Grammar Glossary for Parents

EYFS | Speaking and early language

Term	What it means	Example
Sentence	A group of words that communicates a complete idea.	The dog is sleeping.
Word	A meaningful unit of language.	cat; jump; happy
Question	Something we ask to find out information.	Where is my coat?
Statement	Something we tell someone.	I have a red bike.
Instruction	Words that tell someone what to do.	Put your shoes away.
Rhyme	Words that end with similar sounds.	cat / hat
Sound	Something we hear in a spoken word.	sun begins with /s/.
Story sequence	The order in which events happen.	First we baked; then we ate.

Try at home: Build spoken sentences through stories, songs and conversation. Model full sentences, listen carefully and talk about what happens first, next and last. Formal grammatical terminology is not an EYFS requirement.

Year 1 | Sentences and Punctuation

Term	What it means	Example
Letter / capital letter	A written symbol; a capital is used at the start of a sentence and for names.	Sam went home.
Word	A unit of language separated by spaces in writing.	The / dog / ran.
Sentence	Words arranged to express a complete idea.	The cat sleeps.
Full stop (.)	Punctuation at the end of a statement.	It is raining.
Question mark (?)	Punctuation at the end of a question.	Is it raining?
Exclamation mark (!)	Punctuation showing strong feeling or emphasis.	What a surprise!
Singular / plural	One thing / more than one.	book / books
Noun	A word naming a person, place or thing.	teacher, park, pencil
Verb	A word expressing an action or state.	run, is, have
Adjective	A word describing or giving information about a noun.	a fluffy rabbit
Conjunction: and	Joins words or ideas.	I ran and I jumped.

Try at home: Look for capital letters, finger spaces and end punctuation when reading together. Ask your child to say a complete sentence before writing it.

Year 2 | Sentence types and word classes

Term	What it means	Example
Noun / noun phrase	A noun names something; a noun phrase centres on a noun.	the bright yellow flower
Statement	A sentence that tells us something.	The door is open.
Question	A sentence asking something.	Is the door open?
Command	A sentence giving an instruction.	Close the door.
Exclamation	An exclamatory sentence beginning with what or how.	What a lovely day!
Adjective	Adds detail about a noun.	a tiny mouse
Adverb	Often describes how, when or where something happens.	She sang softly.
Past / present tense	Verb forms that locate actions or states in time.	I walked. / I walk.
Subordination	Links a subordinate clause using words such as when, if, because or that.	I stayed in because it rained.
Coordination	Links sentences with and, but or or.	I tried but I fell.
Apostrophe for contraction	Marks omitted letters.	do not → don't
Possessive apostrophe (singular)	Shows something belongs to one person or thing.	the girl's bag
Comma in a list	Separates items in a list.	pens, pencils and rulers

Try at home: Ask whether a sentence tells, asks or commands. Practise changing present tense to past tense and using because to explain ideas.

Year 3 | Clauses and expanded grammar

Term	What it means	Example
Preposition	Shows relationships such as place or time.	under the table; after lunch
Conjunction	Joins clauses or words. Coordinating – for,and,nor,but,or, yet and so	because, when, although
Subordinate clause	A clause that depends on a main clause.	because it was raining
Main clause	A clause that can stand alone as a sentence.	We stayed inside.
Adverb	Modifies a verb, adjective or another adverb.	She ran quickly.
Adverbial	A word or group of words telling when, where or how.	After lunch, we played.
Present perfect	A verb form using have/has with a past participle.	She has finished.
Direct speech	The exact words spoken by someone.	"Come here," said Dad.
Inverted commas	Punctuation enclosing direct speech.	"Hello," she said.

Prefix	Letters added at the beginning of a word.	unhappy; disagree
Word family	Words related in form and meaning.	solve, solution, solver

Try at home: Notice where, when and why events happen. Compare "I ate" with "I have eaten", and find speech punctuation in books.

Year 4 | Cohesion and fronted adverbials

Term	What it means	Example
Pronoun	A word used in place of a noun or noun phrase.	Aisha lost her pen. She found it.
Possessive pronoun	Shows possession without naming the noun again.	mine, yours, theirs
Determiner	Introduces or specifies a noun.	the, a, this, some, three
Adverbial	A word or phrase giving extra information about a verb or clause.	in the morning; carefully
Fronted adverbial	An adverbial placed at the start of a sentence.	Before breakfast, I read.
Comma after fronted adverbial	Separates a fronted adverbial from the main clause.	Later that day, we left.
Expanded noun phrase	A noun phrase with added descriptive detail.	the tall tree with red leaves
Direct speech punctuation	Inverted commas and other punctuation around speech.	"Stop!" shouted Ben.
Plural possessive apostrophe	Shows possession by more than one.	the girls' coats
Standard English	Language forms used in formal writing and speech.	We were going, not we was going.

Try at home: Practise moving an adverbial to the beginning: "We played after lunch" → "After lunch, we played." Remember the comma.

Year 5 | Relative clauses and formality

Term	What it means	Example
Relative pronoun	Introduces a relative clause.	who, which, that, whose
Relative clause	Adds information about a noun.	The boy, who was tired, sat down.
Modal verb	Expresses possibility, obligation or likelihood.	might, should, must, could
Adverb of possibility	Shows how certain something is.	perhaps, surely, probably
Parenthesis	Extra information inserted into a sentence.	My sister (aged ten) loves art.
Brackets ( )	Can mark parenthetical information.	The trip (on Friday) is free.
Dashes —	Can mark parenthetical information.	The cake — still warm — was delicious.
Commas for parenthesis	Can mark extra non-essential information.	Maya, our captain, scored.
Cohesion	Ways sentences and paragraphs link together.	First… Later… Finally…

Tense consistency	Keeping time references clear and consistent.	She opened the door and walked in.
Formal vocabulary	Word choices suited to more formal contexts.	request rather than ask for

Try at home: Ask children to add extra information with a relative clause and to explain how commas, brackets or dashes affect meaning.

Year 6 | Advanced grammar and punctuation

Term	What it means	Example
Subject	The person or thing the clause is about grammatically.	The dog chased the ball.
Object	A person or thing affected by a verb in a clause.	The dog chased the ball.
Active voice	The subject typically performs the action.	The chef baked the cake.
Passive voice	The subject receives the action.	The cake was baked by the chef.
Synonym	A word with the same or similar meaning.	happy / joyful
Antonym	A word with an opposite meaning.	happy / sad
Ellipsis (…)	Indicates omitted words or a trailing thought.	She opened the box…
Colon (:)	Introduces an explanation, example or list.	Bring three things: water, a hat and a coat.
Semicolon (;)	Links closely related independent clauses.	It was late; we went home.
Hyphen (-)	Can prevent ambiguity in compound expressions.	re-cover / recover
Bullet points	Organise information into a clear list.	• pencil • ruler
Subjunctive form	A formal verb form used in some hypothetical or required situations.	If I were you, I would wait.
Formal / informal register	Language choices suited to audience and purpose.	I would appreciate… / Can you…

Try at home: Compare active and passive versions of the same sentence. Discuss why a writer might choose a colon, semicolon or more formal vocabulary.