

Guide to grammar and punctuation in Year 5

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Overview

This guide looks at some of the key punctuation and grammar elements that are looked at in Year 5 at Somers Park. It is not meant as a comprehensive list, but as a guide to the main areas that children will need to have a good understanding of by the end of Year 5 moving in to Year 6.

The guide is split into three areas including: 1) Word types, 2) Sentences, clauses and phrases, and 3) Important punctuation to watch out for.

1) Word types

It is important to become confident in recognising word types. Let's look at the following sentence:

Cautiously, the male lion climbed up the ancient tree because he wanted to find shade as he adored lazing in the sun.

Adjective – describes a noun. In this example, “male” describes the lion and “ancient” describes the tree.

Adverbs – used to describe a verb (how, where, when something occurs / exists), they typically have an “ly” ending. They don't have to be beside the verb. Often, they are at the start of a sentence (fronted adverbial). “Cautiously,” is the adverb used in this sentence and it is a fronted adverbial. Fronted adverbials can also be a subordinate clause (see sentences, clauses and phrases section below) and so contain several words in it.

Not all adverbs end in “ly”. For example: Always, almost, altogether, anyway, as, instead, moreover, etc the list is considerable. It is also important to note that a lot of these type of adverbs can also be used as subordinating conjunctions (see below e.g. as).

Conjunction – a type of connective which links main clauses together (see clauses and phrases section below). There are two types of conjunctions including coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions are used to make compound sentences. Subordinating conjunctions make complex sentences. Children are encouraged to use subordination as much as possible in year 5 to illustrate their developing authorial control.

There are seven coordinating conjunctions that can be remembered by the simple acronym FANBOYS which stands for:

For **A**nd **N**or **B**ut **O**r **Y**et **S**o.

All other conjunctions are subordinating conjunctions. There are many subordinating conjunctions. Below is a list of some of the more common ones.

After	If
Although	Once
As	Provided
Because	So that
Before	Since
Due to	Unless
Even though	When
However	While
In order to	Whether

In the example sentence, “because” and “as” are the subordinating conjunctions.

Determiners – There are two classes of determiners *specific* and *general*. Specific determiners refer to a specific noun. General determiners refer to a noun generally. The most common determiners are **definite** and **indefinite** articles. In the example sentence “the” is a definite article, which is a specific determiner, used in front of “lion” and “tree”. “A” is an indefinite article and it is a general determiner. The table below contains the key types, class and words used. It is important to note that a determiner is only classed as a determiner if it is used directly in front of a noun or noun phrase (see below). If it is not, then it is not a determiner.

Type	Class	Words
Definite article	Specific	The
Demonstrative determiner – they relate to the location of a noun.	Specific	That, these, this, those
Possessive determiner – confusingly, these are also called possessive pronouns. In English, word types often overlap and can fall into several categories.	Specific	My, your, her, his , our, its, their
Indefinite article	General	A / an
Quantifiers – they tell us the specific amount of a noun	General	Both, much, each, every, all, enough, whole, one, two, three, etc.

Noun

A noun is a person, place, thing, ideas or concepts. These are the main types of nouns:

- **Abstract nouns** are ideas or concepts. E.g. sadness, boredom, happiness, etc.
- **Collective nouns** are common terms used to describe a group of nouns e.g. herd, school, class, flock, committee, etc.
- **Common nouns** are ordinary things e.g. dog, cat, city, month, boy, dad, etc.

- **Concrete nouns** are things that you can touch/feel or observe with your senses e.g. chair, town, bicycle, etc.
- **Proper nouns** are the specific names of specific people, places or things. E.g. Worcester, Mr Wood, January, Simon, Samantha, etc.

In the example sentence, “lion”, “tree” and “sun” are all common nouns and “shade” are abstract nouns as opposed to a concrete/common one.

There can be overlap in these categories as you can have both common / concrete nouns. There can also be disagreement about what constitutes an abstract noun (e.g. day – some believe it’s a common concrete noun while others believe it is an abstract noun).

Prepositions – Prepositions are used to tell the location, time or movement of a noun or pronoun. In the example sentence, the prepositions are used to describe movement (“up”) and location (“in”).

Common examples

Location	Time	Movement
Above	As	Down
At	Before	Into
Behind	By	Off
Below	During	Over
Beside	Past	Out of
Between	Since	Through
By	Until	Under
Far		
In		
In front of		
Inside		
Near		
Outside		
Over		
Under		

As you can see, there is quite a lot of over-lap. Prepositions can also form prepositional phrases (see clauses and phrases section below).

Pronouns

These replace nouns otherwise English would be quite repetitive. (See the table below). These are the key types of pronouns:

Type	Examples
Personal pronouns	I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, us, him, her
Possessive pronouns	Mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs. Note how there is no apostrophe used. Children can get confused by this.
Relative pronouns	That, who, whom, whose, which
Reflexive pronouns	They refer back to an earlier pronoun. E.g. He taught himself to play the guitar. Myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves.
Interrogative pronouns	What? Who? Which? Whose? Whom? (in essence, they are relative pronouns used in question form/context).
Indefinite pronouns	These type of pronouns do not refer to any specific person, place or thing but can take the place of a noun. Somebody, something, anyone, each, some, someone, anybody, anything, many, few, nobody, nothing, no one, most, none, all, another, (whose), other, such

2) Sentences, clauses and phrases

What is a sentence?

Well really, a sentence is made up of clauses so the question really is what is a clause? A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a main verb. There are two main types of clauses.

Main clause and subordinate clause

- **Main clause** which is also known as an **independent clause** in that it makes sense by itself and can stand alone as a sentence.

E.g. The child walked into the room.

In this example, the child is the subject and walked is the main verb.

- **Subordinate or dependent clause** which adds additional information to the main clause and is *dependent* on that clause to make sense. Consequently, it cannot stand alone by itself as a sentence.

E.g. Due to the weather being bad, the game was postponed.

In this example, “Due to the weather being bad,” is the subordinate (or dependent) clause because it provides more information about the subject of the main clause.

In the subordinate clause, “Due to the weather being bad,” weather is the subject and being is the main verb.

It is important to be aware of common errors made by children when using main clauses and subordinate clauses.

- ***Comma splice*** – A main clause cannot be joined to another main clause with a comma. It must either be separated with a full-stop or joined with a conjunction. Children tend to make this mistake a lot in their writing.
- ***Missing conjunctions or full stops between main clauses*** - This is a common mistake. Where children write two main clauses beside each other and have nothing in between them, they need to put either a full-stop to end the sentence or, a (ideally subordinating) conjunction to join the two main clauses.

Sentence types

There are three main sentence types including:

- 1) **Simple sentences:** These are composed of one main clause.

E.g. I walked home.

- 2) **Compound sentences:** These are sentences where there are two main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS).

E.g. I walked home so I could watch television.

In this type of sentence, the main clauses remain as main clauses.

- 2) **Complex sentences:** These are sentences that have a main clause and a subordinate clause linked together using either a comma or a subordinating conjunction that has been used to link two main clauses. Here are some examples:

E.g. As the wind blew in from the north, the town was enveloped in a snow blizzard.

In this example, “As the wind blew from the north, “ is a subordinate clause because it has a subject “wind” and a main verb “blew” but it cannot stand alone by itself and so is dependent on the main clause that follows. In fact, this subordinate clause is an example of a fronted adverbial that is a subordinate clause.

Obviously, we could put the subordinate clause at the end of the sentence. Again, obviously, where this happens, it is not classed as a fronted adverbial but just a subordinate clause.

E.g. The town became enveloped in a snow blizzard, as the wind blew in from the north.

Another type of complex sentence is where two main clauses are joined together using a subordinating conjunction.

E.g. He was sullen because he had failed his exam.

This is also a complex sentence because it has two main clauses joined by the subordinating conjunction “because”. When a subordinating conjunction is used in front of a main clause, it turns that main clause into a subordinate clause. So in fact, in this sentence, “He was sullen,” is the main clause and, “because he had failed his exam,” is the subordinate clause.

In the previous example, “As the wind blew from the north,” is the subordinate clause and, “the town became enveloped in a snow storm,” is the main clause.

Relative and embedded clauses

Relative and embedded clauses are types of clauses that provide additional information about a subject.

A relative clause has a relative pronoun in front of it.

A relative pronoun is a type of pronoun that refers back to a noun or pronoun earlier in a sentence. Relative pronouns include: that, who, whom, whose, which (see pronouns above). Here is an example sentence using a relative clause.

E.g. The building is an example of Victorian architecture, which is common in this area.

It is important to note that a relative clause is joined to a main clause by a comma.

A relative clause can come in the middle of a sentence. Where it does, it is classed as a relative embedded clause.

E.g. Frank, who adores art, is going to Paris to visit the Louvre.

Again, it is important to note that the relative embedded clause has a comma at either end to show that it is adding additional information about the main clause it is “embedded in”. Children are typically taught to recognise this first in Years 2 and 3 as a, “comma sentence sandwich”.

An embedded clause adds additional information and comes in the middle of a sentence.

E.g. Luke, as soon as he heard the news, ran home to his mum.

“As soon as he heard the news...” is still an embedded clause because it adds additional information and it is in the middle of (embedded) a sentence. However, it does not use a relative pronoun and so is not a relative embedded clause, just an embedded clause.

3) Important punctuation to watch out for

Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used in two areas only in English. These include:

- **Contractions / omissions:** This is where two words are joined together and shortened (contraction) by leaving letters out (omissions). An example of this is, e.g. “could have” becomes “could’ve”. The letters “h” and “a” have been omitted and the apostrophe denotes this omission.

It is important to stress to children that could’ve or would’ve is the contraction of “could have” or “would have” as many children write them as “could of” or “would of” which is incorrect.

- **Possession:** Apostrophes also denote ownership. E.g. The child's pencil. It shows that the pencil is owned by the child.

There are two common mistakes made with apostrophes by children and adults alike. The first is, using an apostrophe to show a noun plural.

If we take the word "dog" which is the noun singular form, many people think that, in order to change it to the noun plural "dogs" they should add an apostrophe i.e. dog's. This is wrong. An apostrophe is **never** used to show the noun plural. It only has two purposes as stated above.

The second mistake is a tricky one for children to understand and serves to highlight the extremely confusing nature of English well. It revolves around possessive pronouns.

Possessive pronouns show that something belongs to someone or something, **BUT**, they don't use an apostrophe. Using the example of "its" e.g. "The dog loves its bone", many children write this as, "The dog loves it's bone." What they've actually written is, "The dog loves it is bone, " which is wrong.

It is important that they understand that, although apostrophes are used to denote possession, possessive pronouns are an exception to this rule and **DO NOT** use apostrophes.

Direct and reported speech

Direct speech uses inverted commas (speech marks). E.g. Mr Dowling stated, "I am feeling much better."

Reported speech is where we are told about what somebody said or says indirectly. E.g. Mr Dowling told us that he was feeling much better.

It does not use speech marks and there is no reference to the first person ("I"). Instead the first person changes to the third person ("He").

When using direct speech children must remember to open and **close** inverted commas:

E.g. In a state of rage, the old man shouted, "I said I'm starving!"

They must remember to use commas in the correct place and use a capital letter at the start of the direct speech. Note where the commas and capital letters are in the following examples:

E.g.1. "I'm really hungry," raged the old man.

E.g.2 In a rage, the old man bellowed, "I'm starving," before storming off towards the restaurant growling, "Steak is what I want and steak is what I shall have!"

From the above examples, the commas come before opening the speech marks (inverted commas) and closing them. Capital letters are used where a main clause starts inside the inverted commas.

One other area that children get confused by is when using direct speech with more than one speaker. They must remember to start a new line each time a different speaker speaks. E.g.

“Hello. My name is Kevin. How are you?” asked the boy.

“Fine thanks. My name is Stewart. How are you?” questioned the other.

“Great thanks. Do you come to football training often?” Kevin continued.

“No. This is my first time,” explained Stewart.

You will notice that the word “said” was not used in this example. This is because we encourage the children to vary their use of “said” where they are expected to “put said to bed”.

Paragraphing

In Year 5, children will be expected to group their ideas around common themes which are grouped into paragraphs. Children must learn to start a new paragraph when:

- They start to write about a new theme
- A different speaks when using direct speech.

To prevent confusion, children are encouraged to leave a line space between paragraphs / different speakers.