for three dots (...) which show that something has been omitted or is incomplete.

---

**empathy**

identifying with another: a character in a story, or an historical figure; the ability to see situations from the other's point of view. Literally 'feeling with' or 'feeling in'.

---

**epic**

a poem or story relating the adventures of a heroic or legendary figure, often related to national identity, as Odysseus or Arthur.

---

**epitaph**

engraved wording on a tombstone. May be selected by the deceased or his/her family. Some will choose extracts from the Bible or from literature; others will compose their own epitaph.

---

**etymology**

the study of the origin and history of words.

---

**eulogy**

writing or speech, the purpose of which is praise of a named person or thing. In America, this refers specifically to funeral oration.

---

**exclamation**

An exclamation is an utterance expressing emotion (joy, wonder, anger, surprise, etc) and is usually followed in writing by an **exclamation mark (!)**. Exclamations can be **interjections**:

*Oh dear!*  
*Good grief!*  
*Ow!*

Some exclamations begin with *what* or *how*:

*What a beautiful day!*  
*How stupid (he is)!*  
*What a quiet little girl.*

Exclamations like these are a special type of **sentence** ('exclamative') and may have no verb.

see also **interjection, sentence**

---

### **exclamation mark (!)**

An exclamation mark is used at the end of a **sentence** (which may be exclamative, imperative or declarative) or an **interjection** to indicate strong emotion:

*What a pity!*

*Get out!*

*It's a goal!*

*Oh dear!*

See also **exclamation, sentence**

---

### **exclamative**

see **sentence**

---

### **explanation text**

Explanation text is written to explain how or why something happens, eg how river valleys are formed or why the Romans built roads. Typically such text consists of a description of the phenomenon and an explanatory sequence. The writer will normally need to use **connectives** expressing cause and effect (eg *so, therefore, as a result*) and time (eg *later, meanwhile*).

The **passive** often occurs in writing of this kind. For example:

*Roman roads are considered to be a miracle of engineering.*

---

### **fable**

a short story which is devised and written to convey a useful moral lesson. Animals are often used as characters, as in Aesop's Fables.

See **parable**

---

### **fact**

accepted, observable or demonstrable truth. What is accepted as truth may change over time, in the light of new evidence. Facts must be supported by evidence; if evidence is not available, they can only be given the status of opinion.

Fiction texts often make use of factual information, as in the case of historical fiction, or fiction which includes information about science or art, etc. In these texts, it is important that writers research the appropriate subject.

---

### **fairy tale**

a story written for, or told to, children which includes elements of magic and magical folk, such as fairies, elves, goblins.

---

### **fiction**

text which is invented by a writer or speaker. Characters, settings and events are created by the originator. In some cases, one of these elements may be factual: for example, the setting may be a named city or area; the text may be based on an historical event.

---

### **figurative language**

use of metaphor or simile to create a particular impression or mood. A writer may develop an idea of a character's military approach to life by using phrases and words which are linked with the army, such as *he was something of a loose cannon* (**metaphor**); *he rifled through the papers*; *his arm shot out*; *he marched into the room*; *he paraded his knowledge*. To link a character with a bird, she/he may use: *he flew down the stairs*; *they twittered to each other*; *he perched on his chair*; *his feathers were definitely ruffled*.

---

### **flow chart**

a diagrammatic representation of either:

- a. events in a story;
- b. a process; or
- c. an activity.

A flow chart illustrates sequences of events and explores possible consequences of decisions.

---

### **footnote**

additional information which is printed at the bottom of the page rather than in the main body of the text.

---

### **format**

the way in which a text is arranged or presented, for example as a book, leaflet, essay, video, audiotape. May also relate to the structure of the text, for example, the use of headings and sub-headings, diagrams/photographs with captions.

---

### **free verse**

poetry which is not constrained by patterns of rhyme or rhythm.

---

### **generic structure**

the way in which elements of a text are arranged to match its purpose. This structure can be observed by readers, and writers will use this knowledge to structure their writing, depending on their purpose.

See **discussion text, explanation text, instruction text, narrative text, recount text, report text**

---

### **genre**

this term refers to different types of writing, each with its own specific characteristics which relate to origin (legend/folk tale) or reader interest area - the types of books individuals particularly choose to read: adventure, romance, science fiction.

Texts with these specific features - often related to story elements, patterns of language, structure, vocabulary - may

be described as belonging to a particular genre. These attributes are useful in discussing text and in supporting development of writing skills.

Texts may operate at different levels, and so represent more than one genre; some will be combinations, for example historical romance.

---

### **glossary**

part of a text, often an **appendix**, which defines terms the writer/editor considers may be unfamiliar to the intended audience.

---

### **grammar**

the conventions which govern the relationships between words in any language. Includes the study of word order and changes in words: use of inflections, etc. Study of grammar is important, as it enhances both reading and writing skills; it supports effective communication.

---

### **grammatical boundary**

A grammatical boundary is the edge of a grammatical unit (a sentence, clause or phrase) which, in writing, may be indicated by a punctuation mark such as a **comma**, full stop, **colon**, **semi-colon** or **dash**.

---

### **grapheme**

written representation of a sound; may consist of one or more letters; for example the phoneme *s* can be represented by the graphemes *s*, *se*, *c*, *sc* and *ce* as in *sun*, *mouse*, *city*, *science*.

---

### **guided reading**

a classroom activity in which pupils are taught in groups according to reading ability. The teacher works with each group on a text carefully selected to offer an appropriate level of challenge to the group. Usefully thought of as a 'mini lesson'. Challenge may be in terms of reading cues and strategies, language and vocabulary, or sophisticated aspects of grammar, inference, skimming and scanning.

Guided reading sessions have a similar format:

- a. the teacher introduces the text, and sets the purpose for reading, for example reminding pupils of strategies and cues which will be useful, or asking them to gather particular information;
- b. pupils read independently, solving problems as they read through the text. More fluent readers will read silently. The teacher is available to offer help when it is needed. S/he then guides pupils to appropriate cues, for example use of syntax, picture cues, initial letter;
- c. the teacher discusses the text with the pupils, drawing attention to successful strategies and focusing on comprehension, referring back to the initial focus.

---

### **guided writing**

a classroom activity in which pupils are grouped by writing ability. The teacher works with each group on a task carefully selected to offer an appropriate level of challenge to the group. Usefully thought of as a 'mini lesson'. Challenge may be in terms of spelling, letter formation, simple punctuation, language and vocabulary, or sophisticated aspects of generic structure, planning and editing, use of imagery and so on.

---

## haiku

Japanese form. The poem has three lines and 17 syllables in total in the pattern 5, 7, 5:

*Loving, faithful, fun  
Trusting and loyal and true  
Chocolate-brown Suki*

---

## half-rhyme

words which almost rhyme: *polish/relish; pun/man*.

---

## homograph

words which have the same spelling as another, but different meaning: *the calf was eating/my calf was aching; the North Pole/totem pole; he is a Pole*. Pronunciation may be different: *a lead pencil/the dog's lead; furniture polish/Polish people*. A **homonym**.

---

## homonym

words which have the same spelling or pronunciation as another, but different meaning or origin. May be a **homograph** or **homophone**.

---

## homophone

words which have the same sound as another but different meaning or different spelling: *read/reed; pair/pear; right/write/rite*. A **homonym**.

---

## hyphen (-)

A hyphen is sometimes used to join the two parts of a **compound** noun, as in *golf-ball* and *proof-read*. But it is much more usual for such compounds to be written as single words (eg *football, headache, bedroom*) or as separate words without a hyphen (*golf ball, stomach ache, dining room, city centre*).

However, hyphens are used in the following cases:

- a. in compound adjectives and longer phrases used as modifiers before nouns:

*a foul-smelling substance  
a well-known painter  
a German-English dictionary  
a one-in-a-million chance  
a state-of-the-art computer  
a ten-year-old girl*

- b. in many compound nouns where the second part is a short word like *in, off, up* or *by*:

*a break-in  
a write-off  
a mix-up  
a passer-by*

- c. in many words beginning with the prefixes *co-*, *non-* and *ex-*:

*co-operate*

*non-existent*

*ex-husband*

Hyphens are also used to divide words at the end of a line of print.

### idiom

An idiom is an expression which is not meant literally and whose meaning cannot be deduced from knowledge of the individual words. For example:

*You look a bit under the weather this morning. Are you all right?*

*Try and keep to the point of the discussion. You're always introducing red herrings.*

*You and I have the same problems - we're in the same boat.*

*That name rings a bell. I've heard it before somewhere.*

### imagery

use of language to create a vivid sensory image - often visual. May include:

**vocabulary** choice of synonym, for example *sprinted/ran/raced*, selection of adjectives and adverbs

**simile** *he ran like the wind*

**metaphor** *his feet had wings*

see **figurative language**

### imperative

see **sentence**

### indirect speech

see **direct speech**

### infinitive

The infinitive is the base form of the verb without any additional endings. For example, *play* is an infinitive form (as opposed to *playing*, *played* or *plays*). The infinitive is used with many **auxiliary verbs**:

*I will play*

*he should play*

*do you play?*

The infinitive is often used with *to* (*to play*, *to eat* etc):

*I ought to play*

*I want to play*

*I'm going to play*

*it would be nice to play*

The simple present tense (*I play*, *they play* etc) has the same form as the infinitive, except for the third **person** singular (*he/she/it plays*).

---

## inflection

Inflection is a change to the ending of a word to indicate tense, number or other grammatical features. For example:

*walk* - *walks/walked/walking*

*shoe* - *shoes*

*old* - *older/oldest*

see also **suffix**

---

## information text

text written to inform. Examples include **explanation, report, procedure** or **recount**.

---

## innovation on text

a classroom strategy in which the teacher uses a familiar text as the model for a piece of new writing: *Georgina and the Dragon*; *The Very Hungry Kittens*; *Burglar Barry*.

---

## instruction text

text written to help readers achieve certain goals. The text may consist of a statement of the intended outcome, the materials needed to achieve it and a sequence of actions in chronological order. Connectives will often be time-related; verbs may be imperative, and will often be placed at the beginning of sentences to form a series of commands. Examples of this type of text include recipes and instructions.

---

## interjection

An interjection is a word like *Ouch!*, *Oh!* or *Damn!* expressing an emotion such as pain, surprise, anger, etc. An interjection is followed by an **exclamation mark (!)**.

see also **exclamation**

---

## internal rhyme

placement of rhyming words within a line of poetry: '*Though the threat of snow was growing slowly...*'

see also **assonance** and **rhyme**

---

## intonation

Intonation is the way in which changes in the musical pitch of the voice are used to structure speech and to contribute to meaning. Among other functions, intonation may distinguish questions from statements (as in 'Sure?' 'Sure!'), or indicate contrastive and emotive stress (as in 'I said *two*, not three', or 'I just *hate* that advertisement!').

---

## jargon

language used by a particular profession or interest group. May include vocabulary unfamiliar to those outside the group, sometimes deliberately.

---

**jingle**

a short verse or line used to attract attention and be memorable. May be based on **alliteration** or **rhyme**. Often associated with advertising.

---

**kenning**

a compound expression used in Old English and Norse poetry, which named something without using its name, for example *mouse catcher* = *cat*. Anglo-Saxons often used kennings to name their swords: *death bringer*. A poem made of kennings would be a list of such expressions about one subject:

*MY DOG*  
*ankle biter*  
*bone cruncher*  
*night howler*  
*rabbit catcher*  
*fur pillow.*

---

**legend**

a traditional story about heroic characters such as King Arthur, which may be based on truth, but which has been embellished over the years. Also refers to the wording on maps and charts which explains the symbols used.

---

**letter string**

a group of letters which together represent a **phoneme** or **morpheme**.

---

**limerick**

A five-line comic verse following the syllable pattern 8 8 6 6 8 with the rhyme scheme *a a b b a*. Early limericks, such as the nonsense verse of Edward Lear, repeat line 1 in line 5. However, recent verse does not always follow this model.

---

**literacy**

communication skill. The term *literacy* originally, and most often, applied to written communication; however, it can also be applied to other forms, as in *media literacy*, *computer literacy*.

---

**logogram**

a symbol or character which represents a **morpheme** or word. A logographic system contrasts with an alphabetic-phonetic system, such as English, in which symbols relate to sounds rather than meaning. There are a number of logograms which would be instantly recognisable to those using alphabetic systems, for example £, &, %.

---

**metalanguage**

the language we use when talking about language itself. It includes words like *sentence*, *noun*, *paragraph*, *preposition*. Those who understand these concepts are able to talk about language quite precisely; thus, acquisition of metalanguage is seen as a crucial step in developing awareness of and proficiency in communication, particularly written language.

---

## metaphor

where the writer writes about something as if it were really something else. Fowler describes it as an 'imaginative substitution'. For example: *he is an ass*; *love's meteor*. *A poisoned apple passed along from generation to generation* (McGough).

---

## mnemonic

a device to aid memory, for instance to learn particular spelling patterns or spellings: *I Go Home Tonight*; *There is a rat in separate*.

---

## modal verb

The modal verbs are:

*can/could*  
*will/would*  
*shall/should*  
*may/might*  
*must/ought*

These **auxiliary verbs** are used to express such ideas as possibility, willingness, prediction, speculation, deduction and necessity. They are all followed by the **infinitive**, and *ought* is followed by *to* + infinitive:

*I can help you.*  
*We might go out tonight.*  
*You ought to eat something.*  
*Stephanie will be here soon.*  
*I wouldn't do that if I were you.*  
*I must go now.*

These verbs can occur with other auxiliary verbs (*be* and *have*):

*I'll be leaving at 11.30.*  
*You should have asked me.*  
*They must have been working.*

In this context *have* is unstressed and therefore identical in speech to unstressed *of*; this is why the misspelling *of* for standard *have* or 've is not uncommon.

---

## modelling

In literacy, this refers to demonstration of an aspect of reading or writing by an expert for learners. This would support direct instruction.

---

## monologue

a text spoken by a lone speaker. In dramatic situations, this may be a 'one person show'; in other situations, it may refer to a speaker who monopolises the conversation.

**morpheme**

the smallest unit of meaning. A word may consist of one morpheme (*house*), two morphemes (*house/s; hous/ing*) or three or more morphemes (*house/keep/ing; un/happi/ness*). **Suffixes** and **prefixes** are morphemes.

**myth**

an ancient traditional story of gods or heroes which addresses a problem or concern of human existence. May include an explanation of some fact or phenomenon.

**narrative poem**

a poem which tells a story: '*Hiawatha*', '*Charge of the Light Brigade*'. Often a ballad.

**narrative text**

text which re-tells events, often in chronological sequence. May be purely fictional, or include some information. May be in prose or poetic form.

**non-chronological writing**

writing organised without reference to time sequence. Typically, writing organised by characteristics and attributes, for example, a report on a town might be organised into population, situation, facilities.

**noun**

A noun is a word that denotes somebody or something. In the sentence *My younger sister won some money in a competition*, '*sister*', '*money*' and '*competition*' are nouns.

Many nouns (countable nouns) can be **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one). For example *sister/sisters*, *problem/problems*, *party/parties*. Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: *butter*, *cotton*, *electricity*, *money*, *happiness*.

A **collective noun** is a word that refers to a group. For example, *crowd*, *flock*, *team*. Although these are singular in form, we often think of them as plural in meaning and use them with a plural verb. For example, if we say *The team have won all their games so far*, we think of '*the team*' as '*they*' (rather than '*it*').

**Proper nouns** are the names of people, places, organisations, etc. These normally begin with a capital letter: *Amanda*, *Birmingham*, *Microsoft*, *Islam*, *November*.

**Noun phrase** is a wider term than 'noun'. It can refer to a single noun (*money*), a pronoun (*it*) or a group of words that functions in the same way as a noun in a sentence, for example:

*a lot of money*  
*my younger sister*  
*a new car*  
*the best team in the world*

Similarly, a **noun clause** functions in the same way as a noun. For example:

*The story was not true.* (noun)  
*What you said was not true.* (noun clause)

---

**obituary**

public notice of the death of an individual. May include an account of the life of the person.

---

**object**

see **subject**

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**ode**

lyric poem usually addressed to the subject, so written in the **second person**. There is no fixed rhyme or rhythm pattern. Language may be unusual, perhaps self-consciously 'poetic': *Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness...* (Keats, 'On a Grecian Urn').

---

**onomatopoeia**

words which echo sounds associated with their meaning: *clang, hiss, crash, cuckoo*.

---

**onset**

the onset of a word or syllable is the initial consonant or consonant cluster: *clang; trike; sun*. Some words or syllables have no onset: *or; out; end; at; on; earth*.

see **rime**

---

**opinion**

a belief held by an individual or group of individuals for which there is insufficient evidence for it to be accepted as **fact**. May be presented as fact in writing.

---

**palindrome**

a word or phrase which is the same when read left-right or right-left: *madam; mum; dad; eve; pup; Madam, I'm Adam*.

---

**parable**

a short story told to illustrate a moral lesson or duty. Parables are often associated with the New Testament; however, many stories, including modern texts, may be classed as parables.

see **fable**

---

**paragraph**

a section of a piece of writing. A new paragraph marks a change of focus, a change of time, a change of place or a change of speaker in a passage of dialogue.

A new paragraph begins on a new line, usually with a one-line gap separating it from the previous paragraph. Some writers also indent the first line of a new paragraph.

Paragraphing helps writers to organise their thoughts, and helps readers to follow the story line, argument or dialogue.

**parenthesis**

A parenthesis is a word or phrase inserted into a sentence to explain or elaborate. It may be placed in brackets or between **dashes** or **commas**:

*Sam and Emma (his oldest children) are coming to visit him next weekend.*  
*Margaret is generally happy — she sings in the mornings! — but responsibility weighs her down.*  
*Sarah is, I believe, our best student.*

The term parentheses can also refer to the brackets themselves.

**parody**

a literary caricature: a version of a story or poem which emphasises particular aspects of language or form to humorous effect.

**part of speech**

see **word class**

**participle**

Verbs have a present participle and a past participle.

**present participle**

The present participle ends in *-ing* (*working, reading, going* etc). Although it is called 'present', it is used in all continuous forms: *she is going, she was going, she will be going, she would have been going*, etc.

The *-ing* ending is also used for a verb functioning as a noun. For example: *I enjoy reading. Reading is important.* ('Reading' is used as a noun in these examples.) This *-ing* form is sometimes called a verbal noun or a gerund.

**past participle**

The past participle often ends in *-ed* (*worked, played*) but many common verbs are irregular and have other endings, eg *-t* (*kept*), *-n* (*flown*), and *-en* (*stolen*).

Past participles are used:

- after *have* to make perfect forms: *I've worked, he has fallen, we should have gone*
- after *be* (*is/was* etc) to make passive forms: *I was asked, they are kept, it has been stolen*

Here too, the name is misleading, because passive forms need not refer to the past: *A toast will be drunk.*

Participles (present and past) are sometimes used as adjectives: *the falling leaves, stolen goods*. They can also be used to introduce subordinate clauses, for example:

*Being a student, Tom doesn't have much money.*  
*Written in 1923, the book has been translated into twenty-five languages.*

see also **active** and **passive, tense** and **verb**

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**passive**see **active**

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**person**

In grammar, a distinction is made between first, second and third person.

One uses the first person when referring to oneself (*I/we*); the second person when referring to one's listener or reader (*you*); and the third person when referring to somebody or something else (*he/she/it/they/my friend/the books* etc).

In some cases the form of the verb changes according to person:

*I/we/you/they know*

*I/we/you/they have*

*we/you/they were*

*he/she knows*

*he/she/it has*

*I/he/she/it was*

see also **agreement**

---

**personification**

a form of **metaphor** in which language relating to human action, motivation and emotion is used to refer to non-human agents or objects or abstract concepts: *the weather is smiling on us today; Love is blind*.

---

**persuasive text**

text which aims to persuade the reader. A persuasive text typically consists of a statement of the viewpoint, arguments and evidence for this thesis, possibly some arguments and evidence supporting a different view, and a final summary or recommendation.

**Connectives** will be related to reasoning (*therefore, however*).

An example of such a text would be an essay on banning fox-hunting or recycling, or whether Roald Dahl was the greatest writer in English. Advertisements are forms of persuasive text.

see also **discussion text**

---

**phoneme**

A phoneme is the smallest contrastive unit of sound in a word. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (the number varies depending on the accent). A phoneme may have variant pronunciations in different positions; for example, the first and last sounds in the word 'little' are variants of the phoneme /l/. A phoneme may be represented by one, two, three or four letters. The following words end in the same phoneme (with the corresponding letters underlined):

*to*

*shoe*

*through*

---

### phonological awareness

awareness of sounds within words - demonstrated for example in the ability to generate rhyme and alliteration, and in segmenting and blending component sounds.

---

### phrase

A phrase is a group of words that act as one unit. So *dog* is a word, but *the dog*, *a big dog* or *that dog over there* are all phrases. Strictly speaking, a phrase can also consist of just one word. For example, in the sentence *Dogs are nice*, 'dogs' and 'nice' are both one-word phrases.

A phrase can function as a noun, an adjective or an adverb:

a noun phrase	<i>a big dog, my last holiday</i>
an adjectival phrase	<i>(she's not) as old as you, (I'm) really hungry</i>
an adverbial phrase	<i>(they left) five minutes ago, (she walks) very slowly</i>

If a phrase begins with a **preposition** (like *in a hurry*, *along the lane*), it can be called a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase can be adjectival or adverbial in meaning:

adjectival	<i>(I'm) in a hurry, (the man) with long hair</i>
adverbial	<i>(they left) on Tuesday, (she lives) along the lane</i>

---

### plural

see **singular**

---

### poem

a text which uses features such as **rhythm, rhyme** or **syntax** and **vocabulary** to convey ideas in an intense way. Poets may also use **alliteration, figurative language** and other techniques. Prose may sometimes be poetic in effect.

---

### portmanteau

a word made up from blending two others: *swurse* = *swear* + *curse*; *picture* + *dictionary* = *pictionary*; *smoke* + *fog* = *smog*; *breakfast* + *lunch* = *brunch*.

---

### predicate

The predicate is that part of a sentence which is not the subject but which gives information about the subject. So, in the sentence *Clare went to school*, 'Clare' is the subject and 'went to school' is the predicate.

---

### prefix

A prefix is a **morpheme** which can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. For example:

*inedible*  
*disappear*  
*supermarket*  
*unintentional*

---

## preposition

A preposition is a word like *at*, *over*, *by* and *with*. It is usually followed by a **noun phrase**. In the examples, the preposition and the following noun phrase are underlined:

*We got home at midnight.*  
*Did you come here by car?*  
*Are you coming with me?*  
*They jumped over a fence.*  
*What's the name of this street?*  
*I fell asleep during the film.*

Prepositions often indicate time (*at midnight/during the film/on Friday*), position (*at the station/in a field*) or direction (*to the station/over a fence*). There are many other meanings, including possession (*of this street*), means (*by car*) and accompaniment (*with me*).

In questions and a few other structures, prepositions often occur at the end of the clause:

*Who did you go out with?*  
*We haven't got enough money to live on.*  
*I found the book I was looking for.*

In formal style, the preposition can go before *whom* or *which* (*with whom*, *about which* etc):

*With whom do you wish to speak?*

Many prepositions (eg *on*, *over*, *up*) can also be used as **adverbs** (without a following noun or pronoun):

*We got on the bus.* (preposition - followed by a noun phrase)  
*The bus stopped and we got on.* (adverb - no following noun or pronoun)

---

## procedural text

see **instruction text**

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## pronoun

There are several kinds of pronoun, including:

personal pronouns

*I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, it*  
*I like him. They don't want it.*

possessive pronouns

*mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its*  
*Is this book yours or mine?*

reflexive pronouns

*myself, herself, themselves* etc

*I hurt myself. Enjoy yourselves!*

indefinite pronouns

*someone, anything, nobody, everything etc*  
*Someone wants to see you about something.*

interrogative pronouns

*who/whom, whose, which, what*  
*Who did that? What happened?*

relative pronouns

*who/whom, whose, which, that*  
*The person who did that ... The thing that annoyed me was ...*

Many **determiners** can also be used as pronouns, including *this/that/these/those* and the quantifiers (*some, much* etc). For example:

*These are mine.*  
*Would you like some?*

Pronouns often 'replace' a noun or noun phrase and enable us to avoid repetition:

*I saw your father but I didn't speak to him. (= your father)*  
*'We're going away for the weekend.' 'Oh, are you? That's nice.' (= the fact you're going away)*

---

### proof-read

to check a piece of work thoroughly before final publication.

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### prose

written language which does not follow poetic or dramatic forms.

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### proverb

a saying, which may have changed little over time, which states a belief about the world: *the early bird catches the worm; too many cooks spoil the broth; the grass is always greener on the other side.*

---

### pun

a play on words; use of words with similar sounds but different meaning to humorous effect. For example, *grave* has two possible meanings, which Shakespeare used in 'Romeo and Juliet'. Mercutio's final words were: '*ask for me tomorrow And you shall find me a grave man*'; *red* and *read* sound the same, so *the book is never red/the book is never read; I'm on a seafood diet: I see food and I eat it*. Puns are often used in newspaper headlines.

---

### punctuation

Punctuation is a way of marking text to help readers' understanding. The most commonly used marks in English are: **apostrophe, colon, comma, dash, ellipsis, exclamation mark**, full stop, **hyphen, semi-colon** and **speech marks** (inverted commas).

---

### question mark (?)

A question mark is used at the end of an interrogative **sentence** (eg *Who was that?*) or one whose function is a question (eg *You're leaving already?*)

---

### rap

a form of oral poetry which has a very strong rhythm and rapid pace. Associated with Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean cultures, has now been assimilated into other literary traditions. Rap is often used in modern music.

---

### recount text

a text written to retell for information or entertainment. A fictional narrative recount may consist of scene-setting, a starting point, a problem, account and a conclusion. The language is descriptive, and there may be dialogue. Characters are defined and often named.

A non-fiction recount may begin with a scene-setting introduction, and then retell events in chronological order. An example of this type of text would include writing about visits, newspaper accounts of an event or a biography.

---

### reference text

an information text organised in a clearly defined way, for example alphabetically, and used for study purposes.

---

### relative clause

A relative clause is one that defines or gives information about somebody or something. Relative clauses typically begin with relative pronouns (*who/whom/whose/which/that*):

*Do you know the people who live in the house on the corner?* (defines 'the people')

*The biscuits that Tom bought this morning have all gone.* (defines 'the biscuits')

*Our hotel, which was only two minutes from the beach, was very nice.* (gives more information about the hotel)

---

### renga

a series of **haiku**, each linked to the next by two seven-syllable lines, sometimes written by different poets in turn, and forming a series of complete poems.

---

### report text

a non-chronological text written to describe or classify. The text often begins with a general classification, moving to a description of particular characteristics with a final summary. It is often written in the continuous present tense with generalised participants (*people, cats, buildings*). An example of this sort of text would include a report on dinosaurs or Roman housing, a guide-book or a description of a scene.

---

### rhetorical expression

an utterance in which the meaning intended by the speaker/writer is an expression different from that which might be inferred by a listener who is unaware of the conventions of the language; for example *Do you know his name?* is a question which seems to require a yes/no response; in fact, the speaker is asking *What is his name?* Rhetorical expressions are often questions disguising imperatives: *Would you like to get out your English books?* usually means *Get out your English books.*

**rhyme**

A rhyme occurs when words share the same stressed vowel phoneme, eg *she/tea, way/delay* and subsequent consonant(s) eg *sheet/treat, made/lemonade* and final unstressed vowel eg *laughter/after*.

**rhythm**

Rhythm is the more or less regular alternation of light beats and heavy beats (stresses) in speech or music. Some poetry uses very regular rhythm patterns.

**riddle**

a question or statement, sometimes in rhyme, which forms a puzzle to be solved by the reader/listener.

**rime**

that part of a syllable which contains the vowel and final consonant or consonant cluster if there is one: *at* in *cat*; *orn* in *horn*; *ow* in *cow*. Some words consist of rime only: *or, ate, eel*.

see **onset**

**root word**

a word to which **prefixes** and **suffixes** may be added to make other words; for example in *unclear, clearly, cleared*, the root word is *clear*.

**scan**

this word has two relevant meanings:

- a. to look over a text very quickly, trying to locate information by locating a key word;
- b. a line of poetry which conforms to the rhythm (metre) of the rest of the poem is said to scan.

**segment**

to break a word or part of a word down into its component phonemes, for example: *c-a-t; ch-a-t; ch-ar-t; g-r-ou-n-d; s-k-i-n*.

**semi-colon (;)**

A semi-colon can be used to separate two main **clauses** in a sentence:

*I liked the book; it was a pleasure to read.*

This could also be written as two separate sentences:

*I liked the book. It was a pleasure to read.*

However, where the two clauses are closely related in meaning (as in the above example), a writer may prefer to use a semi-colon rather than two separate sentences.

Semi-colons can also be used to separate items in a list if these items consist of longer phrases. For example:

*I need large, juicy tomatoes; half a pound of unsalted butter; a kilo of fresh pasta, preferably tagliatelle; and a jar of black olives.*

In a simple list, **commas** are used.

---

## sentence

A sentence can be simple, compound or complex.

A simple sentence consists of one **clause**:

*It was late.*

A compound sentence has two or more clauses joined by *and*, *or*, *but* or *so*. The clauses are of equal weight (they are both main clauses):

*It was late but I wasn't tired.*

A complex sentence consists of a main clause which itself includes one or more subordinate clauses:

*Although it was late, I wasn't tired.* (subordinate clause beginning with *although* underlined)

Simple sentences can also be grouped as follows according to their structure:

declarative (for statements, suggestions, etc):

*The class yelled in triumph. Maybe we could eat afterwards.*

interrogative (for questions, requests, etc):

*Is your sister here? Could you show me how?*

imperative (for commands, instructions, etc):

*Hold this! Take the second left.*

exclamative (for exclamations):

*How peaceful she looks. What a pity!*

In writing, we mark sentences by using a capital letter at the beginning, and a full stop (or question mark or exclamation mark) at the end.

---

## shape poem

a poem in which the layout of the words reflects an aspect of the subject. There is a huge variety of shape poems.

see **calligrams**, **concrete poems**

---

## shared reading

in shared reading the teacher, as an expert reader, models the reading process by reading the text to the learners. The text chosen may be at a level which would be too difficult for the readers to read independently. The teacher

demonstrates use of cues and strategies such as syntax, initial letter, re-reading. Learners have opportunities to join in with the reading, singly or chorally, and are later encouraged to re-read part or all of the text.

### shared writing

a classroom process where the teacher models the writing process for children: free from the physical difficulties of writing, children can observe, and subsequently be involved in, planning, composition, redrafting, editing and publishing through the medium of the teacher. Shared writing is interactive in nature and is appropriate for teaching all forms and genres.

### simile

the writer creates an image in readers' minds by comparing a subject to something else: *as happy as a lark*; *as strong as an ox*. Many similes are **idiomatic**: *he smokes like a chimney*.

### singular and plural

Singular forms are used to refer to one thing, person etc. For example: *tree, student, party*.

Many nouns (countable nouns) can be **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one). The plural is usually marked by the ending -s: *trees, students, parties*.

Some plural forms are irregular. For example: *children, teeth, mice*.

Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: *butter, cotton, electricity, money, happiness*.

**Verbs, pronouns, and determiners** sometimes have different singular and plural forms:

*He was late*

*Where is the key? Have you seen it?*

*Do you like this hat?*

*They were late*

*Where are the keys? Have you seen them?*

*Do you like these shoes?*

Note that *they/them/their* (plural words) are sometimes used to refer back to singular words that don't designate a specific person, such as *anyone* or *somebody*. In such cases, *they* usually means 'he or she':

*If anyone wants to ask a question, they can ask me later. (= he or she can ask me)*

*Did everybody do their homework?*

*Work with a partner. Ask them their name.*

See also **agreement, pronoun**

### skim

read to get an initial overview of the subject matter and main ideas of a passage.

### slang

words and phrases which are used in informal context, often linked with certain regions or used by people identifying with particular groups. May differentiate that group from others.

---

## sonnet

a poem of 14 lines. May follow any rhyme scheme. Two examples of rhyme schemes:

- a. Petrarchan rhyme: *a b b a a b b a* followed by two or three other rhymes in remaining six lines;
  - b. Elizabethan rhyme: *a b a b c d c d e f e f g g*
- 

## speech, speech marks

see **direct speech** and **indirect speech**

---

## spelling log

a personal, ongoing record of words which are being learnt. Pupils would decide, with the teacher's guidance, words to be learnt. These words would be kept in a folder so the pupil can work on them during the week with a partner or teacher, or at home. Once learnt, the words can be added to the pupil's record.

---

## standard English

Standard English is the variety of English used in public communication, particularly in writing. It is the form taught in schools and used by educated speakers. It is not limited to a particular region and can be spoken with any accent.

There are differences in vocabulary and grammar between standard English and other varieties. For example, *we were robbed* and *look at those trees* are standard English; *we was robbed* and *look at them trees* are non-standard.

To communicate effectively in a range of situations - written and oral - it is necessary to be able to use standard English, and to recognise when it is appropriate to use it in preference to any other variety.

Note that standard British English is not the only standard variety; other English-speaking countries, such as the United States and Australia, have their own standard forms.

see also **agreement**, **dialect**, **double negative**

---

## stanza

a verse or set of lines of poetry, the pattern of which is repeated throughout the poem.

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## story board

a plan for a visual text (video, film, etc) which demonstrates the plot and critical events through a sequence of pictures. Children may do a story board after reading to demonstrate comprehension; story-boarding may also be used to plan a piece of writing.

---

## subject and object

In the sentence *John kicked the ball*, the subject is 'John', and the object is 'the ball'.

The subject is the person or thing about which something is said. In sentences with a subject and an object, the subject typically carries out an action, while the object is the person or thing affected by the action. In declarative sentences (statements), the subject normally goes before the verb; the object goes after the verb.

Some verbs (eg *give*, *show*, *buy*) can have two objects, indirect and direct. For example:

*She gave the man some money.*

Here, 'some money' is the direct object (= what she gave). 'The man' is the indirect object (= the person who receives the direct object).

When a verb has an object, it is transitive, eg *find a job*, *like chocolate*, *lay the table*. If it has no object, it is intransitive (eg *go*, *talk*, *lie*).

see also **active** and **passive, complement**

---

### suffix

A suffix is a **morpheme** which is added to the end of a word. There are two main categories:

- a. An **inflectional** suffix changes the tense or grammatical status of a word, eg from present to past (*worked*) or from singular to plural (*accidents*).
- b. A **derivational** suffix changes the word class, eg from verb to noun (*worker*) or from noun to adjective (*accidental*).

---

### syllable

Each beat in a word is a syllable. Words with only one beat (*cat*, *fright*, *jail*) are called **monosyllabic**; words with more than one beat (*super*, *coward*, *superficiality*) are **polysyllabic**.

---

### synonym

words which have the same meaning as another word, or very similar: *wet/damp*. Avoids overuse of any word; adds variety.

---

### synopsis

a brief summary or outline of a paragraph, chapter or book.

---

### syntax

Syntax is the study of **sentence** structure, ie how words are used together in a sentence.

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### tanka

Japanese poem based on the **haiku** but with two additional lines giving a complete picture of an event or mood. Traditionally, when a member of the Japanese court wrote a haiku for a friend, the receiver would add two lines and return it, giving a total of five lines with 31 syllables in the pattern 5 7 5 7 7.

---

### tautology

use of an extra word in a phrase or sentence which unnecessarily repeats an idea: *this annual event is staged yearly, this unacceptably poor work is of a low standard.*

---

### tense

A tense is a verb form that most often indicates time. English verbs have two basic tenses, present and past, and each of these can be simple or continuous. For example:

**present***I play* (simple)*I am playing* (continuous)**past***I played* (simple)*I was playing* (continuous)

Additionally, all these forms can be perfect (with *have*):

**present perfect***I have played* (perfect)*I have been playing* (perfect continuous)**past perfect***I had played* (perfect)*I had been playing* (perfect continuous)

English has no specific future tense. Future time can be expressed in a number of ways using *will* or present tenses. For example:

*John will arrive tomorrow.**John will be arriving tomorrow.**John is going to arrive tomorrow.**John is arriving tomorrow.**John arrives tomorrow.*

see also **verb**

**text**

language organised to communicate. Includes written, spoken and electronic forms.

**text type**

this term describes texts which share a purpose: to inform/persuade/describe. Whole texts or parts of texts with specific features - patterns of language, structure, vocabulary - which help them achieve this purpose may be described as belonging to a particular text type. These attributes are not obligatory, but are useful in discussing text and in supporting development of a range of writing skills.

Texts may consist of mixed genres: for example, a guide-book may contain procedural text (the path or route) and report (information about exhibits).

**theme**

the subject of a piece of writing. This may not be explicitly stated, but can be deduced by the reader. For example, many traditional stories have similar themes: the triumph of good over evil, cunning over strength, kindness over beauty.

**thesaurus**

a reference text which groups words by meaning. A thesaurus can help writers to select words, consider the full range of alternatives and vary words which are used frequently: *said, went, nice*.

**trigraph**

three letters representing one phoneme: *high; fudge*.

**verb**

A verb is a word that expresses an action, a happening, a process or a state. It can be thought of as a 'doing' or 'being' word. In the sentence *Mark is tired and wants to go to bed*, 'is', 'wants' and 'go' are verbs. Sometimes two or more words make up a verb phrase, such as *are going*, *didn't want*, *has been waiting*.

Most verbs (except modal verbs, such as *can* or *will*) have four or five different forms. For example:

base form or infinitive	+ -s	+ -ing (present participle)	simple past	past participle
<i>wait</i>	<i>waits</i>	<i>waiting</i>		<i>waited</i>
<i>make</i>	<i>makes</i>	<i>making</i>		<i>made</i>
<i>drive</i>	<i>drives</i>	<i>driving</i>	<i>drove</i>	<i>driven</i>

A verb can be present or past:

*I wait/she waits* (present)

*I waited/she waited* (past)

Most verbs can occur in simple or continuous forms (*be* + *-ing*):

*I make* (simple present)/*I'm making* (present continuous)

*she drove* (simple past)/*she was driving* (past continuous)

A verb can also be perfect (with *have*):

*I have made/I have been making* (present perfect)

*he had driven/he had been driving* (past perfect)

If a verb is regular, the simple past and the past participle are the same, and end in *-ed*. For example:

*wanted*

*played*

*answered*

Verbs that do not follow this pattern are irregular. For example:

*make/made*

*catch/caught*

*see/saw/seen*

*come/came/come*

see also **active** and **passive**, **auxiliary verbs**, **infinitive**, **modal verbs**, **participle**, **person**, **tense**

**voice**

see **active and passive**

**vowel**

a phoneme produced without audible friction or closure. Every syllable contains a vowel. A vowel phoneme may be

represented by one or more letters. These may be vowels (*maid*, or a combination of vowels and consonants (*start*; *could*).

---

### word class

The main word classes are **verb, noun, adjective, adverb, pronoun, determiner, preposition** and **conjunction**. These are all dealt with separately in this glossary.

Note that a word can belong to more than one class. For example:

<i>play</i>	verb ( <i>I play</i> ) or noun ( <i>a play</i> )
<i>fit</i>	noun ( <i>a fit</i> ), verb ( <i>they fit</i> ) or adjective ( <i>I'm fit</i> )
<i>until</i>	preposition ( <i>until Monday</i> ) or conjunction ( <i>until I come back</i> )
<i>like</i>	verb ( <i>I like</i> ) or preposition ( <i>do it like this</i> )
<i>hard</i>	adjective ( <i>it's hard work</i> ) or adverb ( <i>I work hard</i> )
<i>that</i>	determiner ( <i>that book</i> ) or pronoun ( <i>who did that?</i> ) or conjunction ( <i>he said that he ...</i> )

---

### writing frame

a structured prompt to support writing. A writing frame often takes the form of opening phrases of paragraphs, and may include suggested vocabulary. It often provides a template for a particular text type.

## Further reading

The Linguistics Association maintain a page of further information at <http://www.art.man.ac.uk/english/staff/dd/reading.htm>

# Grammatical subject index

Grammatical feature	Teaching units			
	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Adjectives	10	26		44
Adverbs		23	39	44
Apostrophes		27		
Audience			35, 41	53
Capitalisation	4, 6, 12			
Commas	7, 19	24, 28	40	
Complex sentences	17	28	34, 40, 43	47
Compound sentences	17	28		
Conditionals				51
Conjunctions	17	32	34	47
Connectives	18			46
Direct speech	4, 16		36	
Exclamation marks	3			
Formal language			35	49
Full stops	6			
Grammatical agreement	14, 15	20		
Imperative			37	
Negatives		31		
Note taking	13			50
Nouns	7, 11		39	44
Paragraphing	8, 9	25, 28	38	52
Passive				45, 48
Pluralisation	11	30		
Preposition			42	44
Presentation	5			
Pronouns	15		39	
Punctuation			34, 41, 43	46
Purpose			35, 41	53
Question marks	3			
Questions		31		
Reported speech			36	
Simple sentences	6	20, 28		
Speech marks	4, 16		36	
Standard English			33	54
Subordinate clauses		28	34, 40, 43	
Verbs	1, 2, 7, 14	22, 30	37	
Verb tenses		21	37	