

Grammar Glossary for Parents – Key Stage 2

Please find below a glossary of the terminology that children are expected to know and use in key stage 2.

Some of this you will obviously know but some of it does get rather technical, so please do not worry about coming to ask for further clarification if required.

Term	Explanation	Example
active voice	When the subject of the verb carries out an action.	David Beckham scored the penalty.
adjective	<p>A “describing word”. The surest way to identify adjectives is by the ways they can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • before a noun, to make the noun’s meaning more specific <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after the verb to be, as its complement. <p>Adjectives cannot be modified by other adjectives. This distinguishes them from nouns, which can be.</p>	<p>The pupils did some really <u>excellent</u> work. [adjective used before a noun, to modify it] Their work was <u>excellent</u>. [adjective used after the verb to be, as its complement]</p>
adverb	<p>Adverbs are sometimes said to describe manner or time. This is often true, but it doesn’t help to distinguish adverbs from other word classes .The surest way to identify adverbs is by the ways they can be used: they can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a whole clause.</p>	<p>Joshua <u>soon</u> started snoring <u>loudly</u>. [adverbs modifying the verbs started and snoring] That match was <u>really</u> exciting! [adverb modifying the adjective exciting] We don’t get to play games <u>very</u> often. [adverb modifying the other adverb, often] <u>Fortunately</u>, it didn’t rain. [adverb modifying the whole clause ‘it didn’t rain’ by commenting on it]</p>
antonyms	Words which mean the opposite to each other.	<p>The antonym of up is down The antonym of tall is short The antonym of add is subtract</p>
apostrophe	Apostrophes have two completely different uses:	<u>We’re</u> going out and <u>we’ll</u> get something to eat.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showing the place of missing letters (e.g. I'm for I am) • marking possessives 	<p>[showing missing letters]</p> <p><u>Hannah's</u> mother went to town in <u>Justin's</u> car.</p> <p>[marking possessives]</p>
brackets (Parenthesis)	Punctuation Used for additional information or explanation.	<p>Jamie's bike was red (bright red) with a yellow stripe.</p> <p>His first book (The Colour Of Magic) was written in 1989.</p>
capital letter	A letter of the alphabet that usually differs from its corresponding lowercase letter in form and height; A, B, Q as distinguished from a, b, q. Used as the initial letter of a proper name, the pronoun I and in the first word of a sentence.	After school T ed plays football in R oyston.
colon	Punctuation which indicates that an example, a list, or more detailed explanation follows.	<p>On School journey you will need to bring: a waterproof coat, wellies, warm jumpers and any medication.</p> <p>Marvin was stunned: he had never seen a firework display like it!</p>
clauses	<p>A clause is a group of words which does contain a verb; it is part of a sentence. There are two kinds of clauses:</p> <p>1. A main clause (makes sense on its own) e.g.: Sue bought a new dress.</p> <p>2. A subordinate clause (does not make sense on its own; it depends on the main clause for its meaning)</p>	<p>Main clause: My sister is older than me. Subordinate: My sister is older than me and she is very annoying.</p>
comma	A punctuation mark (,) indicating a pause between parts of a sentence or separating items in a list. In KS1 we focus on commas to separate items in a list.	<p>Tony went to the supermarket and bought tomatoes, onions, mushrooms and potatoes.</p> <p>[note no comma before and]</p>
command	See 'sentence'	
compound	A compound word contains	blackbird, blow-dry,

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	at least two root words in its make-up; e.g. whiteboard, superman. Compounding is very important in English.	English teacher, inkjet, one-eyed, daydream
conjunction/connective	A conjunction links two words or phrases together. There are two main types of conjunctions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-ordinating conjunctions (e.g. and) link two words or phrases together as an equal pair • subordinating conjunctions (e.g. when) introduce a subordinate clause. 	James bought a bat <u>and</u> ball. [links the words bat and ball as an equal pair] Kylie is young <u>but</u> she can kick the ball hard. [links two clauses as an equal pair] Everyone watches <u>when</u> Joe does back-flips. [introduces a subordinate clause]
co-ordination	Words or phrases are co-ordinated if they are linked as an equal pair by a co-ordinating conjunction (i.e. and, but, or). In the examples given, the co-ordinated elements are shown in bold, and the conjunction is underlined.	Susan <u>and</u> Amra met in a café. [links the words Susan and Amra as an equal pair] Susan got a bus <u>but</u> Amra walked . [links two clauses as an equal pair]
dash	Punctuation which indicates a stronger pause than a comma. Can be used like a comma or bracket to add parenthesis.	The woman – only 25 years old – was the first to win a gold medal for Britain.
dialogue	A conversation between two or more people.	“Who’s there?” asked Marvin. “Doctor”, replied the mysterious man behind the door. “Doctor Who?” Marvin enquired. “Exactly...” came the ominous response.
direct speech	When you write down the words that have been spoken and use speech marks.	“Who’s there?” said Marvin
determiner	Determiners are the most frequently used words in English. They are used with	This car is yours. Which colour do you prefer?

Term	Explanation	Example
	nouns to give more information about that noun - who it belongs to, how many, or sometimes to ask questions.	Some new cars.
ellipsis	Punctuation used to show a pause in someone's speech or thoughts, and to build tension or show that a sentence is not finished.	"The sight was awesome... truly amazing."
exclamation	See 'sentence'	
exclamation mark	A punctuation mark (!) indicating strong feelings, something unusual or high volume (shouting).	Stop that now!
full stop	A punctuation mark (.) used at the end of a sentence or an abbreviation.	English grammar has many rules and exceptions.
first person	When the writer speaks about himself or herself. Only 'I/we/me/us' are used as pronouns when writing in the first person.	My family all went to the park. We all loved it, me especially. I always love the slide.
future tense	Writing about what will happen. We usually place will in front of verbs when writing in the future tense.	Next week, Emma will be going to Secondary school. She will have to wear a blazer and tie!
fronted adverbial phrase	A fronted adverbial phrase goes at the beginning of a sentence It describes the verb in the sentence It describes where, when and how	As soon as the train had left the station, Tom jumped from the carriage door. After my tooth fell out, I went I went to the dentist to get a false one!
homophones	Words which sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings.	Their, there, they're I, eye Our, are To, too, two
hyphen	Punctuation which joins one or more words or adds a prefix to a word.	Happy-go-lucky
idiom	An idiom is an expression or 'saying' that is not taken	You look a bit under the weather today.

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	literally. They come from a variety of different sources; some are regional as well as historical but can be heard in everyday conversations even though on their own they don't appear to make any sense.	She's the apple of his eye.
letter	A character representing one or more of the sounds used in speech. Written words are made up of letters.	In KS1 children have to be able to identify letters from <i>phonemes</i> or sounds. The word 'cat' has three letters and three phonemes. The word 'catch' has five letters and three phonemes. The word 'caught' has six letters and three phonemes.
metaphor	Compares different things by saying one thing is another.	
noun	Nouns are sometimes called 'naming words' because they name people, places and things. A noun can almost always be used after determiners such as <i>the</i> : for example, most nouns will fit into the frame "The matters/matter." Nouns may be classified as common (e.g. boy, day) or proper (e.g. Ivan, Monday)	Our <u>dog</u> bit the <u>burglar</u> on his <u>behind</u> ! <u>Actions</u> speak louder than <u>Words</u> .
noun phrase	A noun phrase is a phrase that plays the role of a noun. The head word in a noun phrase will be a noun or a pronoun. Noun phrases are most often used for description and specification e.g. plain flour, foxes with bushy tails.	He knows <u>the back streets</u> . I've met <u>the last remaining chief</u> . [Nouns in bold, noun phrases underlined.]
plural	A plural noun normally has a suffix -s or -es and means 'more than one'.	There are a few nouns with different morphology in the plural (e.g. mice, formulae).
prefix	A prefix is added at the beginning of a word in order to turn it into another word.	overtake , unappealing , disappear
paragraph	'Chunks' of related thoughts	

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	<p>or ideas. They make reading easier to understand. A new paragraph usually means a change of topic, idea, time, place or argument.</p>	
passive voice	<p>When a subject or verb has an action done to them. Often, the subject is not even mentioned.</p>	A window was smashed.
personification	<p>Giving human qualities to animals or objects.</p>	<p>The Sun smiled on the World. The birds sung their beautiful song.</p>
punctuation	<p>Punctuation includes any conventional features of writing other than spelling and general layout. One important role of punctuation is to indicate sentence boundaries.</p>	
plural	<p>More than one person, place or thing.</p>	<p><i>Most nouns are made into plurals by adding –s:</i> Three bikes <i>Some nouns ending in –o are made into plurals by adding –es:</i> Two mangoes <i>Most nouns ending in hissing, shushing or buzzing sounds are made into plurals by adding –es:</i> Ten dresses <i>For words ending in a vowel and then –y, just add –s:</i> Eight turkeys <i>For words ending in a consonant and then –y, change –y to –i and add –es:</i> Five flies <i>Most nouns ending in –for–fe change to –ves in the plural:</i> Six halves</p>
preposition	<p>Words which show the relationship between two things. They often tell you where</p>	<p>About, above, across, after, against, along, amid, amidst, among, amongst, before,</p>

Term	Explanation	Example
	one thing is as opposed to another.	behind, below, beneath, beside, between, betwixt, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, into, near, of, off, on, over, round, since, though, till, to, towards, under, underneath, until, unto, up, upon, with, within, without. Tom jumped over the cat. The monkey is in the tree.
pronoun	Words used to avoid repeating a noun.	I, you, me, he, she, it, you, him, her, mine, yours, his, hers, its we, they, us, them, ours, yours, theirs
question	See 'sentence'	
question mark	A punctuation mark (?) indicating a question.	How do we know who to call?
sentence	A sentence is a group of words which are grammatically connected to each other but not to any words outside the sentence. The form of a sentence's main clause shows whether it is being used as a statement, a question, a command or an exclamation. A sentence may consist of a single clause or it may contain several clauses held together by subordination or co-ordination.	You are my friend. [statement] Are you my friend? [question] Be my friend! [command] What a good friend you are! [exclamation]
singular	A word or form denoting or referring to just one person or thing.	I had one dress but Jane gave me another so now I have two dresses.
statement	See 'sentence'	
subordination	A subordinate word or phrase tells us more about the meaning of the word it is subordinate to. Subordination can be thought of as an unequal relationship between a	big dogs [big is subordinate to dogs] Big dogs need long walks. [big dogs and long walks are subordinate to need]

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	<p>subordinate word and a main word.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an adjective is subordinate to the noun it modifies subjects and objects are subordinate to their verbs. 	<p>We can watch TV when we've finished.</p> <p>[when we've finished is subordinate to watch]</p>
second person	<p>When the writer speaks to the reader.</p> <p>The word 'you' is often placed before verbs.</p>	<p>You are reading a SPAG Glossary and I hope you are finding it useful.</p>
simile	<p>Compares two or more things, usually using the words 'like' or 'as'.</p>	<p>The water was as hot as lava.</p> <p>He was as scared as a mouse.</p>
semi colon	<p>Punctuation used in place of a connective.</p> <p>It separates two complete sentences which are closely related and can be used in lists of phrases.</p>	<p>The children came home today; they had been away for a week.</p>
suffix	<p>A suffix is an 'ending', used at the end of one word to turn it into another word. Suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word.</p>	<p>success – successful</p> <p>teach – teacher</p> <p>small – smallest</p>
synonym	<p>Words which have the same, or nearly the same meaning as each other.</p>	<p>Bad - awful, terrible, horrible</p> <p>Happy - content, joyful, pleased</p> <p>Look - watch, stare, glaze</p> <p>Walk - stroll, crawl, tread</p>
tense (past, present)	<p>Verbs in the past tense are commonly used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about the past talk about imagined situations make a request sound more polite. <p>Most verbs take a suffix –ed to form their past tense, but many commonly used verbs are irregular.</p> <p>Verbs in the present tense are commonly used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about the present 	<p>Antonio <u>went</u> on holiday to Brazil.</p> <p>[an event in the past]</p> <p>I wish I <u>had</u> a puppy.</p> <p>[an <i>imagined</i> situation]</p> <p>I <u>was</u> hoping you'd help tomorrow.</p> <p>[makes an implied request sound more polite]</p> <p>Paula <u>goes</u> to the pool every day.</p> <p>[describes a habit that exists]</p>

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Term	Explanation	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about the future. They may take a suffix –s (depending on the subject). 	She <u>can</u> swim. [describes a state that is true now] Her friends <u>are</u> coming to join her. [describes a plan in progress now]
third person	When the writer speaks about someone or something else. The pronouns ‘he/she/it/they/him/her/it/them’ are used when writing in the third person	He walked to the shops because he wanted to taste the new chocolate bar.
verb	Verbs are sometimes called ‘doing words’ because many verbs name an action that someone does; while this can be a way of recognising verbs, many verbs name states or feelings rather than actions. Verbs can usually have a tense, either present or past (also future).	He <u>lives</u> in Birmingham. [present tense] The teacher <u>wrote</u> a song for the class. [past tense] He <u>likes</u> chocolate. [present tense; not an action] He <u>knew</u> my father. [past tense; not an action]
word	A word is a unit of grammar: it can be selected and moved around relatively independently, but cannot easily be split. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word spaces.	