



ALDERBROOK SCHOOL

LITERACY

SELF HELP

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Useful definitions

Vowels	a, e, i, o, u
Verbs (doing words)	run, jump, pounce, walk
Adjectives (describing words)	bright, awful, radiant, dazzling
Nouns (names of things and people)	teacher, man, cat, pen, bag
Proper nouns (the actual name of the person, place, thing)	Middle East, San Francisco, Jupiter, Agatha Christie
Adverbs (describes verb)	moved quickly shouted loudly cautiously entered
Pronouns (instead of names)	he, she, they
Preposition (show place)	in, by, under, next, to
Conjunctions (joining words)	and, but, because, although

Types of sentences

1. A **statement** is a sentence which gives information.
e.g. he is eleven years old.
2. A **command** is a sentence which gives commands or instruction.
e.g. go home.
3. An **exclamation** is a sentence which shows emotion or surprise.
e.g. help me!
4. A **question** is a sentence which asks for information.
e.g. what is your name?

Simple and compound sentences

Clause

A clause is a part of a sentence that contains a subject and a verb.

For example: my **dog** **loves** pizza crusts.

The diagram shows the sentence "my dog loves pizza crusts." with "dog" and "loves" highlighted in purple. An arrow points from the word "dog" to the label "subject" below it. Another arrow points from the word "loves" to the label "verb" above it.

Main clause

A clause that makes sense on its own.

For example: **Claire walks to the train station.**

Subordinate clause

A subordinate clause gives additional information about the main clause. It begins with a conjunction like *when*, *because*, *if* or *although*. They do not make sense on their own.

For example: James enjoys football, **although he does not play for a team.** —————> subordinate clause

Simple sentence: a single main clause.

For example:

- The ballerina danced all night.
- Annie watched the television.

Compound sentence: two main clauses joined together by a word like *and, but, or.*

For example:

- Rachel loves TV *and* she likes films.
- The dog loves to run *but* he often gets really muddy.

Complex sentence: a main clause and a subordinate clause.

For example:

- Tom ran to the bus stop, because he was late.

The subordinate clause can be moved to the beginning or middle of a sentence.

- Because he was late, Tom ran to the bus stop.
- Tom, because he was late, ran to the bus stop.

Punctuation marks

Comma	,	Separates words in a list, phrases and some clauses.
Full stop	.	Separates statement and command sentences. Used at the end of a sentence.
Brackets	()	Goes around extra information.
Hyphen	-	Can replace a comma, semi-colon or colon, to add pause, emphasis or show interruption.
Exclamation mark	!	Shows surprise at the end of a sentence.
Question mark	?	Goes at the end of a sentence that contains a question.
Colon	:	Goes at the start of a list and separates clauses.
Semi-colon	;	Goes between clauses and a list of phrases. Can replace <i>and</i> .
Ellipsis	...	Shows interruption or a trailing off.
Speech marks	“ ”	Goes around speech or a quotation.
Apostrophe	'	Shows where a letter is missed out or to mark possession.

Commas

Commas have lots of uses:

Commas are used to separate items in a list, for example, when listing names or objects.

- *For the recipe you will need tomatoes, garlic, herbs and puree.*

(Note: usually commas are not used before the word 'and' in a list.)

Commas are used to show the reader where to pause in a sentence. Often the comma separates a phrase that gives more information from the main clause.

- *Although it's late, I'll help you.*

Commas are used to mark off the person being addressed.

- *Miss, can you help me?*

When deciding where to place a comma in your writing, it is helpful to read your sentences aloud. Listen out for when you would naturally take a shorty break. That is probably where you need to put your comma.

Speech Marks

Speech marks are used to punctuate direct speech. In direct speech, the words are written as a person said or says them. The speech marks show when the person begins speaking and when they stop speaking.

- For example: *Robyn said, "I won first prize."*

What Robyn said is a complete sentence, and is punctuated as a sentence, **within** the speech marks.

Notice how when the speaker appears **before** the speech, a comma must be placed before the speech marks.

Colon

A **colon** is useful when you are writing a sentence with a list in it.

Colons are used to introduce something, often a list.

- For example: *we need lots of fruit for this recipe: bananas, apples, pears and mangoes.*

Semi-colons

Semi-colons are used instead of a full stop between two sentences that are closely connected.

- For example: *it's a great idea; let's tell the others about it.*

Semi-colons balance two similar ideas.

Semi-colons can sometimes replace 'and'.

Apostrophes

The apostrophe has two uses:

- 1. It is used to show letters have been missed out of a word.**
- 2. It is used to show possession.**

- 1. One way in which we use apostrophes is to show that some letters have been missed out of a word or words.**

When words contract i.e. when they get pushed together, that is, some of the letters get missed out.

e.g. **I'm** not in a good mood today. I **don't** feel like going to school. **It's** not fair.

Here are some more examples of some common contractions:

I will	I'll
I have	I've
will not	won't
you will	you'll
is not	isn't
he is or has	he's
I would	I'd
they are	they're
she would or had	she'd
you have	you've

REMEMBER!

Remember not to mix up **it's** and **its**.

- **its** means there's something **belonging**.
- **it's** is short for **it is** and there is an apostrophe.

For example:

- **It's** time for the cat to have **its** dinner.
- The museum needs to update **its** online schedule for summer; **it's** confusing.
- **It's** your right to refuse the invitation, even though the furniture store celebrated **its** tenth anniversary.

2. Possessive apostrophes

The apostrophe can be used to show ownership – who an item belongs to or is part of.

It means of or belonging to.

E.g.

the dog's tail

the boy's book (singular)

the boys' trophy (plural)

the woman's coat (singular)

the women's coats (plural)

IMPORTANT NOTE

Care must be taken not to misuse the apostrophe. It should not be used for plurals.

For example:

<i>*I bought three banana's</i>	WRONG	✘
<i>*I bought three bananas</i>	RIGHT	✔
<i>*The Wilson's are here</i>	WRONG	✘
<i>*The Wilsons are here</i>	RIGHT	✔
<i>*Apostrophe's are confusing</i>	WRONG	✘
<i>*Apostrophes are confusing</i>	RIGHT	✔

When do you start a new paragraph?

**Change
of time**

**Change
of person**

**Change
of place**

**Change
of topic**

Connectives

Words and phrases to join sentences more effectively.

<p>Sequence (when writing about a process in stages)</p>	<p>Contrast (when you show the difference between one thing and another)</p>	<p>Cause and Effect (when you show that something has happened as a result of something else)</p>
<p>initially finally firstly once secondly so far next subsequently meanwhile eventually following previously to begin with</p>	<p>however whereas nevertheless yet although on the other hand instead the opposite otherwise</p>	<p>Therefore since Because consequently Eventually accordingly Depending upon Necessarily until</p>
<p>Addition (when you add another point)</p>	<p>Comparison (when you show similarities between one thing and another)</p>	<p>Summary / conclusion</p>
<p>and as well as also again furthermore in addition moreover</p>	<p>equally similarly comparatively in comparison with likewise</p>	<p>in conclusion finally ultimately overall to conclude</p>
<p>Illustration (when you give an example of a point)</p>	<p>Persuasion (when you try to change someone's opinion)</p>	<p>Emphasis (when you make a strong point)</p>
<p>for instance such as to show that thus as revealed by for example</p>	<p>naturally surely obviously clearly evidently certainly undoubtedly</p>	<p>above all notable in particular especially in fact specifically more important</p>

Six spelling rules to learn

- 1) The letter q is always followed by u in English words.

For example: question, quite.

- 2) English words do not end with the letter v.

- 3) Capitalise proper nouns.

For example: John, Middle East.

- 4) When a word ends in a silent e, drop the e before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel.

For example: make + ing is making.

Keep the silent e before adding a suffix beginning with a consonant.

For example: time + ly is timely.

- 5) When a word ends in a consonant and y, change the y to i before adding a suffix, unless the suffix begins with i.

For example: happy + ly is happily, but hurry + ing is hurrying.

- 6) When a word ends in a vowel and y, do not change the y to i.

For example: play + ed is played.

Homophones

Homophones are words which sound the same. They have different spellings and different meanings.

For example:

- *The sun set over the ocean.*
- *The son gave his father a card.*

Other examples of homophones are:

<i>witch</i>	<i>which</i>
<i>stare</i>	<i>stair</i>
<i>hair</i>	<i>hare</i>
<i>hour</i>	<i>our</i>
<i>meddle</i>	<i>medal</i>
<i>deer</i>	<i>dear</i>

Most common misused homophones:

There ———> reference to a place.

Their ———> something which belongs to someone.

They're ———> shortened form of they are.

We drove to Solihull as their family were living there; they're happy to be going home.

Your ———> belongs to you.

You're ———> you are.

Your being here is causing problems; I think you're lying.

Homonyms

Homonyms are words which sound the same and are spelt the same, but have different meanings.

For example:

- *The conductor will bow to the audience.*
- *The captain stood on the bow of the ship.*

Other examples of homonyms are:

iron (ironing)
iron (metal)

jumper (clothes)
jumper (person who jumps)

present (gift)
present (here, now)

will (resolve)
will (legacy)

Common mistakes

*Then —→ is used for time.

- *First I will sing my song, then I will leave.*

*Than —→ is used for comparison.

- *I'm much better at listening to people than talking to people.*

*It's definitely...not definatly.

*Lose —→ opposite of win.

- *I think they will lose the match.*

*Loose —→ something which is not tight.

- *These clothes are now extremely loose on me.*

*Effect → is a noun.

*Affect → is a verb.

TIP – if you are unsure, try substituting a different verb and see if it works.

For example:

- As a child he was affected by his parents.
- As a child he was ~~affected~~ corrected by his parents.

A verb works here,
so you should use
'affected'.

