

HANOVER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Islington's Community of Schools

Grammar Policy and Scheme of Work

Written by Sangeeta Kerai and Kim Clapham, adapted by Jack Sloan

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Hanover Primary School



Islington's Community of Schools Exemplar Grammar Policy

Introduction

This policy, developed in partnership with Vittoria Primary School, defines what we mean by grammar and sets out the rationale underpinning an approach based on modern 'Grammar for Writing.' It makes explicit age related expectations for the teaching of different aspects of grammar from Year 1 through to Year 6. The teaching of grammar and pupil progress is seen as a collective, whole school responsibility based on consistency and continuity of approach. The policy identifies a range of 'fit for purpose' pedagogies and creative and interactive approaches which can be drawn upon to ensure pupils are engaged, motivated and learn successfully to their full potential.

What is Grammar?

The linguist David Crystal was asked to define grammar in terms that a nine-year-old child might understand. He suggested this definition: *It is the study of how we make sentences.* He used a very concrete analogy, suggesting sentences are made in the same way that a table might be made. *A table is made out of wood, put together according to certain conventions, so that it does the job it is intended to do. A sentence is made out of words, put together according to certain conventions, so they do the job they are intended to do.*

Why teach grammar?

Through grammar teaching we aim to improve children's writing by raising awareness of the key grammatical principles and to increase the range of grammatical choices open to pupils when they write. By Year 6, the great majority of pupils will be able to select and modify words and sentence structures effectively to create a particular effect in their writing and to create an impact on the reader. Grammatical terms are taught to develop the meta-language necessary to help children reflect upon, evaluate and restructure their use of language and ideas.

What does the research tell us?

The *Exeter Grammar for Writing Project: Summary Report* (December 2010) provides compelling data to support the teaching of modern grammar for writing. The headline finding from the quantitative data is that effectively embedded grammar teaching can have a significant impact on student writing performance. The intervention group improved their writing scores by 20% over the year, while the comparison group improved by 11%. Our grammar policy and practice is informed by unequivocal, evidence based, action research so that we promote high quality teaching and learning which maximises progress for all pupils.

The differences between spoken and written language

The characteristics of spoken language are very different from written language. Writing needs to be more concise and explicit, whereas spoken language often relies on context, facial expression, intonation, pause and gesture to convey meaning and create effect. As part of grammar study, we believe it is important that our pupils learn the conventions of Standard English so that they can adopt an appropriate level of formality in their writing, appropriate to audience and purpose.

What does progression in grammar teaching look like across the school?

The importance of the Early Years

Developing young children's confidence to express themselves clearly and confidently, using an interesting and developing range of vocabulary is an important aim of education. In the Foundation Stage, practitioners follow the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage and draw upon the principles of the *Every Child a Talker* (ECAT) project as the basis for promoting good speaking and listening. Importantly, this paves the way and lays a good foundation for developing children's oral and written language in the primary phase.

In the Foundation Stage:

- Practitioners orally model grammatically correct sentences, rephrasing standard forms sensitively as appropriate.
- Pupils learn through aural exposure to phrases and sentences through rhymes, games, story-telling, shared reading and listening stations.
- Through high quality interaction, and shared / guided reading and writing opportunities, practitioners model and encourage pupils to use a wide range of nouns, pronouns, prepositions and determiners. They draw upon high quality texts such as *Where's Spot?*, which offers an excellent way into extending children's use of prepositional language.
- Practitioners model and encourage pupils to use and extend their use of descriptive language, connectives and openers. Using high quality stories such as *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, combined with oral story re telling, and planned opportunities for children to re -enact the story, further promotes language development.

Through shared and guided reading and writing activities, practitioners focus on and model sentence demarcation using capital letters and full stops. Practitioners draw upon multi-sensory approaches, games and interactive activities to support pupils as they begin to generate complete sentences, explore and begin to apply capital letters and full stops. Popular multi -sensory approaches include story scribing (the 'helicopter approach'); Ros Wilson's *kung fu punctuation*; and punctuation using musical instruments.

Across the primary years, pupils focus on the following three features of grammar:

- text cohesion;
- sentence structure and punctuation;
- word choice and modification.

Text cohesion: *how sentences link*

- In KS1, pupils learn how to create a coherent sequence of ideas.
- Through KS2, pupils select from a wide range of connecting words and phrases and learn to use verbs and pronouns consistently to create a range of chronological and non-chronological texts covering non -fiction and narrative.

Sentence structure and punctuation

- At KS1, the emphasis is on structuring ideas in complete sentences, marked by capital letters and full stops.
- At KS2, children develop the ability to link ideas by sequencing and combining clauses. They explore doing this in a variety of ways to create impact and effect.

Word choice and modification

- At KS1, children develop their vocabulary so that they can select words and phrases to add interest and precision to their writing. During this phase, writing becomes more engaging and appropriate to the purpose.
- Throughout KS2, children learn how to enhance the meaning through word choice. They learn how to modify nouns and verbs to add focus, variety and interest to engage the reader.

How should grammar be taught?

Modern grammar draws upon a wide range of pedagogical approaches including: investigation, analysis, problem solving, language play (using group activities and multi-sensory approaches) and develops a growing awareness and interest in how language works. Grammar is a means to an end, not an end in itself; therefore, it must be strongly embedded within the teaching sequence from reading to writing. Sentence level teaching can only improve children's writing if it genuinely and continually connects with real and purposeful writing. Alongside discrete grammar skills sessions, we ensure pupils have frequent and regular opportunities to apply sentence levels skills in their own writing within literacy lessons and across the curriculum.

What pedagogical approaches and strategies do we use to teach grammar for writing?

Teachers draw upon a wide range of 'fit for purpose' pedagogies and strategies to support the teaching and learning of grammar for writing, which include the following:

Use of high quality texts to promote reading for purpose and pleasure

There is an inextricable link between reading and writing. Often our best writers are wide and avid readers, who read, read and read. Good writers have internalised book language patterns and developed a rich vocabulary, which they can apply in their own writing. Encouraging the habit of reading, so that pupils develop knowledge of grammar based on structures they encounter in books, is vital.

Talk for writing

Not all children, however, automatically internalise book language from their reading and so benefit from explicit teaching to help them make these links. Teaching therefore draws upon the pedagogies of 'text analysis' and 'book talk' promoted by Pie Corbett in *Talk for Writing*. Pupils are encouraged to read with a writer's eye in order to see how the writing has been crafted to create a particular effect. Pupils actively investigate the writer's choice of vocabulary, use of grammatical features and explore their effects. Children are encouraged to read with a view to imitating the writer and as they become more confident, to play around with innovations. As children progress through KS2, they develop a deeper understanding of, and use, the underlying structures and principles to create increasingly imaginative and effective writing. Close, curious, attentive reading and analysis of high quality texts, not only helps children to internalise language structures but often acts as a catalyst, triggering the imagination to create original ideas inspired by the text.

Oral storytelling drama and language games

Pie Corbett's oral story-telling and language games provides another route into helping children to internalise the big patterns of narrative and text types; the flow of sentences and syntactical patterns; adventurous vocabulary and importantly, connectives, which are required for effective writing. We use actions to help children remember and use connectives to structure their own oral stories.

Sentence level games and activities

Within the teaching sequence from reading to writing, there is a place for explicit teaching of discrete sentence level skills. This takes place prior to pupils applying these skills in the context of the text type/ genre being taught. For example, we show pupils how to combine simple sentences into more sophisticated sentences by using subordinate clauses and conjunctions. Teachers draw upon grammar games and activities as a more creative and engaging context to support learning. The use of complex sentences alone does not make the writing better; complex sentences have to be used appropriately and be relevant to the form and purpose. Pupils and teachers engage in discussion about how language works and the effectiveness of different ways of expressing ideas and justify choices. This discussion aims to support children to take control and ownership so that they can shape writing to meet the audience and purpose.

Teachers draw upon the following resources and contexts using creative and multi - sensory approaches to help children practising sentence levels skills:

- The NLS *Grammar for Writing Handbook*
- www.collaborativelearning.org
- Ros Wilson's *Kung Fu Punctuation*
- Washing line sentences
- Sue Palmer's grammar bags
- Pie Corbett and Sue Palmer Skeleton Books/ interactive CD ROM
- Pie Corbett's *Talk for Writing* (Early Years, and Across the Curriculum)
- interactive resources, e.g. punctuation fans
- Trisha Lee, *Princesses, Dragons and Helicopter Stories: Story Scribing and Story Acting in the Early Years*
- First hand, active learning experiences to scaffold appropriate grammatical language, e.g. DT/ cookery lesson involve reading instructions for a real purpose; live presentation to explain the water cycle to another class; drama and role play using artefacts, props and costume to practice voice and tone of character...

Shared Writing Techniques

Teachers draw upon a range writing strategies to scaffold pupils' learning. Shared writing provides a powerful means to work with the whole class modelling and discussing at the point of writing, the decisions a writer makes (rather than teaching retrospectively to corrections). As the teacher scribes, he/she involves the children in the composition taking their ideas, structuring discussion and refining contributions as appropriate. Teachers demonstrate and share the compositional process, helping children to make links between reading and writing, making the craft of writing explicit. During or following on from teacher modelling, children work in pairs to discuss choices, and orally compose/ write the next section of the text focussing on objective of the lesson.

Guided writing

Children are grouped on the basis of current attainment and need. Having analysed writing, the teacher supports the group with targets and writing priorities. The teacher canailoring the teaching to the specific needs of the group and conferencing with pupils at words, sentence or text level.

Assessment for Learning

Based on good assessment for learning principles, children work as 'critics' evaluating their own and their peers' writing, identifying which grammatical constructions work well and which aspects could be improved to achieve the purpose, e.g. Does this choice of powerful verb best portray the character?

Appendices

Progression, Pitch and Expectation

Appendix 1 provides a clear progression from Y1 to Y6 for teaching different aspects of sentence level work. This progression must be interpreted flexibly to meet the needs of pupils. For example, teachers can move forward in the progression of a particular strand of grammar, to help plan more challenging work to extend more able pupils.

Teachers' Subject Knowledge

Teachers' subject knowledge is fundamental to the successful teaching of contextualised grammar.

Appendix 2 based on PNS Self Study Modules 1 to 5 provides useful principles, notes and explanations of the different grammatical features to support teachers' grammatical subject knowledge. Supplementary grammatical features and notes have also been included to provide teachers with further support.

Appendix 1

Grammar Policy – progression, pitch and expectation from National Curriculum 2015

Year Group	Word Structure	Sentence structure	Text Structure	Punctuation	Vocabulary
1	<p>Regular plural noun suffixes –s or –es (e.g. <i>dog, dogs; wish, wishes</i>)</p> <p>Suffixes that can be added to verbs (e.g. <i>helping, helped, helper</i>)</p> <p>How the prefix un- changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives (negation, e.g. <i>unkind</i>, or undoing, e.g. <i>untie the boat</i>)</p>	<p>How words can combine to make sentences</p> <p>Joining words and joining sentences using <i>and</i></p>	<p>Sequencing sentences to form short narratives</p>	<p>Separation of words with spaces</p> <p>Introduction to capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences</p> <p>Capital letters for names and for the personal pronoun I</p>	<p>word, sentence, letter, capital letter, full stop, punctuation, singular, plural, question mark, exclamation mark</p>

Year Group	Word Structure	Sentence structure	Text Structure	Punctuation	Vocabulary
2	<p>Formation of nouns using suffixes such as –ness, –er</p> <p>Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as –ful, –less</p> <p>(A fuller list of suffixes can be found in the Year 2 spelling appendix.)</p> <p>Use of the suffixes –er and –est to form comparisons of adjectives and adverbs</p>	<p>Subordination (using when, if, that, or because) and co-ordination (using or, and, or but)</p> <p>Expanded noun phrases for description and specification (e.g. the blue butterfly, plain flour, the man in the moon)</p> <p>Sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation, command</p>	<p>Correct choice and consistent use of present tense and past tense throughout writing</p> <p>Use of the continuous form of verbs in the present and past tense to mark actions in progress (e.g. she is drumming, he was shouting)</p>	<p>Use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences</p> <p>Commas to separate items in a list</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark contracted forms in spelling</p>	<p>verb, tense (past, present), adjective, noun, suffix, apostrophe, comma</p>

Year Group	Word Structure	Sentence structure	Text Structure	Punctuation	Vocabulary
3	<p>Formation of nouns using a range of prefixes, such as super-, anti-, auto-</p> <p>Use of the determiners a or an according to whether the next word begins with a consonant or a vowel (e.g. a rock, an open box)</p> <p>Word families based on common words</p>	<p>Expressing time and cause using conjunctions (e.g. when, so, before, after, while, because), adverbs (e.g. then, next, soon, therefore, or prepositions (e.g. before, after, during, in, because of)</p>	<p>Introduction to paragraphs as a way to group related material</p> <p>Headings and sub-headings to aid presentation</p> <p>Use of the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause (e.g. I <i>have written it down so we can check what he said.</i>)</p>	<p>Introduction to inverted commas to punctuate direct speech</p>	<p>word family, conjunction, adverb, preposition, direct speech, inverted commas (or “speech marks”), prefix, consonant, vowel, consonant letter, vowel letter, clause, subordinate clause</p>

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Year Group	Word Structure	Sentence structure	Text Structure	Punctuation	Vocabulary
4	<p>The grammatical difference between plural and possessive -s</p> <p>Standard English forms for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms (e.g. we were instead of we was, or I did instead of I done)</p>	<p>Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun within a sentence to avoid ambiguity and repetition</p> <p>Fronted adverbials (e.g. Later that day, I heard the bad news.)</p>	<p>Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme</p> <p>Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun across sentences to aid cohesion and avoid repetition</p>	<p>Use of inverted commas to punctuate direct speech</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark singular and plural possession (e.g. the girl's name, the boys' boots)</p> <p>Use of commas after fronted adverbials</p>	<p>pronoun, possessive pronoun, adverbial</p>

Year Group	Word Structure	Sentence structure	Text Structure	Punctuation	Vocabulary
5	<p>Converting nouns or adjectives into verbs using suffixes (e.g. -ate; -ise; -ify)</p> <p>Verb prefixes (e.g. dis-, de-, mis-, over- and re-)</p>	<p>Relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, why, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun</p> <p>Indicating degrees of possibility using modal verbs (e.g. might, should, will, must) or adverbs (e.g. perhaps, surely)</p>	<p>Devices to build cohesion within a paragraph (e.g. then, after that, this, firstly)</p> <p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time (e.g. later), place (e.g. nearby) and number (e.g. secondly)</p>	<p>Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis</p> <p>Use of commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity</p>	<p>relative clause, modal verb, relative pronoun, parenthesis, bracket, dash, determiner, cohesion, ambiguity</p>

Year Group	Word Structure	Sentence structure	Text Structure	Punctuation	Vocabulary
6	<p>The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing (e.g. said versus reported, alleged, or claimed in formal speech or writing)</p>	<p>Use of the passive voice to affect the presentation of information in a sentence (e.g. I broke the window in the greenhouse versus The window in the greenhouse was broken)</p> <p>Expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely (e.g. the boy that jumped over the fence is over there, or the fact that it was raining meant the end of sports day)</p> <p>The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures</p>	<p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices: semantic cohesion (e.g. repetition of a word or phrase), grammatical connections (e.g. the use of adverbials such as on the other hand, in contrast, or as a consequence), and ellipsis</p> <p>Layout devices, such as headings, sub-headings, columns, bullets, or tables, to structure text</p>	<p>Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses (e.g. It's raining; I'm fed up.)</p> <p>Use of the colon to introduce a list</p> <p>Punctuation of bullet points to list information</p> <p>How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity (e.g. man eating shark versus man-eating shark, or recover versus re-cover)</p>	<p>active and passive voice, subject and object, hyphen, colon, semi-colon, bullet points, synonym and antonym</p>

		appropriate for formal speech and writing (such as the use of question tags, e.g. He's your friend, isn't he?, or the use of the subjunctive in some very formal writing and speech)			
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N.B the range of exemplary vocabulary and connectives gives an indication of progression and range, however, words must always be selected to fit the purpose and audience. It must be remembered that a simple word or connective may be the most effective in that particular context.

Appendix 2: Grammatical terminology

Sentence Types

Sentences are made up of clauses.

Simple sentences contain just one clause.

Compound sentences consist of two or more main clauses loosely joined by conjunctions – *and, but, or*.

In **complex sentences**, clauses are linked together in ways which show the interrelationships between ideas. This involves the more sophisticated use of conjunctions or other linking devices.

Simple sentences

Simple Sentences

The dog barked.

The baby woke up.

The dog whined.

A simple sentence has a **subject** (or noun phrase) and a **verb** (or verb chain). There may be other elements in the sentence but as long as there is only one verb or verb chain it is a **simple sentence**.

Simple sentences

In the middle of the night, **the dog barked** loudly for its owner.

After dinner, **the baby woke up** his mother with a loud yell.

The dog whined miserably in the cold garden.

Compound sentences

The simplest way to link **simple sentences** together would be to use a **co-ordinating conjunction** (like **and** or **but**). This is what most immature writers would do.

The dog barked **and** the baby woke up **and** the dog whined.

We now have three clauses that are very loosely linked. Each clause is still a **main clause** and can stand independently of the others.

Sometimes, when the subject of two or more clauses is the same, you can remove the second subject.

Compound sentences

The **dog** barked and the **dog** whined.

The **dog** barked and whined.

In a compound sentence, the **clauses** on either side of the conjunction have equal weight: they are both **main clauses**. These co-ordinating conjunctions do not suggest that one clause is subordinate to the.

We all know, however, the dreadful boredom of reading sentences endlessly linked together by **and** or **and then**.

The dog barked **and** the baby work up **and** he started crying **and** Mum came to stop him **and** she told the dog off **and** it whined **and** **then** it went to sleep **and then** it woke up and it was all a dream

This does not mean that using **and** isn't perfectly valid and often appropriate. It is especially useful in speech, where we do not have much time to think things through, and where we can use intonation patterns and gestures to show how we link our ideas together.

Complex sentences

To explore and express the possible relationships between ideas, we can use more 'sophisticated' conjunctions – words like *if*, **because**, **unless**, **when** and **although** - which encapsulate those interrelationships.

Complex sentences

The dog barked **because** it was lonely.

Mother sang a lullaby **when** the baby woke up.

A complex sentence has one **main clause** (which can stand on its own and make complete sense) and one or more **subordinate clauses** (which do not make sense on their own).

Conjunctions like **when**, **if**, **because**, **whenever** are **subordinating conjunctions**. When you put one at the front of a clause you automatically make it into a subordinate clause.

In these complex sentences the main clauses (not in bold) could stand on their own as simple sentences. The subordinate clauses (in bold) begin with a conjunction and don't make sense on their own.

Subordinate clauses

When the dog barked, the baby woke up.

Because the dog barked, the baby woke up.

If the dog barked, the baby woke up.

In the following two sentences, the subordinate clause (in bold) is the second one. The main clause (not in bold), which would make sense on its own, is at the beginning.

Main clauses

The dog barked **until the baby woke up**.

The dog barked **so that the baby woke up**.

The manipulation of conjunctions is very important to the concepts underlying subordination; so two more small points are worth making.

Subordinate clauses starting with conjunctions are **adverbials**. This means that they are mobile.

When the dog barked, the baby woke up.

The baby woke up **when the dog barked**.

Whenever the dog barked, the baby woke up.

The baby woke up **whenever the dog barked**.

Just as you can change the rhythm and emphasis of a piece of writing by moving the position of adverbial chunks within a clause, you can do the same with the larger chunks of a complex sentence.

When a sentence opens with a subordinate clause, you need a comma **before** the main clause to signal to your reader that you have reached a grammatical boundary.

When the dog barked, the baby woke up.

You don't necessarily need a comma if the subordinate clause comes **after** the main clause, because the conjunction signals the grammatical boundary.

The baby woke up **when the dog barked**.

More complex sentences

1. Relative clauses

The subordinate clauses in the complex sentences we have seen so far are all **adverbial**. There are other sorts of subordinate clauses.

Clauses can also act like **adjectives**. In this instance they are called **relative clauses** and are embedded within the sentence.

Relative clauses start with a pronoun **who, whom, which, that**.

Relative clauses

The dog, **which was called Rover**, was barking.

Its owner, **who was called Mr Jones**, was out.

The neighbours, **whom Rover was keeping awake**, were annoyed.

Finally, the dog **that barked in the night** fell asleep.

2. Non-finite clauses

Another sort of subordinate clause is the **non-finite clause**.

In these complex sentences, the main clauses are in bold. The subordinate clauses, which have **non-finite** (or incomplete) verbs, are separated off by a comma.

Non-finite clauses

Smiling to himself, **Robin at last returned to the forest.**

Tired of waiting, **Marian had gone to bed.**

In both cases, the non-finite clause (not in bold) could also split the main clause (in bold) with implications for punctuation.

Smiling to himself, **Robin at last returned to the forest.**
Robin, smiling to himself, **at last returned to the forest.**

Tired of waiting, **Marian had gone to bed.**
Marian, tired of waiting, **had gone to bed.**

These non-finite clauses are a feature of mature, fluent writing. They can also be less cumbersome than the other subordinate clauses we have investigated in this module.

Robin, who was smiling to himself, at last returned to the forest.

Robin, smiling to himself, **at last returned to the forest.**

Because she was tired of waiting, **Marian had gone to bed.**

Tired of waiting, **Marian had gone to bed.**

The term **non-finite clause** is contemporary grammar terminology. In the past, *smiling to himself* and *tired of waiting* were known as **participle phrases**. Now they are described as **subordinate clauses**. It is a more accurate description of the function. The change of name makes absolutely no difference to the usage, punctuation and so on.

Sentences, clauses, phrases

Children are taught that a sentence is 'a group of words that go together to make sense'. Within that sentence, there are smaller chunks of sense.

Sentence

Sentences are made up of clauses.

Clause

Clauses are made up of phrases.

Phrase

Phrases are made up of words.

words

dog barked big

It is a hierarchic structure: the words build up to phrases, the phrases build up to clauses, the clauses go together to make compound and complex sentences.

Words

dog *barked* *big*

Here are a few words – the smallest 'chunks'. Notice that each of these words do different jobs in a sentence.

- ***dog*** ... the noun, which names things
- ***barked*** ... the verb, which indicates what happens in a sentence
- ***big*** ... the adjective, which gives more detail about a noun

As far as children are concerned, words are the smallest meaningful chunks of sense.

Phrases

1. Noun phrase

the big dog

Words go together to make phrases. This is an example of a noun phrase – a group of words that work in the sentence in the same way as a single noun. This is a fairly short noun phrase. We could have

- *the enormous great furry dog*
- *the small fluffy dog with the big paw*
- *the increasingly tired and irritable dog*

If a group of words *act* like a noun in the sentence, it is a noun phrase.

2. Verb chain

was barking

This is known as a **verb chain**. Very often in English, we need several words to express the full force of the verb - a group of words that go together expressing *when* something happened, or other aspects, for instance:

- *might have been barking*
- *could have barked*
- *should bark*

It is worth introducing the term **verb chain** to children, because very often the verb in a sentence is not a single word

3. Adjectival and adverbial phrases

in the garden

This is the sort of thing most people think of when the term **phrase** is used.

It is indeed a phrase, and it is quite an interesting one. If we put add it to *the big dog*, it tells us more about the dog. It has got an **adjectival** function. Like the word 'big', it has been subsumed into the noun phrase, giving us more detail about the dog.

The big dog in the garden.

But if we put it here, it is doing a different job.

The big dog was barking in the garden.

It is no longer telling us more about the dog. It is telling us *where* the barking happened. Its function is **adverbial**. This example demonstrates very clearly that words or phrases can sometimes do different jobs depending on their context in the sentence.

We tend to think of adverbs as words with *-ly* on the end - words which tell us more about a verb in the same way that adjectives tell us more about a noun. Indeed, there are many adverbs with *-ly* on the end which perform this function. They answer the question *how?* for instance, *slowly, madly, deeply*.

However, the adverb word class is actually much wider than this. An adverb is any word that answers the questions *how? when? or where?*

So when in the example 'in the garden' was used to answer the question '*Where* was the big dog barking?' its function was adverbial.

Adverbial chunks are very useful. They fill in the background detail of the action: *how, when* and *where* something happened and they are like the 'roving reporters of the sentence'.

Clauses

After phrase, the next size of 'chunk' is the clause.

Here is a clause.

the big dog was barking

It consists of a noun phrase and a verb chain stuck together to make what the grammarians call a **single proposition**.

At the base of every clause is a single proposition made up of ...

a **noun phrase** known as the **subject** (e.g. *the big dog*)

and a **verb chain** known as the **verb** (e.g. *was barking*).

Of course, there may be lots of other bits adhering to a clause.

The big dog was barking.

The big dog was barking the Hallelujah Chorus.

The big dog was barking the Hallelujah Chorus in the garden.

At midnight last Wednesday, **the big dog was barking** the Hallelujah Chorus, rather wistfully, in the garden behind Buckingham Palace.

All sorts of extra information and detail can be added, but as long as there is only one **verb (or verb chain)**, there is only one clause.

This brings us to the **sentence**.

It will not have escaped your attention that if we put a capital letter at the beginning of this clause and a full stop at the end, we have a sentence. A **simple sentence** consists of one clause, at the root of which is a **subject** and a **verb**.

The big dog was barking.

Complex sentences

A simple one-clause sentence can express a single proposition (with a greater or lesser amount of detail). But in order to express more complex ideas consisting of more than one proposition we need to be able to link them together.

A **complex sentence** consists of

- one main clause, which can make sense on its own
- and one or more subordinate clauses, which are linked to the main clause.

'The big dog was barking' makes sense on its own. It is a main clause.

the big dog was barking

This chunk is a clause too.

It has got a subject (*I*) and a verb (*arrived*). But it does not make sense on its own. It needs to be linked to the main clause to make sense. It is a subordinate clause.

when I arrived

Now we have two clauses, linked together in a way which shows a relationship between the ideas – in this case, a time relationship. We have a complex sentence.

when I arrived the big dog was barking

Again, we have got a subject (*it*) and a verb (*was*), so we have got a clause. But it does not make sense on its own. It is another subordinate clause and it needs a main clause.

because it was lonely

when I arrived the big dog was barking because it was lonely

Here is another clause.

which was called Rover

In this clause, the subject is a pronoun (*which*), referring us back to the big dog.

Here is a verb chain (*was called*).

We have got a subject and a verb, so we have got a clause, but this one certainly makes no sense on its own. We need to put it with the main clause.

Notice that the main clause has been split. It is getting more and more complex and difficult to read.

*when I arrived the big dog which was called Rover was barking
because it was lonely*

Punctuation

Full stop

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.

The big dog was barking.

Question mark

A question mark is used at the end of an interrogative sentence

Who was that?

or one whose function is a question.

You're leaving already?

Exclamation mark

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

exclamative: What a pity!
imperative: Get out!
declarative: It's a goal!
interjection: Oh dear!

Comma

A comma is 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 and swimming.

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 (e.g. *however, on the other hand, anyway, for example*).

Anyway, in the end I decided not to go.

Incorrect use of the comma: comma splice

Children often use commas incorrectly to mark **any** grammatical boundary. When a comma is the only link between the clauses, it is known as ‘the comma splice’.

She turned round but there was no one there except a painting, all of a sudden the people in the painting moved and started talking again, Jade couldn't believe her eyes

A simple rule of thumb to tell whether a comma is being used to ‘splice’ main clauses together, is to see **if you could substitute a full stop**. In each case in our example, a full stop would work.

She turned round but there was no one there except a painting. All of a sudden the people in the painting moved and started talking again. Jade couldn't believe her eyes

So both the commas must be splices, and therefore incorrect.

To correct a comma splice, you could substitute a full stop, but this could lead to very staccato sentences – and sometimes you may wish to suggest a closer link between the clauses. In this case, you could substitute a **dash**, a **semi-colon** or possibly a **colon**. Alternatively, you could link the clauses by inserting a **conjunction**.

There are several acceptable ways of correcting the example. A semi colon probably captures the writer's intention.

She turned round but there was no one there except a painting; All of a sudden, the people in the painting moved and started talking again; Jade couldn't believe her eyes.

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 two clauses are closely related in meaning (as in this 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.

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

Colon

A colon is used to introduce a list or a following example. It may also be used before a **second clause** that expands or illustrates the first.

He was very cold: the temperature was below zero.

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 – everyone enjoyed it.

Hyphen

A hyphen is sometimes used to join the two parts of a compound noun.

City-centre

But it is much more usual for such compound nouns to be written as single words ...

football headache bedroom

or as separate words without a hyphen.

golf ball stomach ache city centre

However, hyphens are used in the following cases:
in compound adjectives and longer phrases used as modifiers before nouns;

a well-known painter
a ten year-old girl

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

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

co-operate non-smoker ex-wife
co-educate non-existent ex-serviceman

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

Brackets (Parenthesis)

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

Sam and Emma (**his oldest children**) are coming to visit him next weekend.

or between dashes...

Margaret is generally happy – **she sings in the mornings!** – but responsibility weighs her down.

or commas.

Paul is, **I believe**, our best student.

The term parentheses (plural of *parenthesis*) can also refer to the brackets themselves.

Apostrophe

There are two main uses of the apostrophe:

- to show that letters have been omitted
- to indicate possession.

The apostrophe in omission

We use an apostrophe for the omitted letter(s) when a verb is contracted (i.e. shortened).

I'm (I am)
would've (would have)
who's (who has)

In contracted negative forms, **not** is contracted to **n't** and joined to the verb.

isn't (is not)
didn't (did not)
couldn't (could not)

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

There are a few other cases when an apostrophe is used to indicate that letters are in some sense 'omitted' in words other than verbs.

let's (let us)
o'clock (of the clock)

Note the differences between **its** (belonging to *it*) and **it's** (*it is* or *it has*).

No apostrophe
The company is to close one of **its** factories.

Apostrophe
The factory employs 800 people. **It's** the largest factory in town.

N.B. The term contraction is used in the sample grammar test papers, rather than the term omission. It is therefore, important children are familiar with this terminology.

The apostrophe in 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

No further **s** is added after a plural **s** (e.g. *parents*).

my parents' car
the girls' toilets

But irregular plurals (e.g. *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
I bought some **apple's**.

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

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the term used for three dots (...) which shows that something has been omitted or is incomplete.

Speech marks

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.

Many published texts use **single** speech marks ('...'), which look less 'fussy' on the page. However, in handwritten work, **double** speech marks ("...") are often preferred, as they are more noticeable.

Nouns

Noun

<p>Noun dog Rover</p>

- There are **common nouns** like *dog*, and **proper nouns** like *Rover*.
- Nouns can be **singular**, e.g. *dog, cat, bird, bear*.
- Nouns can be **plural**, e.g. *dogs, cats, birds, bears*.
- There is a special group called **collective nouns**, which are singular names for plural constituents, e.g. *team, group, flock, herd*.
- Some nouns, like *beauty, truth* and *justice*, are **abstract** and less easily recognisable as nouns.

The function of any noun is to name. If a word is the **name** of a person, a place, an animal, a thing or an idea it is a noun, e.g. *Janet, London, dog, lamp, justice*.

Adjective

Adjective
big

An **adjective** is a word that gives us more information about a noun.

It might stand before the noun in a noun phrase.

The **big** dog.

It might also be linked to the noun by a verb.

The dog was **big**.

But an adjective might also appear elsewhere in a sentence.

The traditional definition of an adjective is a 'describing word', but this can be confusing. Lots of other words can be descriptive. The words *swooped* and *flickered*, for instance, are very descriptive verbs. A better way to define an adjective is a word which gives more information about a noun.

Adjectives (and adverbs) can have **comparative** and **superlative** forms.

For short adjectives, the comparative form is **adjective + er**.

adjective + er
old + er = older
hot + er = hotter
busy + er = busier

For longer adjectives (with more than two syllables) the comparative form is **more + adjective**.

more + adjective
more intelligent
more beautiful
more dangerous

The corresponding superlative forms are **-est and most**.

-est and most	
old – oldest	intelligent – most intelligent
hot – hottest	beautiful – most beautiful
busy – busiest	dangerous – most dangerous

=

Determiner

Determiner
the
a

Determiners are used with nouns and they limit (i.e. determine) the reference of the noun in some way. They are the words that 'home you in' on the noun.

You will usually find a determiner at the beginning of a noun phrase.

the big dog
a big dog

These two words are called articles. Articles are a sub-class of determiners.

the = definite article
a = indefinite article

In this first example below, the definite article 'the' refers to a specific book, while the indefinite article 'a' refers to any book.

Give me **the** book.
Give me **a** book.
Give me **an** apple.

The form 'an' is used before words that begin with a vowel sound, e.g. **an elephant**.

'An' is also used even if the vowel sound is spelled with an initial consonant, e.g. **an hour**

The form 'a' is used before words beginning with a consonant, e.g. **a doll**. It is also used before words that begin with a consonant sound (even if spelled with a vowel as in **a European**).

She had **a** house so large that **an** elephant would get lost without **a** map.

Further notes

Before some words beginning with a pronounced (not silent) *h* in an unstressed first syllable, such as *hallucination*, *hilarious*, *historic(al)*, *horrendous*, and *horrific*, some (especially older) British writers prefer to use *an* over **a** (**an historical event**).

An is also preferred before *hotel* by some writers of British English (probably reflecting the relatively recent adoption of the word from French, where the *h* is not pronounced).

But the class of determiner contains many other words, e.g. *that, this, those, any*. This classification is very useful because the determiner word class mops up lots of words, which in older grammar hung around on the sidelines.

This dog, **that** dog
every dog, **some** dogs, **each** dog
his dog, **her** dog, **my** dog

Each time, the determiner lets us know which particular *dog* or *dogs* are the focus of attention.

Pronoun

Pronoun

It
which

Pronouns are another word class. They are words that can stand in place of a noun or indeed a whole noun phrase. Pronouns help us avoid repeating ourselves too often.

If I wanted to talk about a **dog**, I might refer to **it**, or, if I knew its gender, to **he** or **she**. These are **personal pronouns**.

There are **first person pronouns**.

I, me, mine, we, us, ours

There are **second person pronouns**.

You, yours

There are **third person pronouns**.

he, she, it, they
him, her, it, them
his, hers, its, theirs

There are other sorts of pronouns. For example, here the words **which**, **who**, **whom** and **that** are pronouns, referring back to noun phrases.

↙ ↘
The big dog, **which** was called Rover, was barking.
↙ ↘
Its owner, **who** was called Mr. Jones, was out.
↙ ↘
The neighbours, **whom** Rover was keeping awake, were annoyed.
↙ ↘
Finally, the dog **that** barked in the night fell asleep.

If a word is standing in place of a noun, it is a pronoun. Pronouns can stand in for single words or noun phrases. If you are in any doubt where a noun phrase begins and ends, try substituting a pronoun.

<u>The big dog</u>	was barking.
<u>The funny little dog with the floppy ears</u>	was barking.
<u>Rover</u>	was barking.
It	was barking

'I' or 'me'?

The two **personal pronouns** *I* and *me* are often used wrongly, usually in sentences in which *I* is being used with another noun. Here are some tips to help you get it right:

- Use the pronoun *I*, along with other **subjective pronouns** such as *we*, *he*, *she*, *you*, and *they*, when the pronoun is the **subject** of a verb:

He went to bed.
We waited for the bus.
Clare and **I** are going for a coffee.

In the last example, the pronoun *I*, together with the proper noun *Clare*, forms the **subject** of the sentence, so you need to use *I* rather than *me*.

- Use the pronoun *me*, along with other **objective pronouns** such as *us*, *him*, *her*, *you*, and *them*, when the pronoun is the **object** of a verb:

Danny thanked **them**.
The dog followed John and **me** to the door.

In the last example, the pronoun *me*, together with the proper noun *John*, forms the **object** of the verb *follow*, so you need to use *me* rather than *I*.

- Use the pronoun *me*, along with other **objective pronouns** such as *us*, *him*, *her*, *you*, and *them*, when the pronoun is the **object** of a preposition:

Rose spent the day with Jake and **me**.
Me, together with *Jake*, forms the object of the preposition *with*, so you need to use the pronoun *me* rather than the pronoun.

An easy way of making sure you've chosen the right pronoun is to see whether the sentence reads properly if you remove the additional noun:

√ I am going for a coffee	X Me am going for a coffee
√ The dog followed me	X The dog followed I
√ Rose spent the day with me	X Rose spent the day with I

Verb

Verb
barked

Verbs are very important. They are the words that tell you what is *happening* in a sentence.

This definition is preferable to the old one of 'doing words', because probably the most common verb of all is the verb **be**. However, the various forms of the verb **be** do not seem to be *doing* much at all. They just *are*.

The verb (or verb chain) is at the heart of a clause. Without it, a clause or a sentence feels incomplete.

The big hairy dog **barked**.
The big hairy dog **should have barked**.
The big hairy dog?

Sometimes we need two or more words to express the full force of the verb. This is known as a **verb chain** (some linguists call it a verb phrase).

was barking used to bark will be barking

Verbs have **tense**: past, present, future.

Present: The dog **barks**.
Past: The dog **barked**.

Technically, we don't have a future tense in English, because we cannot convey it with a single verb. We always have to create a verb chain. However, in the day to day talk about language, most people refer to any relevant construction as conveying 'tense', including the 'future tense'.

Present: barks, is barking
Past: barked, was barking, used to bark, had barked, etc.
Future: will bark, is going to bark

There are **regular** and **irregular** verbs. If a verb is regular, its past tense ends in **-ed**.

barked wanted played answered

Verbs that don't follow that pattern are irregular.

make - **made**
catch - **caught**
see - **saw/ seen** (I saw/ I have seen)

Adverb

Adverb
loudly
always
outside

The **adverb** fills us in on details such as *how*, *when* or *where* something happened.

Most people think of adverbs as words – like *loudly*, *happily*, *gently* – that answer the question ‘*how?*’. They usually end in **-ly** but not always...

HOW?
fast, well

However, there are many adverbs of time that answer the question ‘*when?*’.

WHEN?
now, then, often, sometimes, never

The time connectives we find in chronological texts are adverbs, e.g. *then*, *next*, *afterwards*, *meanwhile*, *finally*.

Some adverbs answer the question ‘*where?*’.

WHERE?
here, there, everywhere, upstairs, downstairs

Adverbs of **manner**, **time** and **place** are the 'roving reporters of the sentence'. They can often swap positions, varying the rhythm of the sentence.

HOW?

Slowly the man moved towards the dog.
The man moved **slowly** towards the dog.
The man moved towards the dog **slowly**.

WHEN?

Then the dog started barking.
The dog **then** started barking.
The dog started barking **then**.

Where

Up jumped the man and **away** he ran.
The man jumped **up** and he ran **away**.

Often a phrase can act adverbially in a sentence.

Three weeks ago, the big dog had a headache.
He lay down **under the apple tree** and **with a deep sigh** he fell asleep.

Larger chunks like these are known as adverbials. They are mobile just like single adverbs.

The big dog had a headache **three weeks ago**.
With a deep sigh, he lay down and he fell asleep **under the apple tree**.

Adverbials often begin with a preposition, e.g. *with*, *under*.

More about adverbs

Words which act as 'intensifiers' are also adverbs. They answer the question 'how much?'. For example: *extremely*, *slightly*, *rather*, *very*, *quite*, *somewhat*. These adverbs tell you more about an adjective or another adverb.

HOW MUCH?

The **extremely big** dog barked **very loudly**.

Preposition

Preposition
with
at
in
over

A **preposition** is a word like *with*, *at*, *in*, *over*. It is usually followed by a noun phrase.

Here are some examples of prepositions in context.

with some trepidation
at that moment
in the garden
over the moon

If a phrase starts with a preposition, its technical name is a **prepositional phrase**.
But the job these phrases do in a sentence can be either **adjectival** or **adverbial**.

in the garden

This prepositional phrase starts with the preposition *in* and it can perform two different functions in the sentence.

It can be **adjectival**, tagging on to the noun phrase to tell us more about the noun.

The big dog **in the garden** was barking.

Or, it can tell us more about what happened, answering the question ‘*where?*’, in which case it is **adverbial**.

The big dog was barking **in the garden**.

When these phrases are acting adverbially, they have the same mobility as single adverbs.

The big dog was barking **in the garden**.

In the garden, the big dog was barking.

An understanding of the mobility of adverbials enables us to vary sentence structure. If we pull the adverbial to the front, the sentence often has a much more literary flavour.

The dog lurched towards us **with its teeth bared**.

With its teeth bared, the dog lurched towards us.

We had cheese, bread and wine **in our picnic basket**.

In our picnic basket, we had cheese, bread and wine.

In producing written language we have more time to plan and edit text, and can use the adverbial to ‘set the scene’ for the rest of the sentence.

Conjunction

Conjunction
and
when
because

Conjunctions are words which can join two parts of a sentence. There are some simple conjunctions - *and*, *but*, *or* - which can join **words**, **phrases** or **clauses**.

And... but... or

words: bread **and** butter
phrases: all the king's horses **and** all the king's men
clauses: It's getting late **and** I'm tired.

words: tired **but** happy
phrases: out of sight **but** not out of mind
clauses: I like coffee **but** I love tea.

words: heads **or** tails
phrases: *table d'hote* **or** *a la carte*
clauses: We can eat now **or** we can wait until later.

Joining clauses with *and*, *but*, *or* does not produce a complex sentence. Such sentences are called **compound sentences**.

Compound sentences

It's getting late **and** I'm tired.

I like coffee **but** I love tea.

We can eat now **or** we can wait until later.

In these compound sentences, you can see that the clauses have equal weight – neither is subordinate to the other. They are both **main clauses**.

It is sometimes possible to improve compound sentences. When both clauses share the same subject we can delete the second subject (and sometimes other words). This often makes writing more fluent.

I like coffee but I love tea.
I like coffee but love tea.
We can eat now or **we can** wait until later.
We can eat now or wait until later.

Compound sentences are a very basic way of joining your ideas. There are more 'sophisticated' conjunctions, which show the relationships between ideas.

Some common conjunctions
because, although, until, when, where, unless
Samina was unhappy **because** the school trip had been cancelled.

Conjunctions like these are a feature of **complex sentences**.

N.B. Some words (for example *round*) can be used in different ways in different contexts. The classification depends upon the job the word is doing in a particular sentence. The key is to ask what job the word is doing in the sentence.

Active and passive voice

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 *Somebody saw you.*
 We must find them.
 I have repaired it.

passive *You were seen.*
 They must be found.
 It has been repaired.

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.

Alliteration

A phrase where adjacent or closely connected words begin with the same phoneme:

One, wet wellington

Free phone

Slithering snakes

Simile

The writer creates an image in the readers' mind 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

Metaphor

Where the writer is writing about something as if it were really something else:

Time is a thief.

The goal keeper was a rock.

Drowning in money

You are the sunshine of my life.

Personification

A form of metaphor where the language is related to a human action, motivation or emotion and is used to refer to a non- human object or concept:

The weather was smiling at James and his sister.

The wind howled through the trees and made the leaves shiver.

The stars danced playfully in the moonlit sky.

The run down house appeared depressed.

The first rays of morning tiptoed through the meadow.

She did not realize that opportunity was knocking at her door.

The wind howled its mighty objection.

The snow swaddled the earth like a mother would her infant child.

The river swallowed the earth as the water continued to rise higher and higher.

The ocean waves lashed out at the boat and the storm continued to brew.

Onomatopoeia

Words which echo the sound associated with their meaning:

Clang, hiss, crash, cuckoo

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Conjunctions like these are a feature of **complex sentences**.

(See **Module 4 Simple, compound and complex sentences** for more.)

Summary

These are the eight **word classes**: eight different jobs words can do in a sentence.

Word classes			
noun dog Rover	adjective big	determiner a/ the	pronoun it/ which
verb barked	adverb slowly then away	preposition with at in over	conjunction and when because

A **noun** names things.

A **pronoun** stands in for a noun.

A **determiner** 'homes you in' on the particular noun.

An **adjective** tells you more about a noun.

A **verb** tells you what happened in the sentence.

An **adverb** tells you how, when or where something happened.

Prepositions are small functional words that often come at the beginning of a phrase.

Conjunctions join up parts of a sentence, and in particular join clauses together in complex sentences.

Remember though, that some words (for example *round*) can be used in different ways in different contexts. The classification depends upon the job the word is doing in a particular sentence. The key is to ask what job the word is doing in the sentence.