# Grammar and Punctuation <br> JARGON BUSTER 

Oxford School Improvement

| Term | Definition |
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| active voice | In a sentence with an active verb, the subject of the verb is doing the action. This is called the active voice. <br> For example: Hilda strode into the goal area. |
| adjective | An adjective gives more information about a noun. It often goes before the noun or after the verb 'to be': is, am, are, was, were, have been, etc. For example: The little, green bird pecked the juicy apple. The apple was delicious. |
| adverb | An adverb gives more information about a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a clause. An adverb tells you how, when, where or how often something happens. <br> For example: Later, a cat crept up the tree as the little green bird eagerly pecked the juicy apple twice and ate it noisily. <br> Some adverbs make a comment or link ideas. <br> For example: Fortunately, we won. However, the other team played well. <br> Some adverbs are used to say how likely or possible something is. <br> For example: We'll definitely come to the party. <br> Some adverbs are used for emphasis. <br> For example: The bag was terribly heavy. He worked very quickly. |
| adverbial | A word or phrase that gives more information about a verb or clause. An adverbial can be an adverb, a phrase or a subordinate clause. <br> For example: The bird ate the apple noisily. <br> The cat sleeps all day. <br> We'll play when we get home. |
| ambiguity | Ambiguity is when something has more than one possible meaning. <br> For example: 'I hate annoying people.' This could mean 'I do not like to annoy people' or 'I do not like people who are annoying'. <br> Another example: 'It is a large furniture shop.' This could mean 'It is a shop which sells large furniture’ or 'It is a large shop which sells furniture' |
| antonym | Antonyms are words that mean the opposite of each other, such as wet and dry, full and empty, open and closed. |


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| apostrophe | An apostrophe can be used to show when a word has been made shorter by dropping one or more letters. This is called a contraction. You usually use contractions in informal writing or when writing direct speech. <br> For example: <br> I am = I'm did not = didn't <br> could not = couldn't we are = we're <br> you have = you've $\quad$ she will/she shall = she'll <br> An apostrophe can also show ownership or possession. <br> This is called a possessive apostrophe. Possessive apostrophes show that something belongs to, or is for, someone or something. Often, a possessive apostrophe is used with a possessive s. <br> If a singular word doesn't end in $-s$, add 's: <br> For example: the boy's pen <br> If a singular word ends in $-s$, add either 's or just ': <br> For example: James's hat; Nicholas' hat <br> If a singular word ends in -ss, still add 's: <br> For example: the princess's crown <br> If a plural ends in $-s$, just add ': <br> For example: the girls' bags; the visitors' car park; the calves' horns <br> If a plural doesn't end in $-s$, add 's: <br> For example: men's coats |
| article | The words the, an and $a$ are called articles. They are a type of determiner. |
| definite article | The determiner the is the definite article. For example: The book is on the table. |
| indefinite article | The determiner $a / a n$ is the indefinite article. For example: Bring me a book. |
| brackets () | Brackets can be used to separate a word or phrase that has been added to a sentence as an explanation or afterthought. If you take out the word or phrase between the brackets, the sentence should still make sense. For example: My birthday cake was chocolate (which is my absolute favourite) with chocolate icing and chocolate buttons on top as well. |
| bullet points | Bullet points are used to organise a list of points in order to make it clear. The text introducing the list of bullet points should end with a colon. <br> For example: <br> We gave the following reasons for wanting to have a party: <br> It was our last year in primary school. <br> We wanted to say goodbye to our teachers. <br> We had worked hard all year. |

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\begin{array}{|l|l|}\hline \text { Term } & \text { Definition } \\
\hline \text { clause } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A clause is a phrase which has a verb as its head, or key word. The other } \\
\text { words add meaning to the verb. }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { main clause } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A main clause is a clause that can be used on its own as a sentence. } \\
\text { For example: The bird pecked the apple. It flew away. } \\
\text { Main clauses can be joined with coordinating conjunctions such as and, } \\
\text { but and or. } \\
\text { For example: The bird pecked the apple and it flew away. }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { subordinate clause } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A subordinate clause helps to give more meaning to the main clause. It } \\
\text { cannot exist on its own as it is not a complete sentence. A subordinate } \\
\text { clause often starts with a subordinating conjunction such as although, } \\
\text { because, before, if, since or when. } \\
\text { For example: The bird pecked the apple before it flew away. }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { relative clause } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A relative clause is a type of subordinate clause. It is connected to the } \\
\text { main clause by a relative pronoun such as that, which, who, whom or } \\
\text { whose. } \\
\text { For example: I enjoyed the film that we saw last night. }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { cohesion } & \begin{array}{l}\text { Cohesion refers to the ways in which the writer makes the different parts } \\
\text { of a text link together, for example by: } \\
\text { grouping sentences together in paragraphs }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { colon } \\
\text { using particular words and phrases to link ideas } \\
\text { linking different paragraphs together }\end{array}
$$, $$
\begin{array}{l}\text { cohesive device } \\
\hline\end{array}
$$ \begin{array}{l}A cohesive device is a word or phrase which shows how the different parts <br>
of a text link together. <br>
Use determiners and pronouns to link back to other words: <br>
For example: Mr Smith came in with his dog. The dog and he were both <br>
old. <br>
Use a conjunction to link words or groups of words within a sentence. <br>
For example: Mr Smith and his dog were both old. <br>
Use adverbs and adverbials to link between sentences. <br>
For example: I saw a robin in the garden. Later, I saw a green bird. <br>
Use ellipsis when a word or phrase has already been used and does not <br>
need to be repeated again. <br>
For example: 'What do you want to eat?' 'A biscuit.' 'I want to eat' has <br>

been missed out.)\end{array}\right\}\)| A colon can be used to introduce a list. |
| :--- |
| For example: I love the following foods: apples, seeds, grapes and nuts. |
| A colon can be used to introduce examples or explanations. The words |
| after the colon give more information about what comes before it. |
| For example: The bird eats lots of snacks: he needs lots of energy for |
| flying. |
| You do not need to use a capital letter for the word that comes after a |
| colon, unless it is a proper noun or the word $I$. |

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\begin{array}{|l|l|}\hline \text { Term } & \text { Definition } \\
\hline \text { comma } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A comma can be used to separate items in a list. } \\
\text { For example: I like peas, carrots, beans and pizza. } \\
\text { Some texts use the serial, or Oxford, comma after the penultimate item in } \\
\text { a list. } \\
\text { For example: I ate an orange, an apple, and raspberries. } \\
\text { A comma can be used to change the meaning of a sentence. } \\
\text { For example: I told him, honestly. I told him honestly. } \\
\text { A comma can be used to avoid ambiguity. } \\
\text { For example: I'd like some jelly and ice cream for my sister. } \\
\text { I'd like some jelly, and ice cream for my sister. } \\
\text { A comma can be used before a clause starting with or, and or but. } \\
\text { For example: Did you paint this picture yourself, or did someone help } \\
\text { you? } \\
\text { A comma is used after a subordinate clause at the start of a sentence. } \\
\text { For example: If we're really quiet, we won't disturb Grandad. }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { consonant } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A comma is also usually used after a fronted adverbial. } \\
\text { For example: With a shake, the dog dried itself off. } \\
\text { A comma is used to separate the name of the person being spoken to } \\
\text { from the rest of the sentence. } \\
\text { For example: Kids, dinner's ready! }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { command } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A command is a sentence which gives an order or instruction. } \\
\text { For example: Take this food away! }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { comjunction } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A sentence that is a command or instruction is usually in the imperative, } \\
\text { with the verb first. } \\
\text { An exclamation mark can also come at the end of a command. }\end{array} \\
\hline \text { conjunction } & \begin{array}{l}\text { A compound word is made up of two words joined together. Bedroom and } \\
\text { football are compound words. }\end{array}
$$ <br>
\hline All other sounds are called consonants and are represented by the other <br>

letters in the alphabet, which are called consonant letters.\end{array}\right\}\)| A conjunction links words or groups of words within a sentence. |
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| For example: Later, a cat crept up the tree as the bird pecked the apple |
| and ate it noisily. |


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| dash | A dash can introduce further information and can be used instead of a colon, a comma or, occasionally, brackets. After the dash, there may be a list or a main or subordinate clause. <br> For example: The fire spread quickly - I was scared. <br> We catch the bus - the blue one - at 3.15p.m. at the station. |
| determiner | A determiner goes in front of a noun and its adjectives to help to tell you which person or thing the sentence is about, or how much or how many of them there are. <br> For example: The little green bird pecked one juicy apple and ate it as he sat on a branch. |
| direct speech | When people's exact words are written down in inverted commas, this is called direct speech. <br> For example: "I'm beginning to understand," he said. |
| ellipsis | Ellipsis is when one or more words are missed out because it is obvious what is meant. <br> For example: <br> We're off to the park. I can post your letter. <br> In the example above, 'on the way to the park' has been left out. <br> Ellipsis also refers to three dots meaning that a word has been missed out or a sentence has not been finished, for example to suggest tension. <br> For example: The door handle turned, a cough was heard, and ... |
| exclamation | An exclamation is something you say or shout that shows you are very happy, angry, or surprised. In writing you use an exclamation mark after an exclamation. <br> For example: Oh dear! |
| exclamation mark ! | An exclamation mark comes at the end of an exclamation. <br> It shows that something is being exclaimed, or said with a lot of feeling. For example: I'm so late! Hurrah! It's a goal! No! <br> An exclamation mark can also come at the end of a command. <br> For example: No! Run! Stop it! |
| full stop | A full stop comes at the end of a sentence. It shows that a sentence is complete and finished. <br> For example: It is a full sentence. I am the tallest in my class. |


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| future | There are several different ways to talk about the future in English: <br> The verb 'will' followed by the infinitive of the verb. <br> For example: I will leave next week. <br> The verb 'will' followed by 'be' and the present participle. <br> For example: I will be leaving next week. <br> The present progressive of the verb 'go' followed by 'to' and the verb. For example: I am going to leave next week. <br> The present progressive of the verb. <br> For example: I am leaving next week. <br> The present tense of the verb. <br> For example: I leave next week. |
| homophone | Homophones are words that have the same pronunciation but different meanings, origins or spelling. <br> For example: new and knew; threw and through; waste and waist |
| hyphen | A hyphen is used to join two or more words that should be read as a single unit. A hyphen is shorter than a dash. <br> For example: great-aunt; fair-haired <br> A hyphen is also used to help avoid ambiguity. <br> For example: a man eating fish; a man-eating fish <br> A hyphen is sometimes used between a prefix and a root word, especially if the hyphen makes the word easier to read. <br> For example: co-own; re-educate |
| inflection | An inflection is a change to the ending or spelling of a word, which changes its meaning slightly. <br> For example: walks, walked; house, houses; mouse, mice <br> Sometimes the whole word changes. <br> For example: went is an inflection of go. |
| inverted commas 66699 | Inverted commas, or speech marks, show when people are actually speaking. <br> For example: "I'm beginning to understand," he said. <br> The punctuation at the end of the spoken words always comes inside the final set of inverted commas. <br> For example: "I can't hold on any longer!" Alex cried. <br> You may see single (' ') or double (" ") inverted commas, depending on what you are reading. It is important to use the same style across work for consistency. |


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| modal verb | Modal verbs are a type of auxiliary verb. <br> Modal verbs are: can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should, must and ought to. <br> Modal verbs are used for expressing: <br> possibility, ability or likelihood - can, could, may, might, should <br> necessity - must, ought to, should <br> the future - shall, will, would |
| morphology | A morpheme is a unit of meaning that cannot be divided further. <br> Morphemes are the bits that make up words, such as read and ing in reading or read and $s$ in reads. A word consists of one or more morphemes. <br> Some morphemes are words in their own right; others, such as many prefixes and suffixes, are not. |
| noun | A noun names a person, place or thing. <br> For example: apple, dog, team, chair, happiness, beauty. <br> Test whether something is a noun by seeing whether a determiner in front of it makes sense. <br> For example: the apple, my dog, their team, her chair, that beauty could all make sense in a sentence but not the reads, those cuddly, her went. |
| common noun | A common noun is a noun that refers to people or things in general. For example: dog, tree, bridge, chair, beauty, excitement, advice, bread |
| proper noun | A proper noun is a noun that identifies a particular person, place or thing. <br> Proper nouns begin with capital letters. <br> For example: James, Africa, Friday, December |
| noun phrase | A noun phrase is a phrase with a noun as its head, or key word. For example: The ball was lost. <br> A noun phrase can be expanded by adding words before or after it. For example: The ball by the fence was lost. <br> The red cricket ball by the fence was lost. |
| object | The object of a verb is who or what is acted upon by the verb. In a statement, the object is usually the noun (or noun phrase or pronoun) just after the verb. <br> For example: The bird pecked the apple. <br> The bird pecked it. |
| paragraph | A paragraph is a group of linked sentences that are usually about the same thing. A new paragraph starts when you are writing about a new idea, person, place or event. |


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| parenthesis | Brackets () commas, and dashes - can all be used to separate a word or phrase that has been added to a sentence as an explanation or afterthought. <br> The word or phrase inside the brackets, commas or dashes is called a parenthesis. <br> For example: I looked up, squinting because of the sun, and saw the birds flying across the sky. |
| passive voice | In a passive sentence, the subject of the verb is the one that has something done to it, so the do-er disappears or is mentioned after 'by'. <br> For example: The ball was caught. <br> The ball was caught by the little girl. <br> You can tell that a sentence is passive because: <br> the subject of the verb has the action done to it <br> there is part of the verb 'to be' (such as 'was' or 'is') or a verb like 'get', followed by a past participle <br> the person or thing carrying out the action is introduced by the word 'by', or not at all. |
| phrase | A phrase is a group of words that can be understood as a unit. For example: her table is a noun phrase. |
| plural | The plural of a noun is used when there is more than one. It is usually formed by adding -s. <br> For example: cat becomes cats; cake becomes cakes <br> Some nouns have irregular plural endings or no plural ending at all. <br> For example: bush becomes bushes; sheep stays as sheep; mouse becomes mice |
| prefix | A prefix is a morpheme that can be added to the beginning of a root word. <br> Different prefixes have different meanings so, when you add a prefix to a word, you change its meaning and make a new word. <br> For example: <br> dis + appear = disappear <br> im + possible = impossible <br> un + well = unwell <br> sub + marine = submarine |
| preposition | A preposition usually comes before a noun or pronoun. It often shows place or direction. <br> For example: Later, a cat crept up the tree. Suddenly, the cat tried to pounce on the little green bird, but crashed into the tree. <br> Some prepositions show time or cause. <br> For example: After this, the cat was furious with the bird. <br> More prepositions: <br> above, against, behind, below, beside, between, in, inside, near, on, off, onto, outside, over, through, under |


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| progressive | The progressive (or 'continuous') form is created by the verb 'to be' followed by the present participle of the verb. It describes an ongoing event. <br> For example: The bird is pecking at the apples. <br> The cat was looking at the bird. <br> The past progressive, formed with the past tense of the verb 'to be' can show that something was in the process of happening when something else happened. <br> For example: I was going to the shops when I lost my glove. |
| pronoun | A pronoun can be used instead of a noun. Using a pronoun avoids repeating the noun again and again. <br> For example: The bird pecked the apple and ate it as he sat on a branch. |
| personal pronoun | Personal pronouns replace the name of a person or thing. <br> The subject personal pronouns are I, you, he/she/it, we and they. <br> The object personal pronouns are me, you, him/her/it, us and them. |
| possessive pronoun | Possessive pronouns tell you who something belongs to. For example: This apple is mine! |
| relative pronoun | Relative pronouns introduce more information about the noun. <br> For example: The bird that sat on the branch was eating an apple. <br> The words where and when are also sometimes used as relative pronouns. For example: This is the house where I grew up. |
| punctuation | Punctuation marks are used in sentences to make the meaning clear. Sentences can mean very different things if they don't have punctuation. <br> For example: <br> Let's eat Granny! <br> Let's eat, Granny! |
| question | A question is a sentence that is used to find out information. <br> You can tell that a sentence is a question because: <br> - it ends with a question mark <br> - it asks something <br> - if there is a modal verb, it usually comes before the subject <br> - it might start with how, when, what, why or where. |
| question mark ? | A question mark comes at the end of a sentence which is asking a question. <br> For example: Where are you? What is your favourite colour? |
| root word | A root word can stand on its own without suffixes or prefixes. For example: teach is the root word of teaching and teacher. <br> Compounds contain two root words. <br> For example: rain + bow = rainbow; white + board = whiteboard |


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| semicolon | A semicolon can be used between two related main clauses. <br> For example: The film was brilliant; I had a great time. |
|  | A semicolon can separate longer phrases in a list that has been <br> introduced by <br> a colon, or which is more complicated than a simple list of words. <br> For example: The children need to bring with them: a hot-water bottle or <br> an extra blanket if the weather is cold; a cup, a plate and a bowl; a knife, <br> a fork and a spoon. <br> Do not use a comma to join sentences or main clauses. If you want to <br> join sentences using punctuation, choose a semicolon, a colon or, if you <br> are writing informally, a dash. |
| sentence | A sentence tells you something, asks you something, asks you to do <br> something or exclaims about something. <br> In writing, all sentences start with a capital letter and end with a full <br> stop, question mark or exclamation mark. <br> Sentences consist of one or more clauses. <br> All sentences have a verb and, in most sentences, the verb has a subject. |
| subjunctive | A single-clause sentence consists of one main clause. <br> For example: The bird ate the apple. |
| single-clause sentence |  |


| Term | Definition |
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| suffix | A suffix is a morpheme that can be added to the end of a root word. <br> Different suffixes have different meanings so, when you add a suffix to a <br> word, you change its meaning and make a new word. <br> For example: <br> fast +er faster <br> sad + ness = sadness <br> joy + ful = joyful <br> hope + less = hopeless <br> apple + s = apples <br> advert + ise = advertise |
| syllable | A word or part of a word that contains one vowel sound when you say it. <br> For example: vow-el, con-nec-tive |
| synonym | A syllable sounds like a beat in the word: vow-el has two syllables; con- <br> nec-tive has three. |
| tense | Synonyms are words that mean the same - or nearly the same - as each <br> other, such as big and huge, or horrible and nasty. <br> For example: <br> They lived in a big house. <br> They lived in an enormous house. |
| present tense | The verb in a sentence shows the tense. It shows when something <br> happens. |
| past tense | The present tense shows that something is happening now or is true now. <br> For example: The bird likes apples and often pecks them to see if they are <br> good. <br> The present tense is also used to show something is going to happen (or <br> about to happen) in the future. <br> For example: I start school next year. <br> See also the entry for 'progressive'. |
| The past tense is used to describe something that has happened. The <br> past tense is normally shown by adding -ed but some verbs change <br> completely. <br> For example: The bird pecked the apple. <br> I went to the cinema. <br> The past tense is also used to talk about a situation that is imagined or <br> wished for. <br> For example: If we left now, we'd be able to watch the match on TV. <br> I wish I had a dog. |  |


| Term | Definition |
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| verb | A verb often names an action but it can also describe feelings or states. <br> For example: The bird pecks the apple and eats it. The bird is happy. <br> The most basic form of a verb is called the infinitive. Tenses are formed <br> by inflecting the infinitive. |
| regular verb | Regular verbs change their endings in predictable ways. <br> In the present tense most verbs add an -s in their third person form. <br> For example: I run, she runs. <br> The suffix -ed is added to form the past tense. <br> For example: I shout, we shouted. <br> -ing is added to form participles. <br> For example: I listen, she is listening, we were listening, they will be <br> listening. |
| irregular verb | Irregular verbs have varied forms, especially in the past tense. <br> For example: we swim, we swam, we have swum; you take, you took, you <br> have taken. |
| vowel | A vowel is a sound represented by the following letters: $a, e, i, o, u$ and <br> sometimes $y$. |
| word family | Word families are words related to each other by spelling, grammar and/ <br> or meaning. <br> For example: noise, noisy, noiseless |

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