

Grammar Terminology

Grammar Term	Definition
noun	A word that names. It is a thing, a person, an animal or a place. Nouns can be common, proper, abstract or collective.
adjective	A word that is used to describe and give more information about a noun.
verb	A word that expresses a physical action, a mental action or a state of being.
adverb	A word that modifies a verb, telling you how, when, where or why something is being done.
adverbial	Performs the function of an adverb: tells you how, when or where something happened. Fronted adverbials are adverbials that come at the start of a sentence.
expanded noun phrase	A small group of words that does not contain a verb. An expanded noun phrase includes one noun as well as words that describe it, for example: the red shoe.
preposition	Linking words in a sentence. We use prepositions to explain where things are in time or space (under, over, beneath, behind).
pronoun	A word used to replace a noun. Examples of pronouns are: he, she, it, they. Pronouns can be personal and possessive.
possessive pronoun	Used to show ownership. Some can be used on their own (mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, whose); others must be used with a noun (my, your, his, her, its, our, their, whose).
relative pronoun	A word that introduces a relative clause (who, which, that, whom, whose, where or when).
modal verb	A type of verb that changes or affects other verbs in a sentence. They show level of possibility. For example: I <u>might</u> go to the cinema; I <u>can</u> go to the cinema; I <u>must</u> go to the cinema.
determiner	A word that introduces a noun and identifies it in detail. Determiners can be articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that), possessives (your, his), quantifiers (some, many) or numbers (six, sixty).
conjunction	A conjunction joins clauses. A co-ordinating conjunction joins two main clauses, such as and , but and so . A subordinating conjunction joins a main clause to a subordinate clause (because , if and until .)
connective	Connectives join parts of texts together. For example: Firstly , Next , Then or However .
statement	A sentence that says something, and should be punctuated either with a full stop (.) or exclamation mark (!)
question	A sentence which asks something and must be punctuated with a question mark (?)

command	A sentence which tells somebody to do something, and should be punctuated either with an exclamation mark (!) or a full stop (.)
exclamation	A sentence that begins with "what" or "how", includes a verb and can only be punctuated with an exclamation mark (!).
clause	The building blocks of sentences: groups of words that contain a subject and a verb. Main clauses make sense in a sentence on their own, while subordinate clauses do not.
subordinate clause	Needs to be attached to a main clause because it cannot make sense on its own, though it does contain its own subject and verb.
relative clause	A relative clause is a type of subordinate clause that adapts, describes, or modifies a noun by using a relative pronoun (who, which, that, whom, whose, where or when).
parenthesis	A word, phrase or clause inserted into a sentence to add extra information. They can be punctuated with dashes, brackets or commas.
apostrophe	A punctuation mark used to show possession or contraction.
comma	A punctuation mark that separates items in a list and marks divisions within sentences. Often used to separate clauses, or fronted adverbials, from the rest of a sentence to make writing easier to understand.
inverted commas	Punctuation marks that show where direct speech starts and ends.
bracket	A punctuation mark used to indicate parenthesis.
dash	A punctuation mark that can be used within a sentence to show parenthesis.
suffix	A string of letters that go at the end of a word, changing or adding to its meaning. Suffixes can show if a word is a noun, adjective, adverb or noun.
prefix	A string of letters that are added to the beginning of a root word, changing its meaning.
homophone	Words that sound the same but have different meanings. Often, they are spelt differently too, such as to , too and two .
tense	Tells us the time when an action took place, in the past, present or future.
word family	Groups of words that fit into a certain set of letter patterns with the same root words. For example: help, helper, helped, helpless, helping, helpful, unhelpful.
direct speech	Direct speech is a sentence in which the exact words spoken are reproduced in inverted commas. Indirect/reported speech is when the general points of what someone has said are reported, without writing the speech out in full.
cohesion	If a piece of writing shows cohesion, this means that the writing is well structured and the ideas link together in a logical way.
ambiguity	Ambiguity is where a sentence could be open to more than one meaning, which can confuse a reader. We can use commas to help readers understand our writing better and avoid ambiguity.