Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Abstract noun	A feeling or concept which cannot be touched, such as love, happiness, education.
Active voice	A **sentence** written in the active voice has the **subject** of the sentence carrying out the main action.
Adjectival phrase	A **phrase** built around an adjective – for example 'bright red', 'frighteningly bad'.
Adjective	A word which describes a **noun**.
Adverb	A word which describes how a **verb** action is being carried out.
Adverbial phrase	A **phrase** built around an **adverb** – for example 'as quickly as possible', 'very rudely'.
Ambiguity	A sentence contains ambiguity if it could be open to more than one meaning. Pupils are taught to use **hyphens** to avoid ambiguity; for example, the sentence 'Jaws is about a man eating shark' could be ambiguous, but with the insertion of a hyphen becomes much clearer: 'Jaws is about a man-eating shark'.
Antonym	A word with the opposite meaning to another, e.g. good/bad, wise/foolish, long/ short.
Apostrophe '	A punctuation mark used to show possession or to represent missing letters in a **contracted form**. See also **possessive apostrophe.**
Article	Words which tell us if a **noun** is general or specific. 'The' is called the 'definite article' and refers to specific nouns: 'The man's hat is blue'. The 'indefinite articles' are 'a' and 'an', referring to general nouns: 'A cow eats grass'.
Auxiliary verb	A verb which forms the tense, mood and voice of other verbs. The auxiliary verbs are 'be', 'do' and 'have' plus the **modal verbs**. For example, 'be' is used in the **progressive** tense verbs such as 'I am running', 'he was eating'.
Brackets ( )	A **punctuation mark** used to set a non-essential section of a sentence apart. Also known as parenthesis. For example, 'My friend Chloe (who is three months older than me) is coming to my house tonight'.
Bullet points	A way of setting information out in a list of points, which may be **phrases**, words or short **sentences**.
Capital letter	A letter used at the beginning of a **sentence** and for **proper nouns.** They may also be used at the beginning of the important words in a title or sign, for example, 'Keep Off the Grass'.
Clause	Clauses are the building blocks of a **sentence**. They are groups of words that contain a **subject** and a **verb**. They can be '**main**' or '**subordinate**'.
Cohesion	A **sentence** will have cohesion if all its parts fit together, for example if **tenses** and **pronouns** are consistent and **determiners** refer to the correct noun.
Collective noun	A **noun** which refers to a group of people, animals or things, for example, 'a class of children', 'a herd of elephants', 'a pride of lions'.
Colon :	A **punctuation mark** used in a **sentence** to indicate that something is about to follow, such as a quotation, an example or a list. For example, 'I need three things from the shop: milk, eggs and bread'.
Comma ,	A **punctuation mark** used in a **sentence** to mark a slight break between different parts of a sentence, or to separate clauses in order to reduce **ambiguity** and increase **cohesion**. Primary pupils are taught to use commas to separate items in a list, to demarcate clauses and before introducing direct speech.

Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Command	A type of **sentence** which instructs or orders an action to take place. Contains an **imperative verb** which does not need a **subject**. Often a command will begin with this imperative verb or with a **time connective**. For example, 'Eat your dinner. Next add the eggs to the mixture'.
Common exception word	A word which does not follow the common phonetic spelling rules of the language, or where the usual rules act in an unusual way. Children have a list of these words which they are expected to learn by the end of each year in primary school.
Common noun	Describes a class of objects (e.g. dog, man, day) which do not have a **capital letter** (e.g. Rover, John, Tuesday). See also **proper nouns**.
Comparative	The comparative form of an adjective compares one thing with another. For example, 'My cake is big but hers is bigger'. Usually formed by adding the **suffix** '-er' (smaller, higher, happier) or the word 'more' (more beautiful). See also **superlative**.
Complex sentence	Formed by joining a **main clause** with a **subordinate clause** using a **subordinating conjunction**. They can also be called **multi-clause sentences.** The main clause can stand alone but the subordinate or dependent clause cannot. For example, 'I burned dinner when I was on the phone'.
Compound sentence	Formed by joining two **main clauses** with a **connective**. The two clauses can stand on their own as **sentences**. For example, 'I like dogs but my friend likes cats'.
Compound word	A combination of two or more individual words that have a single meaning. For example, 'football', 'carwash', 'sunflower'.
Concrete noun	Something you can touch. For example, 'bed', 'pencil', 'cat'. Can be **common** nouns, or **proper** nouns that need a **capital letter**. For example, 'Mr Jones', 'Blackpool Tower'.
Conjunction	A type of **connective** that joins **clauses**. **Co-ordinating conjunctions** include 'and', 'but' and 'so'. **Subordinating conjunctions** include 'because', 'if' and 'until'. See also **subordinating clause**.
Connective	Any word which joins two bits of text.
Consonant	Any letter of the alphabet other than the vowels (a, e, i, o, u).
Contracted form	Short words made by putting two words together and omitting some letters, which are replaced by an **apostrophe**. For example, 'did not' is contacted to 'didn't'.
Co-ordinating conjunction	A conjunction which joins two **main clauses** to create a **compound sentence** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).
Co-ordination	The joining of **clauses** in a way that gives each one equal importance. For example, 'I am seven and my friend is eight'.
Dash	Used in a similar way to **brackets** or **parentheses** to set information apart in a **sentence**. For example, 'My three friends - Jack, Sam and Callum - are coming to my house for tea'.
Definite article	See **article**.
Determiner	A word that introduces a **noun** and identifies it in detail. This may be a **definite** or **indefinite article** (a, an, the), a demonstrative (this, that), possessive (your, my), a quantifier (some, many) or a number (six, ten, half).
Digraph	A sound represented by two letters - for example 'ee' or 'th'.

Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Direct speech	A sentence where the exact words spoken are represented, and shown in **speech marks** (also known as **inverted commas**). ("Tidy your room, please," said Mum).
Ellipsis ...	Three dots which are used to show missing words or to create a pause for effect. For example, 'So...tell me what happened'.
Embedded clause	A **clause** used in the middle of another **clause**. It is usually marked by **commas**. For example, 'The man, walking along with his dog, whistled a tune to himself'.
Etymology	The origin of words and how they have changed over time. Knowing the etymology of some words can help children to spell them, for example knowing that words with 'ch' pronounced 'sh' are often of French origin (e.g. machine, chef, brochure).
Exclamation	A **sentence** which expresses surprise or wonder, and ends with an **exclamation mark** in place of a **full stop**. Begins with the words 'how' or 'what' and must also contain a **verb**. For example, 'What big eyes you have, Grandma!' or 'How cold it is today!'
Exclamation mark !	A **punctuation mark** used at the end of an exclamation - for example, 'What a fantastic day we have had!' It can also be used at the end of a **statement** or **command** to show something has been said with feeling or emotion, for example, 'That was a really scary film!' or 'Stop hitting your brother!'
Exclamative statement	See **exclamation.**
First person	A **sentence** is written in the first person if it is written from the point of view of the subject - in other words, using the **pronouns** 'I' or 'we'.
Formal speech	A type of speech or writing used in formal, 'serious' texts and situations. Children in primary school start to be taught the difference between the language we use when speaking informally (for example, to our friends) and the language we may use for a formal text, such as a letter of complaint.
Fronted adverbial	Words or phrases used at the beginning of a **sentence**, used like **adverbs** to describe the action that follows. For example, 'With a happy smile, she skipped into the room'.
Full stop	A **punctuation mark** used to demarcate the end of a **statement** or **command**.
Future tense	A verb tense which describes actions that are going to take place in the future. Often uses the **modal auxiliary** verb 'will'. For example, 'Tomorrow I will do the shopping'.
GPC	Stands for grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and refers to the way that sounds heard in words are written down.
Grammar	The rules that cover spoken and written language.
Grapheme	A letter or string of letters that represents a spoken sound.
Homophone	Words that sound the same but have different meanings. Some have different spellings and meanings but sound the same - for example, 'there/their/they're'; some are spelt the same but have different meanings - for example, 'fair' ('Let's go to the fair!'/'That's not fair').
Hyphen -	A punctuation mark used to link and join words, and often used to reduce **ambiguity** in sentences: for example twenty-seven, brother-in-law, man-eating, long-legged.
Imperative verb	A **verb** that stands alone without a **subject noun** or **pronoun** in a **command.**
Indefinite article	See **article**.

Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Indirect speech	A **sentence** where the main points of what someone has said are reported without actually writing the speech out in full. **Speech marks** are not used. For example, 'Mum told us to tidy our rooms'.
Informal speech	See **formal speech**.
Inverted commas	Punctuation marks used to demarcate **direct speech** in a sentence. Also known as speech marks, but in the 2014 National Curriculum children are taught the term inverted commas instead.
Main clause	The leading **clause** in a **sentence** which indicates the main **subject** and action of the sentence. It stands alone without any additional **clauses.** For example, 'Even though the weather is bad, I will still go for a walk'.
Modal verb	A special **verb** which affects the other verbs in the **sentence** by showing obligation (e.g. 'You should do your homework'), possibility (e.g. 'I might have pizza for tea'), ability (e.g. 'You can ride a bike now') or permission (e.g. 'You may go out now').
Morphology	The study of words, how they are formed and their relationship to other words in the same language. It analyses the structure of words and parts of words, such as stems, **root words**, **prefixes**, and **suffixes**. An understanding of morphology can help children with spelling strategies, e.g. knowing that 'medicine', 'medical' and 'paramedic' all share a common root.
Noun	A naming word for things, animals, people, places and feelings. Can be **common, proper, concrete, abstract** or **collective.**
Noun phrase	A small group of words that does not contain a **verb**. A noun phrase contains a noun plus words to describe it - for example, 'the spotty, black dog'.
Object	The object of a **sentence** is involved in the action but does not carry it out. For example, 'I dropped my cup on the floor'.
Paragraph	A distinct section of a piece of writing, which usually has a single theme. It is indicated by starting a new line or indenting the start of the first sentence.
Parenthesis	See **brackets**.
Passive voice	A sentence is written in the passive voice when the **subject** is having something done to it. For example, 'The mouse was chased by the cat'.
Past continuous tense	See **past progressive tense**.
Past perfect tense	A tense used to describe actions that were completed by a certain time in the past. For example, 'Yesterday I was late because I had walked to school'.
Past progressive tense	Also known as past continuous tense, a form of the **past tense** where something goes on for a period of time in the past - for example, 'I was walking in the park'. Usually formed by adding the suffix '-ing' to a verb.
Past tense	Any one of a set of verb tenses which describe action that took place in the past. See also **progressive tense, past perfect tense.**
Phonics	A way of teaching reading and writing which focusses on hearing and learning the sounds in words, and how these are written down. Children are taught to blend sounds together to read words and to segment sounds in words they hear, in order to write down the correct **GPCs.**

Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Phrase	A small group of words that does not contain a **verb**.
Plural	More than one. Using plurals can affect the **nouns** and **verbs** in a **sentence**.
Phoneme	A sound which makes up all or part of a word. For example, the word 'light' is made up of the phonemes: 'l', 'igh' and 't'.
Personal pronoun	A **pronoun** which replaces a person, place or thing. For example, 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'we', 'they', 'it', 'me', 'him', 'her', 'us', 'them'.
Possessive apostrophe	An **apostrophe** used before the letter s to show ownership. For example, 'This is Sally's coat'.
Possessive pronoun	A **pronoun** which is used to show ownership. Some can be used on their own ('mine', 'yours', 'his', 'hers', 'ours', 'theirs'), whilst others need to be attached to a noun ('my', 'your', 'her', 'our', 'their', 'whose').
Prefix	Letters that go in front of a **root word** and change its meaning, for example, 'un-' (happy/unhappy), 'dis-' (appear/disappear), 're-' (act/react)
Preposition	A linking word in a sentence, used to show where things are in time or space. For example, 'under', 'after', 'next', 'behind'.
Prepositional phrase	A **phrase** which contains a **preposition**. For example, 'under the carpet', 'behind the door', 'after school'.
Present perfect tense	The tense which describes actions that are completed at an unspecified time before this moment. For example, 'I have cycled two miles already.'
Present progressive tense	A tense which describes an action which began in the past and is still going on now. For example, 'I am learning to speak French'.
Present tense	Any one of a set of tenses that describe actions which are happening now. See also **present perfect tense** and **present progressive tense.**
Pronoun	Any word which can be used to replace a noun. See **personal pronoun, possessive pronoun.**
Proper noun	A **noun** which names a particular person, place or thing. For example, 'John', 'London', 'France', 'Monday', 'December'.
Punctuation mark	A symbol used to create and support meaning within a **sentence** or within a word, for example **full stop, comma, question mark, colon, speech marks**.
Relative clause	A **relative clause** is a type of **subordinate clause that adapts, describes or modifies a noun by using a relative pronoun** (who, that or which). For example, 'He ate too many cakes, which made him feel ill'.
Relative pronoun	A pronoun used in a **relative clause** (who, that, which).
Reported speech	See **indirect speech**.
Root word	A basic word with no **prefix** or **suffix** added to it. Adding prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning of a root word.
Question	A type of **sentence** which asks a question. It either begins with one of the question words (who, what, where, when, how, why) or reverses the **(pro)noun/verb** order in a **statement** - for example, 'Sarah is washing the dishes' becomes 'Is Sarah washing the dishes?'

Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Question mark ?	A **punctuation mark** which indicates a **question** and comes at the end of the **sentence** in place of the **full stop**.
Second person	A **sentence** is written in the second person if it is written from the point of view of a person being spoken to – in other words, using the **pronoun** 'you'.
Semi-colon ;	A **punctuation mark** used in a **sentence** to separate major sentence elements. A **semicolon** can be used between two closely related independent **clauses**, provided they are not already joined by a **coordinating conjunction**. For example, 'My car is red; my friend's car is blue'.
Sentence	One word or a group of words that makes sense by itself (a grammatical unit). Begins with a **capital letter** and ends with **a full stop, question mark** or **exclamation mark**. Usually contains a **subject** and always contains a **verb**.
Simple sentence	Has a **subject** and one **verb**. See also **compound sentence** and **complex sentence**.
Singular	Referring to only one. Use of the singular may affect the **nouns, pronouns** and **verbs** in a **sentence**.
Speech marks " "	Punctuation marks used to demarcate **direct speech** in a sentence.
Split digraph	A **digraph** that is split by a consonant. Usually represent long vowel sounds 'a-e' (for example, 'cake'), 'i-e' (five), 'o-e' (code) and 'u-e' (rule).
Statement	A **sentence** that conveys a simple piece of information. For example, 'It is a sunny day today'.
Subject	The subject of a **sentence** is the thing or person carrying out the main action. For example, '<u>The cow</u> ate the grass'.
Subordinate clause	A **clause** that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence, but is linked to a main clause using a **subordinating conjunction.** It does not express a complete thought, and if read on its own it requires additional information**.** For example, 'I played out until <u>it went dark</u>'. Subordinate clauses contain a subject noun and a verb.
Subordinating conjunction	A **conjunction** that connects a main **clause** to a **subordinating clause.** Examples include 'because', 'until', 'when', 'as', 'since', 'whereas', 'even though'.
Subordination	The joining of clauses and phrases in a way that links a main clause to a subordinate clause that does not stand alone.
Suffix	A string of letters that go at the end of a **root word**, changing or adding to its meaning. Suffixes can also show if a word is a **noun, verb, adjective** or **adverb**.
Superlative	A form of an adjective used to compare one object to all others in its class. Usually formed by adding the **suffix** '-est' or the word 'most'. For example, 'Mia ran <u>fastest</u> on Sports Day'. 'I am hungry, you are hungrier than me, but he is the <u>hungriest</u> of all'. See also **comparative.**
Syllable	A sequence of speech sounds in a word. The number of syllables in a word sounds like the 'beats' in the word, and breaking a word into syllables can help with spelling. One-syllable words include words such as, 'dog', 'cat', 'walk' and 'bath'; two-syllable words include, 'teacher' and 'Christmas'; three-syllable words include, 'beautiful', 'manager'.
Synonym	A word which has exactly or nearly the same meaning as another word.
Third person	A **sentence** is written in the third person if it is written from the point of view of a person being spoken about – in other words, using the pronouns 'he', 'she', 'it' or 'they'.

Glossary of Terms Used in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Teaching in Primary Schools

Time connective	Words or phrases which tell the reader when something is happening. For example, 'After dinner you must do your homework. Then you can read your book'.
Trigraph	A string of three letters which make a single sound, for example 'igh'.
Verb	A word used to describe an action, occurrence or state. An essential part of a **sentence**.
Vowel	The letters a, e, i, o and u.
Word family	A group of words which may share a common **root word** or **morphology.** For example, 'happy', 'unhappy', 'happiness', 'happily', 'unhappiness', 'unhappily'.