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English Vocabulary for the New National Curriculum

- This document sets out the language associated with English under the new National Curriculum.
- It can be used by teachers, learning support assistants, parents and governors to check pupils' understanding of new vocabulary as it is introduced. Consequently, there is more detail in this document than the children are expected to know,

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Nouns

A noun is a thing.

There are six types of noun:

1. Common noun – an everyday thing e.g. table, pencil, potato
2. Proper noun – a noun that needs a capital letter e.g. Sally, February, London
3. Collective noun – a group of things that go by a special name e.g. herd, flock
4. Abstract noun – something you do not really have, more of a concept or idea e.g. love, war, quiet
5. Countable nouns – things you can count e.g. boy, apple, cat
6. Non-countable nouns – things you can't count e.g. water, imagination

Some nouns can be more than one type!

Determiners

A determiner helps you find a noun. They come before nouns and before adjectives. It tells you if the noun is known or unknown.

There are different types of determiner.

1. Known determiners: these sound definite e.g. the, my, that, Sarah's
2. Unknown determiners: these sound vague e.g. a, some, an
3. Articles: these tell you if it is a known or unknown noun e.g. a, an, the
4. Demonstratives: these show you something e.g. those, these, this
5. Possessives: these are usually pronouns e.g. my, hers, yours, Julia's
6. Quantifiers: these suggest more than one e.g. some, every

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Pronouns

These can replace nouns. They are often used to avoid repetition and to make sure sentences are cohesive.

Pronouns include he, she, it, her, him, them, us, who, I, which, none.

A name can also be a pronoun.

Verbs

A verb is a word that describes a state of being and is often linked to actions. There are many different ways that verbs can be used – see the end of this glossary.

Adjectives

An adjective is a word that usually describes a noun. It often comes before a noun to make the meaning more precise.

e.g. The **hungry** caterpillar.

The **magic, faraway** tree.

Adjectives can come after the verb 'to be'.

e.g. The meal was **good**.

I want to be **happy**.

Adjectives can't be modified by other adjectives. People often say an adjective is a describing word, but this can make it confusing as verbs and adverbs also describe.

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Adverbs

There are different types of adverb:

1. The most common definition is that it modifies a verb. This means it gives us more detail or a more precise idea about the verb.
e.g. I ran quickly.
2. An adverb can modify an adjective.
e.g. The meal was really delicious.
3. An adverb can modify another adverb:
e.g. We are very often late to parties.
4. An adverb can modify a whole clause:
e.g. Luckily, no-one was hurt.

Often, adverbs end in -ly but not all words that end in -ly are adverbs.

There are also lots of adverbs that do not end in -ly.

e.g. soon, very, often, later, never

Adverbs are often used as adverbials but there are lots of other things that can be adverbials too! An adverb will only ever be one word, but an adverbial might have lots of words.

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Prepositions

A preposition is a linking word. It links a noun (including pronouns and noun phrases) to some other information. They often describe places, locations and times.

Prepositions include: on, since, from, in, under, before, next, by, opposite.

Some prepositions can also be conjunctions!

Conjunctions

A conjunction joins two words or phrases together. They should not be called connectives.

Conjunctions can do one of two things:

1. Coordinate: this makes both the things being joined equally important
e.g. Dogs are friendly but annoying.
Teachers are clever and hardworking.
2. Subordinate: this is when a conjunction is used to introduce a subordinate clause,
e.g. Dogs are friendly but cats aren't.
Teachers are clever because they work hard.

Conjunctions include: and, that, but, or, as, if, when, than, because, while, where, after, so, though, since, though, however, neither, nor...

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Head

The head of a phrase or clause is the word that everything else is connected to. If you don't have a head, the rest of the words don't really make sense.

Phrase

A phrase is a group of words that have a noun or a preposition at the 'head'.

A *noun phrase* is a group of words that are all connected to one noun (which can be any type of noun). It usually comes before or after a verb.

e.g. Bananas

Yellow bananas

The old, yellow bananas in the fruit bowl

Any word which adds more information to the noun should be considered part of the noun phrase.

A *prepositional phrase* has to have a preposition at its 'head'. It can be followed by a noun phrase, a noun or a pronoun. It usually comes before or after a verb.

e.g. On the bed

After the party

From eating the ice cream

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Clause

A clause is a special type of phrase that has to have a verb at the 'head'.

There are three main types of clause:

1. A main clause: this contains a subject and a verb. It should show a complete thought. It might also contain an object.

e.g. The dog chased the cat.

The brown, grumpy dog furiously chased the impertinent ginger cat.

2. A subordinate clause: this clause does not make sense as a sentence on its own.

e.g. after eating the spider

who had arrived early

It usually starts with a subordinating conjunction or a pronoun.

e.g. since that day

whereas the boys had won

It usually contains a verb and a subject. It is often contained within punctuation marks or followed by a punctuation mark.

e.g. The dog, who had not slept all day, chased the cat.

Although it liked the cat, the dog chased it up a tree.

3. A relative clause: this is a special type of subordinate clause that begins with which, who or that.

e.g. The boy who lives there is a bully.

Tina said she had the idea, which annoyed me.

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Sentence

A sentence is a group of words. Sentences can have a single clause or multiple clauses. It can have a mixture of main clauses and subordinate clauses. You can have more than one main clause in a sentence.

e.g. The sun was shining. (1 sentence, 1 main clause)

The sun was shining but it was raining. (1 sentence, 2 main clauses)

The sun was shining before the picnic. (1 sentence, 1 main clause, 1 subordinate clause)

In a sentence you must have a subject. The subject is the noun that determines what form the verb should take. A simple definition is that the subject is performing the verb.

e.g. Remy's dog is hiding.

Kamil entered.

In a sentence, you might also have an object. This is the noun that is having the verb done to it.

e.g. The boy kicked the ball.

He pulled my hair.

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Adverbials

An adverbial is a word or phrase used to add more information to the verb.

A prepositional phrase can also be an adverbial:

e.g. The boat is leaving in twenty minutes.

The bell rang behind the door.

A noun phrase can be an adverbial:

e.g. She told me she would ring yesterday morning.

He waited all day.

A subordinate clause can be an adverbial:

e.g. She laughed before shutting the door.

He cried but smiled.

An adverb can be an adverbial:

e.g. He ran frantically.

The mouse squeaked loudly.

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Fronted adverbials are adverbials that come before the verb (and must have a comma):

e.g. Suddenly, he jumped onto the car.

After eating the cake, Lucy was sick.

Cohesion

We use cohesive devices to make sure our sentences flow and make sense without repeating words.

e.g. I brought the new Harry Potter book, it was expensive.

We're going to leave now before we are late.

Ellipsis

This can be a type of cohesion. It is when we miss out some words because they are not needed.

e.g. I was running for the bus but I missed it.

Where are you? I'm Here!

Ellipses can also be used as a punctuation mark to show omission or the passing of time.

e.g. Tom wasn't too sure he wanted to find out...

The handle turned and the door creaked open...

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Verbs, tenses, moods and voices

A verb is a word that describes a state of being and is often linked to actions.

Verbs have a tense. This gives us a clue as to when the verb happened.

Some tenses are:

1. The simple present tense: this is usually used to describe things happening or existing 'now'.
e.g. The cat eats the mouse.
The girls go shopping.
2. The simple past tense: this is usually described to something that has happened or an imagined situation.
e.g. I went to the dentist.
Donna had a puppy.
He wished he had won.
3. The present perfect tense: this is used to describe something in the past that is 'complete' or finished. It is always formed with the present tense verb 'to have'.
e.g. I have eaten the cake.
She has stolen my shoes.
4. The past perfect tense: this is used to describe something in the past that is 'complete' and happened in the past. It is always formed with the past tense verb 'to have'.
e.g. She had been sick.
They had been to the cinema.

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5. The present progressive: this is used to show something that is happening and is ongoing in the present. It is always formed with the present tense verb 'to be' and the present participle (-ing).
e.g. I am singing.
She is cooking.
6. The past progressive: this is used to show something that was happening in the past. It is formed using the past tense 'to be' and the present participle (-ing).
e.g. I was waiting.
They were counting the money.
7. The perfect progressive: this is used to show something that was happening in the past but is now complete. It is formed using the perfect verb form and the present progressive.
e.g. He had been kicking the ball.
They had been playing the game.
8. The future tense: this tense shows what is going to happen. It is formed using a present tense and the infinitive (the basic form of the verb).
e.g. I will go tomorrow.
He may leave later.

Modal verbs

Modal verbs show possibility. They have to be formed with another verb. They are the same regardless of the subject.

Modal verbs are: can, could, might, must, should, shall, would, will, ought.

Some modal verbs are more forceful than others.

e.g. You must brush your teeth.

You ought to visit your grandmother.

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Passive

This is usually used when we turn the object into the subject.

e.g. I kicked the ball → The ball was kicked by me.

The girls ate the sweets. → The sweets were eaten by the girls.

It tends to express things that happened.

Subjunctive

This is usually used to show a possibility. It is very formal and quiet old-fashioned.

It often uses the words 'were' or 'that'. It often follows verbs like advise, ask, command, desire, insist, propose.

e.g. I wish I were a richman.

He asked that I call him immediately.

We ask that students be quiet in the corridors.