

**St Vincent de Paul School**  
**Guide to Grammar and Punctuation**



We understand that for many parents and carers it is a challenge to recall the grammar and punctuation terms learnt during their school days. This booklet gives a brief definition of the terminology a child is taught during their primary education.

These lists show the terminology children in each year are expected to become familiar with.

Please speak to your child's teacher if you have further questions.

## Year One

Term	Definition	Example
Sentence	A group of words that are put together to mean something - must include a verb	The sky is blue. Today is Monday. Her dress looked beautiful.
Noun	Name of a person, place of thing.  4 types: Common - table, cat Proper - John, England Collective - pride, gaggle, flock Abstract - love, bravery	The <b>cat</b> sat on the <b>table</b> . <b>John</b> lives in <b>England</b> . Lions live together in a <b>pride</b> . Can you feel the <b>love</b> ?
Adjective	A word that describes a noun.	The dog was enormous and very fierce.
Verb	An action or doing word.  Some verbs are irregular: see - saw / seen catch - caught	She <b>waited</b> patiently. She <b>has been waiting</b> ... She <b>waits</b> ..
Singular	Singular forms refer to one thing - noun	cat, church, child, tooth
Plural	Plural forms refer to more than one - noun.  Plural usually marked by addition of - s, es  Some plurals are irregular.  Some nouns are mass nouns and do not change in the plural.	<b>cats churches</b>  <b>tooth/teeth; foot/feet</b>  <b>fish, sheep</b>
Conjunction	Used to join two ideas together within one sentence.	He needed his coat <b>because</b> it was cold.  The curtains danced in the wind <b>and</b> the windows crashed.
Preposition	A word that shows the <b>position</b> of a noun.	The box was <b>under</b> the table. I was <b>inside</b> the house. The clouds <b>above</b> ...
Punctuation	Symbols that help the reader to make sense of written words	! . ? ,

Full stop	Comes at the end of a sentence and creates a pause when reading.	I am sitting on the chair.
Question mark	Comes at the end of a question. Voices generally rise when reading aloud.	Would you like icecream?
Exclamation mark	Shows surprise or excitement when a person speaks.	That's huge!

## Year Two

Term	Definition	Example
Pronoun	A word in place of a noun. Avoids repetition.	<b>They</b> were on the bus.  <b>He</b> sat down quietly.
Adverb	Adverbs give extra meaning to a verb, an adjective or a whole sentence.	I <b>really</b> enjoyed the party. (adverb + verb)  She's <b>really</b> nice. (adverb + adjective)  He works <b>really</b> slowly. (adverb + adverb)  <b>Really</b> , he should know better. (adverb + sentence)
Connectives	Used to join a new sentence to the previous.	We went to the park and played on the swings. <b>Then</b> we had an ice cream.
Imperative	To express the action of the subject	Next, slowly <b>turn</b> the tap on.
Present tense	Writing which expresses events happening now	Joyce is <b>skipping</b> and <b>singing</b> a song.  Rex <b>is looking</b> out of the car window.  Rosie <b>looks</b> confused!
Past tense	Writing which expresses events that have already occurred.	Joyce <b>skipped</b> and <b>sang</b> a song.  Rex <b>looked</b> out of the car window.
Suffix	A group of letters added to the end of a word to change	<b>assessment</b>  <b>quickly</b>

	its grammatical use.	<u>beautiful</u>
Prefix	A group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its grammatical use.	<u>dismiss</u> <u>untidy</u> <u>inedible</u>
Noun phrase	Several words used to describe 'a thing'	The <b>big hairy</b> elephant.
Statement	A sentence that delivers facts without an exclamation or question	The elephant is big and hairy.
Exclamation	A sentence that shows surprise or excitement of the speaker	That's big!
Question	A sentence that asks a question	Why are mice so tiny?
Command	A sentence that gives an order	Don't stroke the tiger.
Compound sentences	Two or more units of sense (sentences) joined together with a 'joining word'	I like cats. + I like dogs. <b>I like cats and dogs.</b>
Adverb	Describe a verb	I ran <b>quickly</b> . (Adverbs often end with 'ly'.)
Apostrophe	Punctuation mark that shows:  i) contraction ii) possession	didn't  the boy's dog.
Comma	Used to show a short pause within a sentence. It can separate items in a list.	The cat, dog, goldfish and rabbit all belonged to Martha.

## Year Three

Term	Definition	Example
Determiner	Words used with nouns - <b>this</b> book, <b>my</b> friend, <b>a</b> book, <b>the</b> book.  They limit the reference to the noun.  They include <b>articles</b> (a / an, the), <b>possessive pronouns</b> , <b>demonstratives</b> (this / that,	<b>This</b> book is yours.  I've got <b>some</b> sweets.  I will have <b>an</b> apple.  <b>Which</b> colour do you prefer?

	those / these) and <b>quantifiers</b> (some, many, no etc) and <b>numbers</b> .	
Clause	Contains a <b>subject</b> and a <b>verb</b> . There are two types of clauses Independent- this can stand alone.  Dependent-works only as a whole sentence. It could begin with <b>after, although, because, if, when, while</b> .	<b>She</b> can <b>leave</b> the office now because <b>she finished</b> work early.
Subordinate clause -	A clause which is subordinate (less important) to some other part of the same sentence	The elephant, <b>who had eaten three buns</b> , was very sleepy'.
Phrase	A small group of closely related words with <u>no verb</u> .	<b>If you can</b> <b>At the museum</b>  Prepositional phrases: <b>In the house</b> <b>Under water</b> <b>Out of here</b>
Paragraph	A section of a piece of writing.  A new paragraph marks a change of focus, change of time, change of place or change of speaker.  Should be marked by a new line and a <u>clear</u> indent.	
Collective noun	Name of a person, place or thing.  Collective - <b>pride, gaggle, flock</b>	<b>Lions</b> live together in a <b>pride</b> .
Relative pronoun	Introduces a relative clause - who, whom, which, that,	The train was late, <b>which</b> annoyed me greatly.  This is Sam, <b>who</b> can play the piano.
Subject	The noun or pronoun that is carrying out the action in the sentence.	<b>The dog</b> broke the window.  <b>The children</b> ripped the paper.
Object	The object in the sentence that is having the action done to it.	The dog broke <b>the window</b> .  The children ripped <b>the paper</b> .
Inverted	Also known as speech	Martha said, "I like cats."

Commas	marks, show the actual words spoken.	
Direct speech	The words placed inside inverted commas to show what a person has said	<u>"I love school,"</u> said the boy. It contrasts with reported speech eg The boy said he loves school.
Preposition	Words that show where and object is or where an action took place	The box was <u>on</u> the table.
Conjunction	A conjunction links two words or phrases together. There are two main types of conjunctions:  Co-ordinating conjunctions link two words or phrases together as an equal pair;  Subordinating conjunctions introduce a subordinate clause	The bat <u>and</u> ball were new  Joe can't practise kicking <u>because</u> he's injured.

## Year Four

Term	Definition	Example
Subordinate clause	A clause with a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone, so is in addition to the main clause.	<u>Although I was scared,</u> I crept inside. I crept inside is the main clause as it can stand alone and still make sense.
Relative clause	A clause (with verb) using <u>who, whom, which, whose</u> to relate it back to the subject but that cannot stand alone.	Polly's hair, <u>which was long and brown,</u> hung loosely around her head.  The boy was funny, <u>which made me smile.</u>
Possessive pronoun	Tell who owns something	They can be in front of a noun or after:  <u>my</u> pen / That pen is <u>mine.</u>
Synonym	Two words are synonyms if they have the same meaning, or similar meanings	talk speak, old - elderly
Antonym	Have the opposite meaning	hot cold.

Adverbial	<p>Adverbials of manner – <b>how</b></p> <p>Adverbial of place – <b>where</b></p> <p>Adverbials of time – <b>When / how often</b></p> <p>Adverbials of probability – <b>How certain we are</b></p>	<p>Shouted <b>loudly</b></p> <p>He drove <b>as fast as possible</b>.</p> <p>I saw him <b>over there</b>.</p> <p>They start work <b>at six thirty</b>. <b>In a minute</b>, I will start.</p> <p><b>Perhaps</b> we should go.</p> <p>He will <b>certainly</b> say yes.</p>
Abstract noun	<p>Name of a person, place or thing.</p> <p>Abstract – <b>love, bravery</b></p>	<p>Can you feel the <b>love</b>?</p>
Fronted adverbial	<p>The use of an adverb to begin a sentence to make the sentence more interesting.</p>	<p><b>On the table</b> <b>stood</b> a vase of flowers.</p> <p><b>Next to the window</b> <b>was</b> a bookcase.</p> <p><b>At the end of the lane</b>, Bob paused.</p>
Pronoun	<p>Words that can be used instead of a noun</p>	<p><b>John</b> likes elephants. <b>He</b> likes elephants.</p>
Article	<p>A, an or the!!</p> <p>A sub-category of determiners.</p>	<p><b>an</b> elephant</p> <p><b>a</b> bear</p> <p><b>the</b> teddy</p>
Determiner	<p>A determiner refers to a specific noun</p>	<p><b>a</b> dog <b>the</b> box <b>those</b> eggs <b>that</b> book.</p>

## Year Five

Term	Definition	Example
Modal verb	<p>To show if we believe something is certain, probable or possible – or not! <b>can/could, may/might, shall/should, will/would, must/ought</b></p>	<p>Perhaps I <b>should</b> stay behind.</p> <p><b>Can</b> I get you a drink?</p> <p>Sam <b>will</b> be here</p>



		soon. I <b>must</b> go now.
Cohesion	The structure rules that allow ideas to be compiled together. If you start writing in the past tense you would stay writing in the past tense to keep the writing in cohesion.	I <b>went</b> to the market this morning and bought a soda; then, I <b>went</b> to the store a few hours later and purchased another root beer.
Ambiguity	The presence of two or more possible meanings within a single word.	The Rabbi <b>married</b> my sister.  The fisherman went to the <b>bank</b> .  “You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen; it said, ‘ <b>Parking Fine</b> .’” So that was nice.”
Relative pronoun/Relative clause	A relative clause is a special type of subordinate clause that modifies a noun. It often does this by using a relative pronoun such as who or that to refer back to that noun,	That’s the boy <u>who lives near school</u> . ‘The prize <u>that I won</u> was a book’.
Parenthesis	A remark that is added to a sentence, often to provide an explanation or extra information, that is separated from the main part of the sentence by commas, brackets or dashes	My sister – who lives in Australia – is coming to visit next summer.
Bracket	Used when you want to enclose something that is incidental to the rest of the sentence something that is background or almost unnecessary. Brackets should be used for clarity if the information also includes a comma	The 30th anniversary of the eruption of Mount St. Helens <b>(May 18, 1980)</b> brought back vivid memories of ash and darkness.
Dash	Best used when you want to enclose or set off something that deserves a lot of	They fled through the woods, and then George—dear, sweet George the



	<p>attention, is meant to interrupt your sentence eg</p> <p>Unlike brackets, one dash can be used by itself</p>	<p>accountant—jumped out from behind a tree and stabbed them.</p> <p>There was only one thing missing from the pirate ship—pirates.</p>
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## Year Six

Term	Definition	Example
<p>Active voice</p> <p>Passive voice</p>	<p>Verbs can be active or passive.</p> <p>In an active sentence the subject performs the action.</p> <p>In a passive sentence the subject is on the receiving end of the action.</p>	<p><u>Active -</u> The dog bit Ben. The subject is performing the action.</p> <p><u>Passive -</u> Ben was bitten by the dog. The subject is on the receiving end of the action.</p>
Present progressive	Present progressive tense combines the verb in the present tense with the continuous aspect	The children <b>are</b> sleeping. <b>is, are, am &amp; verb with -ing</b>
Past progressive tense	A form of the past tense where an action goes on for a period of time.	The children <b>were</b> sleeping <b>was, were &amp; verb with -ing</b>
Present perfect tense	This describes an action that started in the past and continues in the present.	I <b>have</b> lived in Bristol since 1984. <b>have, has</b>
Past perfect tense	This talks about time up to a certain point in the past.	We <b>had</b> finished drinking the water before we were half way up the mountain. When we found our dog, he <b>had</b> gotten stuck in a fence.
Subjunctive mood	A verb form used to refer to a hypothetical scenario or to express a wished suggestion or command	I wish I were an astronaut. I suggest you be quiet.
Ellipse	Can be used sparingly to indicate hesitation or faltering speech or thoughts; a break in time;	...

	or to shorten long quotations.	
Hyphen	Used to join words to indicate that they have a combined meaning or that they are linked in the grammar of a sentence	a pick-me-up, rock-forming minerals and long-term
Colon	Means "that is to say" or "here's what I mean." Use a colon to introduce a series of items A colon may also be used between independent clauses when the second sentence explains, or expands on the first sentence	You need to bring the following: a coat, a packed lunch, swimming costume, towel, and sun lotion.  He got what he worked for: he really earned that promotion.
Semi-colon	The main task of the semicolon is to mark a break that is stronger than a comma but not as final as a full stop. It's used between two main clauses that balance each other	The road runs through a beautiful wooded valley; the railway line follows it. I have a big test tomorrow; I can't go out tonight.
Bullet point	You can use bullet points for a list of points or to highlight key issues. You usually use bullet points when it is not important that the items on the list are in any particular order	You will need to bring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a towel</li> <li>• a swimming costume</li> <li>• a coat</li> </ul>