

YOUR TOP 10 QUESTIONS

about the English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test



Here we answer the top 10 questions you have been asking us about the new English grammar, punctuation and spelling test for primary school children.

1. What is the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test and why has it been introduced?

The new English grammar, punctuation and spelling test forms part of the National Curriculum tests which your child will take at the end of Key Stage 2. This test will assess your child's understanding of these 4 English skills: grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling.

There are two separate tests – one for children working at levels 3-5 in English and one for those working above level 5 in English (the level 6 test). Children who are working below level 3 in English don't have to take the test.

The Department for Education is introducing the test because it wants to make sure that when children leave primary school they are confident in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is why there is now a stronger emphasis in primary schools on teaching children grammar, punctuation and spelling skills than in previous years.

2. Will my child have to take the test? If so, when?

Your child will have to take the test that is appropriate for the level that they are working at in English. If your child is in Year 6, it is likely they will take the test in May, at the same time as the other National Curriculum tests.

3. There is already a writing test, isn't there? Is this an extra test?

No, it isn't an extra test – the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test replaces the original writing test.

Your child's teacher will make a separate judgement about how well your child is doing in writing, for example, writing stories or letters.

4. Can you give me some examples of the sorts of things my child will be tested on?

The multiple choice and short sentence answers will assess your child's ability to:

- use connectives (because, despite, however, etc.)
- capitalise the correct words in a sentence and explaining why
- use plurals correctly
- write sentences that illustrate two different meanings of the same word (such as present)
- identify the verb/noun/adjective/adverb in a sentence
- use I/me correctly
- put the correct punctuation into a given sentence

The spelling test will test words in context, for example:

*Sarah went to the library to get some more **information**.*

5. How long is the test?

It will take about one hour. The levels 3-5 test has two parts. The first is a grammar, punctuation and vocabulary test. It is 45 minutes long and contains multiple choice and short-answer questions. The second part is a spelling test which takes around 15 minutes, but is not strictly timed. This consists of 20 spellings which will be read out by your child's teacher in the context of a sentence.

The level 6 test includes a test with short-answer questions, a spelling test, and an extended writing task. It takes around an hour altogether.

6. Will it change what and how my child is taught at school?

No, the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test won't affect what your child learns at school. Your child is already taught these aspects of literacy as part of the National Curriculum. Although grammar, punctuation and spelling skills will now be assessed using a statutory test, this doesn't mean they will be taught separately to writing composition.

7. Who will mark the test and when will I know how my child has done?

The tests will be marked externally like the other assessments at the end of Key Stage 2. Your school will let you know your child's result before the end of the summer term.

Information about your child's progress in all aspects of literacy will be passed on to their new English teacher when they start secondary school, helping them to focus their lessons accordingly.

8. What can I do at home to help my child?

There are lots of fun ideas and free resources that you can use to help your child to prepare for the test in the *Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling made easy* section on the Oxford Owl website (www.oxfordowl.co.uk). There you'll find ideas for quick and easy ways for you to help your child with grammar, punctuation and spelling, plus games and activities you can play with your child to support their learning. You can also download the Grammar and Punctuation Jargon Buster – a handy list of grammar and punctuation terms.

On the Oxford Dictionaries website (www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/primary-grammar-dictionary-activities) you can download grammar, punctuation and spelling worksheets for further practice.

9. What if my child has special educational needs?

The existing access arrangements for the Key Stage 2 tests apply to this new test as well, for example the provision for extra time, a reader or the use of a scribe.

Please talk to your child's teacher and the school SENCO about whether your child's needs affect the way in which they complete the test, and how the test result will be used to inform the support your child will receive next year.

10. Where can I find more information about this test and are there any sample tests I can look at and practise with my child?

Yes, there is information for parents about the test on the Department for Education website (www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2) and you can also download levels 3-5 and level 6 sample test papers.

You may also be interested in reading the mark scheme for the tests, which you can also download. It contains the grammar and punctuation terms your child needs to be familiar with and shows how the various parts of the test will be marked.

