

Oakdale Primary
School's
Grammar and
Punctuation Guide
for Parents



Year 5 and 6

Introduction

The use of grammar and the understanding of grammatical terminology is now expected of all primary school aged children. Children learn grammar at Oakdale in context during their literacy lessons. In order to reinforce this (often quite complex learning) we will send home regular grammar consolidation work as homework.

This parent's guide has been put together with explanations of the grammar terms used in different year groups across school; with examples so that parents are better able to support their children at home. We hope that you find it useful.



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Nouns and pronouns

A proper noun is the name of a person or a place, these start with capital letters. A common noun describes a class of objects and does not have a capital letter. A pronoun is a word which replaces a noun.

For example:

***Sarah, Peterborough** (proper nouns)*

***car, animal, planet, door,** (common nouns)*

*Tom walked into the room, **he** could feel the buzz around **it**. (pronouns)*

Modifying adjectives

Adjectives are used in sentences to give extra detail. They describe nouns (the names of things). They can be used to create expanded noun phrases.

For example:

*The **large, black** cat moved silently.*

*When the **wooden** door opened, the **rusty** hinges creaked.*

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words which are used to connect clauses or sentences or to coordinate words in the same clause. Conjunctions are words such as: because, but, yet, so, and, if, when, while, although.

They can be used in different places in a clause or a sentence.

For example:

While *I was sleeping, my cat crept into my room.*

*The children got very wet **because** it rained all the way home.*

Adverbs

Adverbs are words or phrases which can modify the meaning of an adjective, a verb or another adverb. They can be separated into different categories:

Manner (gently); Place (here); Time (later) or Degree (very).

For example:

*I **gently** placed the figurine on the shelf.*

***Here** is where the dog escaped from.*

***Later** that day the children ate lunch.*

*It was **very** important that the class finish the book.*

Expanded noun phrases

Noun phrases are groups of words which work together and contain a noun. Expanded noun phrases add extra detail.

For example:

The girl - (noun phrase)

*The girl with **red** hair (expanded by an adjective)*

*The girl with **red** hair **skipped quickly** across the road. (expanded by an adjective, verb and adverb)*

Single and multi-clause sentences.

Sentences are made up of collections of words called '**clauses**' and 'phrases'. It is easy to recognise a **clause** because it could be a complete sentence on its own. Single clause sentences are short, multi-clause sentences are longer and more complex.

For example:

He ran. (Single clause sentence made of a *noun* and a *verb*)

The doctor looked into the boy's ear, noticing that it looked very red and sore.

(a multi-clause sentence)

Direct speech and inverted commas

Direct speech is the reporting of speech by repeating the actual words of a speaker.

Inverted commas are used to show, in writing, which words are being spoken. These are also often referred to as speech marks.

For example:

"I'm going," she said.

"The doors will open soon," explained the shopkeeper.

Prepositions and preposition phrases

Prepositions come before a noun or a pronoun to explain its relationship (or position) to other words in the sentence.

For example:

*The man **on** the platform.*

*She arrived **after** dinner.*

***Under** the bridge, lived the troll.*

*It was **behind** the sofa that she found the toy car she had been looking for.*

Present perfect form of verbs

Present perfect tense is used for activities that started in the past but are still true now, or have an effect on what is happening now.

For example:

*We **have been** best friends all that time.*

*My friend Bob **has lived** in this town all his life.*

*My teacher says I **have taken** on some good habits in my writing.*

Apostrophes

Apostrophes can be used in two different ways. To replace letters in words which have been contracted (shortened) and to show possession of plural nouns.

For example:

He had not slept all night.

*He **hadn't** slept all night. (contraction)*

*The **boy's** reading book was worn and tatty from being read so many times.
(possession)*

Fronted Adverbials

Fronted adverbials can be adverbs (see adverb page) and adverbial phrases. They start a sentence and can help when varying sentence openings.

For example:

In the distance, he could see the ship moving towards the shore.

Totally overwhelmed, the captain of the football team lifted the trophy.

As soon as she could, the dancer rushed to the studio to rehearse.

Commas to avoid ambiguity

Commas can be used in different ways: to separate items in a list; after a fronted adverbial; to indicate extra information in a sentence and after direct speech. It is important sometimes that commas are used to make the meaning of sentences absolutely clear.

For example:

Let's eat grandma. (Grandma is being eaten!)

Let's eat, grandma. (Eating with grandma)

Rachel enjoys cooking her family and her dog.

Rachel enjoys cooking, her family and her dog.

Relative pronouns and clauses

A relative pronoun is used to link a clause or a phrase to a noun or pronoun. The most common relative pronouns are; *who, whom, which, whoever, where, when, that*. A relative clause starts with a relative pronoun and is usually 'dropped in' to a sentence and separated with commas.

For example:

*The robot, **which was clean and shiny**, moved around with ease.*

*Chris, **who always wanted to win**, accepted the 2nd place trophy with disgust.*

Passive and active voice

A sentence is written in the **active voice** when the subject of the sentence performs the action. A sentence is written in the **passive voice** when the subject of a sentence has an action done to it by someone or something else.

For example:

*The **girl was washing** the dog. (active voice, the girl is doing something to the dog)*

*The **dog was being washed** by the girl. (passive voice, the subject is now having something done to it by the girl)*

Modal verbs and adverbs

A modal verb is an auxiliary verb which can express necessity or possibility. Modal adverbs sometimes support the modal verb. Modal verbs include: must, should, could, would, will, shall. Modal adverbs include: likely, possibly, certainly, definitely.

For example:

It **should** rain tomorrow.

The sun **will** rise in the East.

I am **definitely** going to sleep tonight.

It is **likely** he **will** fail the test.

Punctuation for parenthesis

Punctuation can be used to separate a parenthesis (additional information which is not essential for the **meaning** of the sentence) from the rest of the sentence. Brackets, dashes and commas can all be used for parenthesis.

For example:

My brother - who thinks he's really cool- never brushes his hair.

Dinosaurs (which are now extinct) were a kind of reptile.

I lost my phone, which was my birthday present, when I went on the rollercoaster.

Semi-colons and colons

Semi-colons (;) are sometimes used to balance two sentences or clauses which are closely related in meaning or to separate a list of phrases. Colons are used to provide a pause before introducing related information.

For example:

The school hall was full; every child was inside for lunch due to the rain.

To make a perfect jam sandwich you need: some bread; butter or margarine and strawberry jam.

Hyphens

A hyphen joins two or more words together and must not be mistaken for a dash (which looks similar). Hyphens can help to make meaning clear in sentences.

For example:

Bird eating spider (a bird is eating a spider)

Bird-eating spider (a spider which eats birds)

Two foot stools (number of foot stools)

Two-foot stools (stools which are two feet high)