

Grammar



A Parents' Guide

A guide to the new national curriculum's grammatical terms for those of us who weren't taught grammar at school.



AMBIGUITY

YEAR 5

Ambiguity can happen when a word in a sentence has more than one meaning.

FOR EXAMPLE

We all saw her duck.

The word duck could be a noun (as in the lady's pet duck), or the word could be a verb.

Ambiguity can also happen due to sentence structure.

FOR EXAMPLE

John bathed his dog wearing blue trousers.

It isn't clear if John is wearing blue trousers whilst washing his dog, or if his dog is wearing blue trousers whilst having a bath.



AUXILIARY VERBS

YEAR 5

Auxiliary verbs are verbs that combine with other verbs to make a complete verb.

The most common auxiliary verbs are
Be: am, is, are, was, were, being, been
Have: has, have, had, having
Do: does, do, did

They help express the tense, voice, or mood of a sentence.

FOR EXAMPLE

I am working.

used to make the tense continuous

Jim and Sam have seen the film.

used to make the present perfect and past perfect tense

I do not like tennis.

used to form negatives or questions



MODAL VERBS

YEAR 5

Modal verbs can reflect the probability of whether or not something is going to happen.

The main modal verbs are
can, could, ought, may, must, might,
would, will, shall, should

Modal verbs are finite verbs. They have a subject and can stand on their own.

FOR EXAMPLE

That animal might be dangerous.

Subject Modal verb

You must.



BRACKETS

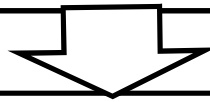
YEAR 5

We use brackets to provide an aside or give extra information in a sentence.



The sentence should always make sense without the extra information.

FOR EXAMPLE



The boys (five in all) wanted to play football.

REMEMBER!

Make sure full stops go outside the brackets if they are at the end of a sentence.



COHESION

YEAR 5

Cohesion is something a paragraph has when its ideas are clearly linked.

Cohesion can be created through determiners and pronouns referring back to earlier words.

The teacher was looking forward to meeting her new class. She was also nervous.

The pronoun 'she' refers back to the teacher.

OR

My uncle eats four pies a day. Consequently, he's overweight.

The adverb 'consequently' tells us the weight is a result of the pies.



RELATIVE CLAUSES

YEAR 5

A relative clause is a subordinate clause that refers back to a noun or noun phrase.

It usually does this by using a relative pronoun. A relative clause can be used with the subject of a sentence.

The lady, who makes a lot of noise, should be quiet.

The relative pronoun 'who' refers back to 'The lady' - the subject of the sentence. The relative clause can also be used with the object of a sentence

The school banned mobile phones that can access the internet.

Phones are an object of this sentence, but the pronoun 'that' refers to the phones.



DASHES

YEAR 5

Dashes can show an interruption, or parenthesis in a sentence.

Dashes can be used in pairs or on their own. The interruption will tend to be more aggressive than with commas or brackets.

FOR EXAMPLE

The teachers want what's best for us - or so they say.

REMEMBER!

The above dash is an em dash. An en dash can be used to show sequence.



PARENTHESIS

YEAR 5

Brackets and dashes can be used for parenthesis, but so can commas. Commas can be less forceful.

Any words inside the parenthesis can be left out and will still leave a meaningful sentence.

FOR EXAMPLE

The sandwich, made by my mother, was tasty.

The sentence would still be meaningful without the section in between the commas.

REMEMBER!

Commas are normally the best choice for parenthesis if you want to be more subtle.

