English – Stage 3

Instructional sequence – Grammar and punctuation

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# Overview

Writing is one of the most cognitively demanding tasks required of students, encompassing cognitive, physical, social and cultural dimensions (Daffern et al. 2017). As a result, the effective teaching of writing is both complex and sophisticated (AERO 2022). The development of students’ writing ability plays a pivotal role in advancing a broader range of skills, including enhancing speaking abilities (Hochman and Wexler 2017), fostering reading development and comprehension (Graham and Hebert 2011; Graham et al. 2018), deepening understanding of content and concepts and aiding the retention of information (Graham et al. 2020).

Explicit writing instruction in the early and middle years requires significant amounts of time focused on the development of 'the building blocks of language’ (Sedita 2023:60), including grammar, syntactic awareness, sentence elaboration and punctuation. Students should be provided with frequent opportunities to craft increasingly complex sentences that express advanced thoughts and connections between multiple ideas, including those occurring simultaneously and those interrupted by alternative thoughts and ideas (NESA 2024a; Lemov 2017).

Sentence writing fluency can be achieved through deliberate writing practice (Lemov 2022a; Lemov 2022b; Hochman and Wexler 2017) that includes the gradual release of responsibility model (Christie 2005; Gibbons 2015; NESA 2024a; Pearson and Gallagher 1983; Sedita 2023). This requires students to engage with authentic, purposefully selected texts that approximate the types of texts and grammatical structures students are attempting to write (Exley and Kitson 2020) and a balance between daily sentence-level writing and its gradual progression to creating whole written texts (NESA 2024a Saddler et al. 2018; Sedita 2023).

In Stage 3, a range of evidence-informed strategies should be integrated into learning to increase syntactic maturity. This includes:

* reading texts aloud to students (Hochman and Wexler 2017)
* the use of demonstration and modelling (Humphrey and Macnaught 2015), with the frequent use of ‘think-aloud’ protocols that highlight what a writer does as a text is constructed, and the associated metalanguage (Kucan and Beck 1997)
* the use of exercises that involve sentence combining (Graham and Perin 2007; Saddler 2019), sentence stems and sentence expansion (Hochman and Wexler 2017)
* opportunities for oral rehearsal of writing before students begin to compose (Bogard and McMackin 2012; Myhill 2005)
* deliberate practice with the frequent revision of smaller pieces of writing to support students’ cognitive load, accelerated learning and rigorous thinking (Lemov 2022a; Lemov 2022b; Wexler 2019).

Daily sentence-level instruction, driven by formative assessment with prompt feedback, is essential for student writing development (Fisher et al. 2016; Graham et al. 2015; Lemov 2017). Additionally, establishing a motivating writing environment with content that is personally relevant, authentic and connected to a range of subject areas is crucial (Graham and Perin 2007; Hochman and Wexler 2017).

## Instructions for use

The ‘English – Stage 3 – Instructional sequence – Grammar and punctuation’ is a suggested sequence to support the planning of explicit, systematic and cumulative sentence and text writing lessons for students in Years 5 and 6. This sequence is designed to support students in demonstrating the outcome:

**EN3-CWT-01** plans, creates and revises written texts for multiple purposes and audiences through selection of text features, sentence-level grammar, punctuation and word-level language

[English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2022.

The ‘English – Stage 3 – Instructional sequence – Grammar and punctuation’ aligns with the sample [English Stage 3 scope and sequence](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/english-curriculum-resources-k-12/english-k-6-resources/scope-and-sequences-stage-3). The outcomes and content in this instructional sequence are best addressed in parallel with Oral language and communication, Vocabulary, Reading comprehension, Creating written texts, and Understanding and responding to literature. Content for the instructional sequence has been identified from the following content groups within the Creating written texts focus area: Imaginative purposes, Informative purposes, Persuasive purposes, Text features for multiple purposes, Sentence-level grammar, Punctuation and Word-level language. Only content relevant and connected to grammar and punctuation has been included.

Content in the instructional sequence is positioned at the point of introduction to students and provides repetition and consolidation of content throughout the stage. Some content points will require more emphasis and repetition than others, and schools may choose to adapt this sequence based on their context and assessment data. When revising content with students, it is important to explore a wide selection of text forms and genres as sentence structures, features and language conventions vary from text to text. For example, the use of complex sentences to describe characters in a narrative can vary to those used to describe action processes in a scientific text.

Learning has been organised into ‘early’ and ‘late’ term blocks. Content groups, shown across 4 columns in each block, are designed to be taught simultaneously through explicit teaching with regular and deliberate practice that is grounded in a knowledge-rich environment. Using stimuli such as quality texts which feature appropriate sentence-level content is recommended. Adapting the instructional sequence may be necessary to make connections with texts relevant and contextual. For example, you may need to change the focus of sentence functions or adjust the types of verb groups being explicitly taught to align with those included in mentor texts.

A glossary of terms is provided at the end of the document. It is linked digitally from where learning is **introduced** or **reviewed** in the instructional sequence. Links between the term blocks have also been included. The use of the Navigation pane in Microsoft Word can support movement between each section of the document. When using this resource, it is important to recognise that it is a guide only and does not provide a complete overview of all possible learning. Regularly monitoring students’ progress as they develop grammar and punctuation skills, and frequently revising previously taught content is necessary to ensure individual learning needs are adequately addressed.

The instructional sequence and glossary use subject-specific metalanguage. It is appropriate to use this metalanguage with students; however, it is important to monitor the use of this terminology and create student-friendly definitions as appropriate.

**Symbols used throughout this document include:**

* an asterisk (\*) to indicate syllabus content points that are being introduced for the first time
* a hash (#) to identify additional information that needs to be taught to support student understanding of syllabus content
* Early Stage 1 (ES1), Stage 1 (S1) and Stage 2 (S2) indicate the content from Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2 to support Stage 3 content.

## Stage 3 – Year 5

### Term 1 (early)

**Imaginative purposes**

* Choose and control narrative voice across a text\*

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* n/a

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail\*
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group\*

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, to indicate proper nouns, for headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms\*
* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list\*
* Use quotation marks consistently across a text to distinguish words that are spoken by characters in dialogue or words authored by others\*

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 1 – Year 5 Term 1 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Imaginative purposes****Introduce** [narrative voice](#_Narrative_voice), including:* [first person narrative voice](#_First_person_narrative) (including first person pronouns)
* [second person narrative voice](#_Second_person_narrative) (including second person pronouns)
* [third person narrative voice](#_Third_person_narrative) (including third person pronouns).
 | **Introduce** [verbs](#_Verbs) including [types of verbs](#_Types_of_verbs), such as: action, saying, thinking, feeling and relating (linking) verbs.**Introduce** [verb groups](#_Verb_groups) and [auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs) including:* [types of auxiliary verbs](#_Types_of_auxiliary)
* [relating verbs as auxiliary verbs](#_Relating_verbs_as).

**Introduce** [adverbial phrases](#_Adverbial_phrases) (S2).**Introduce** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Note**: an adverbial clause is a type of [dependent (subordinate) clause](#_Dependent_(subordinate)_clauses) in a [complex sentence](#_Complex_sentences).**Introduce**: [clause position-adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–). | **Introduce** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) including [capital letters at the beginning of a sentence](#_Capital_letters_at), [proper nouns](#_Capital_letters_for_2), [headings and subheadings](#_Capital_letters_for_1).**Introduce** [commas](#_Commas) including commas to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses)](#_Commas_to_separate_1)

See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Introduce** [dialogue](#_Dialogue) and quotation marks including:* [dialogue at the beginning of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the)
* [dialogue at the end of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the_1)
* [changing lines for each new speaker](#_Changing_lines_for).
 | n/a |

### Term 1 (late)

**Imaginative purposes**

* Choose and control narrative voice across a text

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* n/a

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Include appositives to provide details to nouns and to vary sentence structures suited to text purpose\*
* Make choices about the use of declarative, exclamatory, interrogative and imperative sentences to suit text purpose, and for meaning and effect\*

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, to indicate proper nouns, for headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms
* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 2 – Year 5 Term 1 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Imaginative purposes****Review** [narrative voice](#_Narrative_voice), including:* [first person narrative voice](#_First_person_narrative) (including first person pronouns)
* [second person narrative voice](#_Second_person_narrative) (including second person pronouns).
 | **Introduce** [appositives](#_Appositives) to provide details about nouns or pronounsSee [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives).**Introduce** [sentence functions](#_Sentence_functions) including:* [declarative sentences](#_Declarative_sentences)
* [exclamatory sentences](#_Exclamatory_sentences)
* [imperative sentences](#_Imperative_sentences)
* [interrogative sentences](#_Interrogative_sentences) including [direct questions](#_Direct_questions), [indirect questions](#_Indirect_questions) and [rhetorical questions](#_Rhetorical_questions).
 | **Review** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) including for [proper nouns](#_Capital_letters_for_2), [headings and subheadings](#_Capital_letters_for_1).**Introduce** [capital letters for abbreviations](#_Capital_letters_for), including acronyms and initialisms.**Review** [commas](#_Commas) including commas to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses)](#_Commas_to_separate_1).

**Note**: a review of adverbial phrases and clauses may be required.See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position-adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Introduce** [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives). | n/a |

### Term 2 (early)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* n/a

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group
* Create nominalisations to convey abstract ideas and concepts succinctly and authoritatively\*

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, to indicate proper nouns, for headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms
* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list

**Word-level language**

* Control modality related to probability, occurrence, obligation or inclination for precision\*

Table 3 – Year 5 Term 2 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| n/a | **Review** [verbs](#_Verbs).**Review** [verb groups](#_Verb_groups) and [auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs) including:* [types of auxiliary verbs](#_Types_of_auxiliary)
* [relating verbs as auxiliary verbs](#_Relating_verbs_as).

**Introduce** [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma use)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [nouns](#_Nouns).**Introduce** [nominalisation](#_Nominalisation), including [forming nouns from verbs](#_Forming_nouns_from). | **Review** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) for [proper nouns](#_Capital_letters_for_2) [and](#_Capital_letters_at) [the beginning of a sentence](#_Capital_letters_at)**Review** [commas](#_Commas), including to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses).](#_Commas_to_separate_1)

See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Introduce** [commas to separate nouns in a list](#_Commas_to_separate_2) and [commas to separate adjectives when more than one is used](#_Commas_to_separate_3). | **Introduce** [modality](#_Modality)to indicate:* probability
* occurrence
* obligation
* inclination.

**Introduce** [modal verbs](#_Modal_verbs). |

### Term 2 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* n/a

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail
* Include appositives to provide details to nouns and to vary sentence structures suited to text purpose
* Create nominalisations to convey abstract ideas and concepts succinctly and authoritatively
* Make choices about the use of declarative, exclamatory, interrogative and imperative sentences to suit text purpose, and for meaning and effect

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, to indicate proper nouns, for headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms
* Understand that texts, such as poetry, may include innovative use of punctuation, and experiment with punctuation to suit purpose and for effect\*

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 4 – Year 5 Term 2 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| n/a | **Review** [verbs](#_Verbs), including [types of verbs](#_Types_of_verbs).**Review** [verb groups](#_Verb_groups), including [auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs), [types of auxiliary verbs](#_Types_of_auxiliary) and [relating verbs as auxiliary verbs](#_Relating_verbs_as).**Review** [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Introduce** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to achieve precision](#_To_achieve_precision).**Review** [nouns](#_Nouns), [pronouns](#_Pronouns) and [noun groups](#_Noun_groups).**Review** [appositives](#_Appositives) to provide details about nouns or pronouns.**Review** [nominalisation](#_Nominalisation), including [forming nouns from verbs](#_Forming_nouns_from).**Introduce** [nominalisation](#_Nominalisation), including [forming nouns from adjectives](#_Forming_nouns_from_1).**Review** [sentence functions](#_Sentence_functions) to suit text purpose, meaning and for effect. | **Review** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) including [capital letters for headings and subheadings](#_Capital_letters_for_1).**Introduce** [capital letters in poetry](#_Capital_letters_in) and [capital letters for emphasis](#_Capital_letters_for_3).**Introduce** [innovative use of punctuation](#_Innovative_use_of), including [innovative punctuation in poetry](#_Innovative_punctuation_in). | n/a |

### Term 3 (early)

**Imaginative purposes**

* Choose and control narrative voice across a text

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Maintain correct noun–pronoun referencing, subject–verb agreement and use temporal, conditional and causal connectives to build cohesive links across a text\*

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group

**Punctuation**

* Use quotation marks consistently across a text to distinguish words that are spoken by characters in dialogue or words authored by others
* Experiment with dashes and parentheses for humorous or ironic effect\*

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 5 – Year 5 Term 3 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| Imaginative purposes**Review** [narrative voice](#_Narrative_voice), including:* [first person narrative voice](#_First_person_narrative) (including first person pronouns)
* [third person narrative voice](#_Third_person_narrative) (including third person pronouns).

**Text features for multiple purposes****Review** [nouns](#_Nouns).**Introduce** [pronouns](#_Pronouns) including [types of nouns](#_Types_of_nouns): [personal pronouns](#_Personal_pronouns).**Introduce** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing), including [backward and forward referencing](#_Backward_and_forward)
* [connectives](#_Connectives) including [types of connectives](#_Types_of_connectives): [temporal connectives](#_Temporal_connectives), [conditional connectives](#_Conditional_connectives) and [causal connectives](#_Causal_connectives).
 | **Review** [verbs](#_Verbs), including [types of verbs](#_Types_of_verbs).**Review** [verb groups](#_Verb_groups), including [auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs), [types of auxiliary verbs](#_Types_of_auxiliary), [relating verbs as auxiliary verbs](#_Relating_verbs_as) and [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Review** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to achieve precision](#_To_achieve_precision).**Introduce** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to add detail](#_To_add_detail).**Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–). | **Review** [dialogue](#_Dialogue) andquotation marks including:* [dialogue at the beginning of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the)
* [dialogue at the end of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the_1)
* [changing lines for each new speaker](#_Changing_lines_for).

**Introduce** [dialogue that is interrupted](#_Dialogue_that_is) and [internal dialogue](#_Internal_dialogue).**Introduce** [dashes](#_Dashes) and [dashes for humorous and ironic effect](#_Dashes_for_humorous). | n/a |

### Term 3 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Control tense across a text according to purpose, shifting between past, present and future tense if required\*

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group
* Include appositives to provide details to nouns and to vary sentence structures suited to text purpose
* Make choices about the use of declarative, exclamatory, interrogative and imperative sentences to suit text purpose, and for meaning and effect

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, to indicate proper nouns, for headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms
* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 6 – Year 5 Term 3 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Introduce** [tense](#_Tense) including:* [the simple form](#_The_simple_form)
* [the continuous form](#_The_continuous_form)
* [timeless present tense](#_Timeless_present_tense)
* [irregular past tense verbs](#_Irregular_past_tense)
* [shifting between past, present and future tense](#_Shifting_between_past,)
 | **Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position-adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [appositives](#_Appositives).**Review** [sentence functions,](#_Sentence_functions) including [declarative](#_Declarative_sentences), [exclamatory](#_Exclamatory_sentences), [imperative sentences](#_Imperative_sentences).**Review** [interrogative sentences](#_Interrogative_sentences) including [direct questions](#_Direct_questions), [indirect questions](#_Indirect_questions) and [rhetorical questions](#_Rhetorical_questions).**Introduce** [interrogative pronouns](#_Interrogative_pronouns) for gathering different types of information. | **Review** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) including for [proper nouns](#_Capital_letters_for_2), [headings and subheadings](#_Capital_letters_for_1), in [poetry](#_Capital_letters_in) and for [emphasis](#_Capital_letters_for_3).**Review** [commas](#_Commas) including to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses)](#_Commas_to_separate_1).

See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives).**Introduce** [commas to separate adverbs when more than one is used](#_Commas_to_separate_4). | n/a |

### Term 4 (early)

**Text features for** multiple purposes

* Control tense across a text according to purpose, shifting between past, present and future tense if required
* Maintain correct noun–pronoun referencing, subject–verb agreement and use temporal, conditional and causal connectives to build cohesive links across a text

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group

**Punctuation**

* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* Understand that texts, such as poetry, may include innovative use of punctuation, and experiment with punctuation to suit purpose and for effect

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 7 – Year 5 Term 4 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Review**: [tense](#_Tense) including:* [the simple form](#_The_simple_form)
* [the continuous form](#_The_continuous_form)
* [timeless present tense](#_Timeless_present_tense)
* [irregular present tense](#_Irregular_verbs)
* [shifting between past, present and future tense](#_Shifting_between_past,)

**Introduce** [the perfect form](#_The_perfect_form), [the perfect continuous form](#_The_perfect_continuous) and [past participles](#_Past_participles).**Review** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing) including [backward and forward referencing](#_Backward_and_forward)
* [connectives](#_Connectives) including [types of connectives](#_Types_of_connectives): [temporal connectives](#_Temporal_connectives), [conditional connectives](#_Conditional_connectives) and [causal connectives](#_Causal_connectives).

**Introduce** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with [subject–verb agreement](#_Subject-verb_agreement_(also). | **Review** [verbs](#_Verbs), including [types of verbs](#_Types_of_verbs).**Review** [verb groups](#_Verb_groups), including [auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs), [types of auxiliary verbs](#_Types_of_auxiliary), [relating verbs as auxiliary verbs](#_Relating_verbs_as) and [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Review** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to achieve precision](#_To_achieve_precision) and [to add detail](#_To_add_detail).**Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position-adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–). | **Review** [commas](#_Commas) including to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses)](#_Commas_to_separate_1).

See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position-adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [commas](#_Commas) including to separate [nouns in a list](#_Commas_to_separate_2).**Review** [innovative use of punctuation](#_Innovative_use_of), including [innovative punctuation in poetry](#_Innovative_punctuation_in). | n/a |

### Term 4 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Maintain correct noun–pronoun referencing, subject–verb agreement and use temporal, conditional and causal connectives to build cohesive links across a text

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group
* Include appositives to provide details to nouns and to vary sentence structures suited to text purpose
* Create nominalisations to convey abstract ideas and concepts succinctly and authoritatively

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, to indicate proper nouns, for headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms
* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* Experiment with dashes and parentheses for humorous or ironic effect

**Word-level language**

* Control modality related to probability, occurrence, obligation or inclination for precision

Table 8 – Year 5 Term 4 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Review** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing) including [backward and forward referencing](#_Backward_and_forward)
* [connectives](#_Connectives) including [types of connectives](#_Types_of_connectives): [temporal connectives](#_Temporal_connectives), [conditional connectives](#_Conditional_connectives) and [causal connectives](#_Causal_connectives)
* [subject–verb agreement](#_Subject-verb_agreement_(also).
 | **Review** [adverbial clauses (in complex sentences)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in).**Review** [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [appositives](#_Appositives).**Review** [nominalisation](#_Nominalisation), including:* [forming nouns from verbs](#_Forming_nouns_from_1)
* [forming nouns from adjectives](#_Forming_nouns_from).
 | **Review** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) including [at the beginning of a sentence](#_Capital_letters_at), [proper nouns](#_Capital_letters_for_2), [headings and subheadings](#_Capital_letters_for_1), and [abbreviations](#_Capital_letters_for) including acronyms and initialisms.**Review** [commas](#_Commas) including to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses)](#_Commas_to_separate_1).

See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives).**Review** [dashes](#_Dashes) and [dashes for humorous and ironic effect](#_Dashes_for_humorous).**Introduce** [parentheses for humorous and ironic effect](#_Parentheses_for_humorous). | **Review** [modality](#_Modality) to indicate:* probability
* occurrence
* obligation
* **inclination.**

**Review** [modal verbs](#_Modal_verbs).**Introduce** [modal adjectives](#_Modal_adjectives). |

## Stage 3 – Year 6

### Term 1 (early)

**Imaginative purposes**

* Choose and control narrative voice across a text

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Control tense across a text according to purpose, shifting between past, present and future tense if required

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Experiment with embedding adjectival clauses with the subject and/or object of other clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a noun or noun group\*

**Punctuation**

* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* Use quotation marks consistently across a text to distinguish words that are spoken by characters in dialogue or words authored by others

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 9 – Year 6 Term 1 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Imaginative purposes****Review** [narrative voice](#_Narrative_voice), including:* [first person narrative voice](#_First_person_narrative) (including first person pronouns)
* [second person narrative voice](#_Second_person_narrative) (including second person pronouns)
* [third person narrative voice](#_Third_person_narrative) (including third person pronouns).

**Text features for multiple purposes****Review** [tense](#_Tense) including:* [the simple form](#_The_simple_form)
* [the continuous form](#_The_continuous_form)
* [timeless present tense](#_Timeless_present_tense)
* [irregular past tense verbs](#_Irregular_verbs)
* [shifting between past, present and future tense](#_Shifting_between_past,)
* [the perfect form](#_The_perfect_form)
* [the perfect continuous form](#_The_perfect_continuous)
* [past participles](#_Past_participles).
 | **Introduce** [adjectival clauses (in complex sentences)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in).**Introduce** [clause position – adjectival clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–). | **Review**: [commas](#_Commas) including to separate:* [an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause (adverbial clauses)](#_Commas_to_separate_1).

**Note**: a review of adverbial phrases and clauses may be required.See [commas and adverbial clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).See [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Introduce** [commas and adjectival clauses](#_Commas_and_adverbial).**Review** [dialogue](#_Dialogue) andquotation marks including:* [dialogue at the beginning of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the)
* [dialogue at the end of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the_1)
* [changing lines for each new speaker](#_Changing_lines_for)
* [dialogue that is interrupted](#_Dialogue_that_is)
* [internal dialogue](#_Internal_dialogue).

**Introduce** [quotation marks to distinguish words authored by others](#_Quotation_marks_to). | n/a |

### Term 1 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* n/a

**Sentence-level grammar**

* experiment with embedding adjectival clauses with the subject and/or object of other clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a noun or noun group
* include appositives to provide details to nouns and to vary sentence structures suited to text purpose
* create nominalisations to convey abstract ideas and concepts succinctly and authoritatively

**Punctuation**

* use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* use parentheses in the first instance when abbreviating names using acronyms, and when acknowledging a source\*

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 10 – Year 6 Term 1 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| n/a | **Review** [adjectival clauses (in complex sentences)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in).**Review** [clause position – adjectival clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [appositives](#_Appositives).**Review** [nominalisation](#_Nominalisation), including:* [forming nouns from verbs](#_Forming_nouns_from_1)
* [forming nouns from adjectives](#_Forming_nouns_from).
 | **Review** [commas](#_Commas) including:* [commas to separate a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause](#_Commas_to_separate_1) (adverbial clause)
* [commas and adjectival clauses](#_Commas_and_adjectival_1)
* [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives).

**Note**: a review of adverbial clauses may be required.**Introduce** [parentheses](#_Parentheses), including when:* [abbreviating names using acronyms](#_Parentheses_when_abbreviating)
* [acknowledging a source](#_Parentheses_when_acknowledging).

**Introduce** [commas](#_Commas) including:* [commas to separate information displayed in parentheses (brackets)](#_Commas_to_separate_5)
* [commas to separate information displayed in parentheses when acknowledging a source](#_Commas_to_separate_6).
 | n/a |

### Term 2 (early)

**Imaginative purposes**

* Choose and control narrative voice across a text

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Control tense across a text according to purpose, shifting between past, present and future tense if required
* Maintain correct noun–pronoun referencing, subject–verb agreement and use temporal, conditional and causal connectives to build cohesive links across a text

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Vary sentence structures or lengths when using simple, compound and complex sentences, with a focus on achieving clarity and effect suited to text purpose\*

**Punctuation**

* Use quotation marks consistently across a text to distinguish words that are spoken by characters in dialogue or words authored by others
* Understand that texts, such as poetry, may include innovative use of punctuation, and experiment with punctuation to suit purpose and for effect

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 11 – Year 6 Term 2 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Imaginative purposes****Review** [narrative voice](#_Narrative_voice), including: [first person narrative voice](#_First_person_narrative).**Text features for multiple purposes****Review** [tense](#_Tense) including:* [the simple form](#_The_simple_form)
* [the continuous form](#_The_continuous_form)
* [timeless present tense](#_Timeless_present_tense)
* [irregular past tense verbs](#_Irregular_verbs)
* [shifting between past, present and future tense](#_Shifting_between_past,)
* [the perfect form](#_The_perfect_form)
* [the perfect continuous form](#_The_perfect_continuous)
* [past participles](#_Past_participles).

**Review** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing) including [backward and forward referencing](#_Backward_and_forward)
* [connectives](#_Connectives) including [types of connectives](#_Types_of_connectives): [temporal connectives](#_Temporal_connectives), [conditional connectives](#_Conditional_connectives) and [causal connectives](#_Causal_connectives)
* [subject–verb agreement](#_Subject-verb_agreement_(also).
 | **Review** [sentence forms (structures)](#_Sentence_forms_(structures)), including [simple sentences](#_Simple_sentences), [compound sentences](#_Compound_sentences) (ES1, S1 and S2) and [complex sentences](#_Complex_sentences).**Introduce** [varying sentence lengths](#_Varying_sentence_lengths) for clarity and effect. | **Review** [dialogue](#_Dialogue) andquotation marks including:* [dialogue at the beginning of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the)
* [dialogue at the end of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the_1)
* [changing lines for each new speaker](#_Changing_lines_for)
* [dialogue that is interrupted](#_Dialogue_that_is)
* [internal dialogue](#_Internal_dialogue).

**Review** [quotation marks to distinguish words authored by others](#_Quotation_marks_to).**Review** [innovative use of punctuation](#_Innovative_punctuation_in), including [innovative punctuation in poetry](#_Innovative_punctuation_in). | n/a |

### Term 2 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Maintain correct noun–pronoun referencing, subject–verb agreement and use temporal, conditional and causal connectives to build cohesive links across a text
* Use word repetition and word associations as cohesive devices across texts\*

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Experiment with the use of non-finite verbs in adverbial clauses\*
* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group

**Punctuation**

* Use capital letters to indicate the beginning of a sentence, proper nouns, headings and subheadings, to indicate the beginning of a poetry line, for emphasis, and when using acronyms
* Understand that texts, such as poetry, may include innovative use of punctuation, and experiment with punctuation to suit purpose and for effect

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 12 – Year 6 Term 2 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Review** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) with:* [noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing) including [backward and forward referencing](#_Backward_and_forward)
* [connectives](#_Connectives) including [types of connectives](#_Types_of_connectives): [temporal connectives](#_Temporal_connectives), [conditional connectives](#_Conditional_connectives) and [causal connectives](#_Causal_connectives)
* [subject–verb agreement](#_Subject-verb_agreement_(also).

**Introduce** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [word repetition](#_Word__)
* [word associations](#_Word_associations).
 | **Review** [verbs](#_Verbs), including [types of verbs,](#_Types_of_verbs) [verb groups](#_Verb_groups) and [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Review** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to achieve precision](#_To_achieve_precision) and [to add detail](#_To_add_detail).**Introduce** [non-finite verbs in adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Non-finite_verbs_in).**Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–). | **Review** [capital letters](#_Capital_letters) including [capital letters in poetry](#_Capital_letters_in) and [capital letters for emphasis](#_Capital_letters_for_3).**Review** [innovative use of punctuation](#_Innovative_punctuation_in), including [innovative punctuation in poetry](#_Innovative_punctuation_in). | n/a |

### Term 3 (early)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* n/a

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Experiment with the use of non-finite verbs in adverbial clauses
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group
* Include appositives to provide details to nouns and to vary sentence structures suited to text purpose
* Make choices about the use of declarative, exclamatory, interrogative and imperative sentences to suit text purpose, and for meaning and effect

**Punctuation**

* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* Use parentheses in the first instance when abbreviating names using acronyms, and when acknowledging a source

**Word-level language**

* Control modality related to probability, occurrence, obligation or inclination for precision

Table 13 – Year 6 Term 3 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| n/a | **Review** [verb groups](#_Verb_groups) and [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Review** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to achieve precision](#_To_achieve_precision) and [to add detail](#_To_add_detail).**Note**: a review of verb groups, multi-word verb groups – phrasal words and verb choices may be required.**Review** [non-finite verbs in adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Non-finite_verbs_in).**Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [appositives](#_Appositives).**Review** [sentence functions](#_Sentence_functions).**Review** [interrogative pronouns](#_Interrogative_pronouns). | **Review** [commas](#_Commas) including:* [commas to separate an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate)
* [commas to separate a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause](#_Commas_to_separate_1) (adverbial clause)
* [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives)
* [commas to separate information displayed in parentheses when acknowledging a source](#_Commas_to_separate_6).

**Review** [parentheses](#_Parentheses) and [parentheses for humorous and ironic effect](#_Parentheses_for_humorous).**Introduce** [parentheses for enclosing additional information](#_Parentheses_when_enclosing). | **Review** [modality](#_Modality) to indicate:* probability
* occurrence
* obligation
* inclination.

**Review** [modal verbs](#_Modal_verbs) and[modal adjectives](#_Modal_adjectives).**Introduce** [modal adverbs](#_Modal_adverbs). |

### Term 3 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Substitute specific nouns with all-purpose words as a cohesive device to replace verb groups, noun groups or whole clauses\*

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Experiment with embedding adjectival clauses with the subject and/or object of other clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a noun or noun group
* Experiment with the placement of adverbial clauses, to modify the meaning or to add detail to a verb or verb group
* Vary sentence structures or lengths when using simple, compound and complex sentences, with a focus on achieving clarity and effect suited to text purpose

**Punctuation**

* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* Understand that texts, such as poetry, may include innovative use of punctuation, and experiment with punctuation to suit purpose and for effect
* Experiment with dashes and parentheses for humorous or ironic effect
* Understand and use simple hyphenation generalisations\*

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 14 – Year 6 Term 3 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Introduce** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [substituting nouns with all-purpose words](#_Substituting_nouns_with).
 | **Review** [adjectival clauses (in complex sentences)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in).**Review** [clause position – adjectival clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–_1).**Review** [adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in) to modify meaning or add detail to verbs or verb groups.**Review** [clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–).**Review** [varying sentence lengths](#_Varying_sentence_lengths).**Introduce** [varying sentence forms (structures)](#_Varying_sentence_forms) in simple, compound and complex sentences for clarity and effect. | **Review** [commas](#_Commas) including:* [commas to separate a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause](#_Commas_to_separate_1)
* [commas and adjectival clauses (non-essential and essential clauses)](#_Commas_and_adjectival_1)
* [commas to separate information displayed in parentheses when acknowledging a source](#_Commas_to_separate_6).

**Review** [innovative use of punctuation,](#_Innovative_use_of) including [innovative punctuation in poetry](#_Innovative_punctuation_in).**Introduce** [punctuating free verse poetry](#_Punctuating_free_verse).**Review** [dashes](#_Dashes) and [dashes for humorous and ironic effect](#_Dashes_for_humorous).**Review** [parentheses](#_Parentheses) including [parentheses for humorous and ironic effect](#_Parentheses_for_humorous) and [parentheses for enclosing additional information](#_Parentheses_when_enclosing).**Introduce** [hyphens](#_Hyphens). | n/a |

### Term 4 (early)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Control tense across a text according to purpose, shifting between past, present and future tense if required
* Substitute specific nouns with all-purpose words as a cohesive device to replace verb groups, noun groups or whole clauses

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Make choices about verbs and verb groups to achieve precision and add detail

**Punctuation**

* Use quotation marks consistently across a text to distinguish words that are spoken by characters in dialogue or words authored by others

**Word-level language**

* Control modality related to probability, occurrence, obligation or inclination for precision

Table 15 – Year 6 Term 3 (early) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Review** [tense](#_Tense) including:* [the simple form](#_The_simple_form)
* [the continuous form](#_The_continuous_form)
* [timeless present tense](#_Timeless_present_tense)
* [irregular past tense verbs](#_Irregular_verbs)
* [shifting between past, present and future tense](#_Shifting_between_past,)
* [the perfect form](#_The_perfect_form)
* [the perfect continuous form](#_The_perfect_continuous)
* [past participles](#_Past_participles).

**Review** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [substituting nouns with all-purpose words](#_Substituting_nouns_with).
 | **Review** [verbs](#_Verbs), including [types of verbs](#_Types_of_verbs), [verb groups](#_Verb_groups), [auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs) and [multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs](#_Multi-word_verb_groups).**Review** [verb choices](#_Verb_choices), including [to achieve precision](#_To_achieve_precision) and [to add detail](#_To_add_detail). | **Review** [dialogue](#_Dialogue) andquotation marks including:* [dialogue at the beginning of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the)
* [dialogue at the end of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the_1)
* [changing lines for each new speaker](#_Changing_lines_for)
* [dialogue that is interrupted](#_Dialogue_that_is)
* [internal dialogue](#_Internal_dialogue).

**Review** [quotation marks to distinguish words authored by others](#_Quotation_marks_to). | **Review** [modality](#_Modality) to indicate:* probability
* occurrence
* obligation
* **inclination.**

**Review** [modal verbs](#_Modal_verbs)**,** [modal adjectives](#_Modal_adjectives) **and** [modal adverbs](#_Modal_adverbs).**Introduce** [modal nouns](#_Modal_nouns). |

### Term 4 (late)

**Text features for multiple purposes**

* Maintain correct noun–pronoun referencing, subject–verb agreement and use temporal, conditional and causal connectives to build cohesive links across a text
* Use word repetition and word associations as cohesive devices across texts

**Sentence-level grammar**

* Create nominalisations to convey abstract ideas and concepts succinctly and authoritatively
* Vary sentence structure or lengths when using simple, compound and complex sentences, with a focus on achieving clarity and effect suited to text purpose

**Punctuation**

* Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause or a phrase from the main clause, or to separate information within a sentence, or to separate items in a list
* Understand and use simple hyphenation generalisations

**Word-level language**

* n/a

Table 16 – Year 6 Term 4 (late) suggested instructional sequence for Grammar and punctuation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text features for multiple purposes | Sentence-level grammar | Punctuation | Word-level language |
| **Review** [cohesive devices and links](#_Cohesion_(including_cohesive) (cohesion) across a text, including with:* [noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing) including [backward and forward referencing](#_Backward_and_forward)
* [connectives](#_Connectives) including [types of connectives](#_Types_of_connectives): [temporal connectives](#_Temporal_connectives), [conditional connectives](#_Conditional_connectives) and [causal connectives](#_Causal_connectives)
* [subject–verb agreement](#_Subject-verb_agreement_(also)
* [word repetition](#_Word__)
* [word associations](#_Word_associations).
 | **Review** [nominalisation](#_Nominalisation).**Review** [varying sentence lengths](#_Varying_sentence_lengths) and [varying sentence forms (structures)](#_Varying_sentence_forms) in simple, compound and complex sentences for clarity and effect. | **Review** [commas](#_Commas) including:* [commas and adjectival clauses](#_Commas_and_adjectival_1)
* [commas to separate adverbs when more than one is used](#_Commas_to_separate_4)
* [commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives)
* [commas to separate information displayed in parentheses when acknowledging a source](#_Commas_to_separate_6).

**Review** [hyphens](#_Hyphens). | n/a |

# Glossary

## Adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes, identifies or quantifies a noun or a pronoun (NESA 2024b). Most adjectives answer the question: ‘What is it like?’ Adjectives can be positioned:

* directly in front of the noun they are describing (known as the **attributive position**). Adjectives positioned before the noun are called pre-modifiers. For example:
* The **crimson** birds sing all day long. (descriptive adjective: ‘crimson’; noun being described: ‘birds’)
* at the end of a sentence, following a relating (linking) verb. These are called **predicate adjectives** because they are part of the sentence predicate. Adjectives positioned after the noun are called post-modifiers. For example:
* The sky is **blue**. (noun being described: ‘sky’; relating verb: ‘is’; predicate adjective: ‘blue’)

Adjectives are often used in a **noun group**. A noun group is a word, or group of words, that provides more information about a noun. For example:

* Imogen watched as the sun flickered on **the still, blue water**. (noun group: ‘the still, blue water’; definite article/adjective: ‘the’; descriptive adjectives: ‘still, blue’; noun: ‘water’)

See: [Types of adjectives](#_Types_of_adjectives), [Additional types of adjectives (determiners/pointers)](#_Additional_types_of), [Noun groups](#_Noun_groups).

### Types of adjectives

#### Descriptive adjectives (describers)

Descriptive adjectives provide more information about the noun or pronoun they are modifying. This can be related to:

* **size**: big, small, gigantic, minuscule
* **shape**: round, square, circular
* **colour**: red, yellow, autumn-coloured, pinkish
* **texture**: rough, prickly, smooth
* **age**: old, antique, young, new.

**Descriptive adjectives can also provide more context on other qualities related to the nature, appearance or attributes of the noun or pronoun they are modifying**. These may include emotions or feelings (happy, sad), opinions (mean, delicious), tastes (sour, spicy), strength (sturdy, fragile), sound (noisy, melodic, ear-piercing), smell (fragrant, pungent), temperature (hot, freezing).

#### Comparative adjectives (describers)

Comparative adjectives compare 2 people or things to show the difference between them. Most short adjectives (one or 2 syllables) can be made into a comparative adjective by adding ‘-er’ to the end (light/lighter). For words ending in ‘-y’, change the ‘y’ to ‘i’ and add ‘-er’ (happy/happier) or double a final consonant following a single vowel (thin/thinner).

When 2 nouns are being compared in a sentence, they are usually linked with the preposition ‘than’. For example:

* The tricycle is **smaller** than the scooter. (nouns being compared: ‘tricycle’ and ‘scooter’; comparative adjective: ‘smaller’ [quality: size])
* My sister is **bossier** than my brother. (nouns being compared: ‘sister’ and ‘brother’; comparative adjective: ‘bossier’ [quality: personality trait])

For longer adjectives, the word ‘more’ is used before the adjective. For example:

* The storm in Southern NSW was more **intense** than any other recorded this year. (nouns being compared: ‘the storm in Southern NSW’ and ‘other storms’; adjective: ‘intense’ [quality: intensity])

#### Superlative adjectives (describers)

Superlative adjectives compare 2 or more people or things to show which one has the highest degree of a certain quality. Most short superlative adjectives can be formed by adding ‘-est’ to the end of the adjective (big/biggest, smart/smartest). For words ending in ‘-y’, change the ‘y’ to ‘i’ and add ‘-est’ (crazy/craziest) or double a final consonant following a single vowel (wet/wettest). For example:

* The roller-coaster is the **scariest** of all rides at the Walgett Show. (nouns being compared: ‘roller-coaster’ and ‘other rides’; superlative adjective: ‘scariest’ [quality: emotion/fear])
* The **tiniest** insect in the world is the fairyfly which measures only about 0.2 mm in length. (nouns being compared: ‘fairyfly’ and ‘other insects’; superlative adjective: ‘tiniest’ [quality: size])

For longer adjectives, the word ‘most’ is used before the adjective. For example:

* The book about dinosaurs was the *most* **interesting**. (nouns being compared: ‘The book about dinosaurs’ and ‘other books’; superlative adjective: ‘most interesting’ [quality: interest])

**Note**: teach irregular comparative and superlative adjectives as necessary. For example, less/least, good/better/best, many/more/most.

#### Quantifying adjectives (quantifiers)

Quantifying adjectives indicate the quantity or amount of the noun they describe. These are sometimes referred to as quantitative adjectives. There are 2 types of quantifying adjectives:

* **definite quantifying adjectives** which identify the exact amount of something (one, 3, thousand)
* **indefinite quantifying adjectives** which provide an idea of the amount without giving an exact number (some, many, a few, several, a lot).

##### Classifying adjectives (classifiers)

Classifying adjectives categorise or classify a noun into a particular group or category. For example, ‘berry’ (farmer), ‘wattle’ (tree), ‘wooden’ (box). A classifying adjective does not allow for the word ‘very’ in front of it. For example:

* She is a very **berry** farmer. (‘very’ does not work in this sentence, signifying that ‘berry’ is a classifying adjective)
* She is a very **busy** farmer. (‘very’ works in this sentence, signifying that ‘busy’ is not a classifying adjective – it is a descriptive adjective)

#### Proper adjectives (classifier)

Some nouns can be modified and used as an adjective. These include proper nouns such as the names of places. These adjectives often end in
‘-an’, ‘-ian’ and ‘-ish’. They should always start with a capital letter. For example, Australian, Mexican, Polish.

#### Modal adjectives (evaluative describers)

Modal adjectives express an amount of possibility, necessity, capability or permission. These adjectives convey modality related to the qualities or characteristics of the noun they are describing. Frequently used modal adjectives include: possible, necessary, compulsory, advisable. For example:

* Eating fruit and vegetables is **necessary** for a healthy diet. (modal adjective: ‘necessary’; noun being described: ‘diet’)

See: [Modality](#_Modality).

**Note**: compound adjectivesare made up of more than one word. The words are usually hyphenated when used together before a noun. This shows that the words are acting together as a single adjective. For example, ‘day-old bread’.

### Additional types of adjectives (determiners/pointers)

Some adjectives show ownership or highlight specific nouns by their location or identity. These words ‘point to’ a specific person or thing: this one, that one, these ones, those ones, the one, his one, her one. They answer the question ‘Which one(s) in particular?’ (Derewianka 2022).

#### Possessive adjectives (possessives)

Possessive adjectives indicate possession or ownership of a specific person or group. They help identify who or what something belongs to. Personal possessive adjectives include ‘my’, ‘your’, ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘its’, ‘our’ and ‘their’. They can be used as part of a noun group.

Possessive adjectives must match the person or subject, and number of the nouns and pronouns they modify. They should also be followed by a noun. For example:

* **My** bike has big, round wheels. (possessive adjective: ‘my’ [referring to a specific person]; noun: ‘bike’ [singular]; verb: ‘has’ [singular])

**Note**: [possessive pronouns](#_Possessive_pronouns) directly replace nouns. For example, ‘my’ is a possessive adjective in ‘**My** book is blue’, but ‘mine’ is a possessive pronoun in ‘The book is **mine**.’

#### Demonstrative adjectives (demonstratives)

Demonstrative adjectives demonstrate or point out a specific noun. They help identify which noun is being referred to. Demonstrative adjectives include ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘these’ and ‘those’.

Demonstrative adjectives must match the person or subject and number of the nouns and pronouns they modify. They should also be followed by a noun to ensure clarity and agreement in the sentence structure. For example:

* **This** bike has a coloured seat. (demonstrative adjective: ‘this’ [singular]; points to a specific noun: ‘bike’ [singular])
* **Those** socks are yours. (demonstrative adjective: ‘those’ [plural]; points to a specific noun: ‘socks’ [plural])

**Note**: [demonstrative pronouns](#_Demonstrative_pronouns) replace nouns directly. For example, ‘**This** is mine.’ (demonstrative pronoun: ‘this’ [represents the noun phrase ‘this thing’ or ‘this item’, replacing the need for a specific noun])

#### Definite and indefinite articles (pointers)

An article is a special kind of adjective which describes a noun (Winch 2013). There are 3 articles: ‘the’, ‘a’ and ‘an’.

* **definite articles**: ‘the’ is a definite article because it refers to a particular thing or things. It has only one form and is used in front of singular and plural nouns. For example:
* **The boys were swimming in the river. (definite articles referring to a particular thing: ‘the boys’ [plural] and 'the river’ [singular])**
* **indefinite articles**: ‘a’ and ‘an’ are indefinite articles because they refer to general things. The article:
* ‘a’ is used in front of words beginning with a consonant sound. For example:
* Put on **a** jacket. (indefinite article referring to a general thing, positioned in front of a consonant sound /j/: ‘a’ jacket)
* ‘an’ is used in front of a word beginning with a vowel sound or silent ‘h’. For example:
* I ate **an** apple today. (indefinite article referring to a general thing in front of a word beginning with a vowel sound /a/: ‘an’ apple)

See: [Noun groups](#_Noun_groups).

### Using more than one adjective

Multiple adjectives can be used when a singular adjective does not describe something adequately.

When using multiple adjectives, separate each with a comma. When a list of adjectives concludes a clause, introduce the last adjective with ‘and’. For example:

* Ruby’s team was knowledgeable, thoughtful and kind. (adjectives: ‘thoughtful’, ‘knowledgeable’, ‘kind’; describing [noun]: ‘Ruby’s team’)

See: [Commas to separate adjectives when more than one is used](#_Commas_to_separate_3).

### Ordering adjectives

When using several adjectives before a noun, adjectives follow a particular order. Generally, the order is **quantity** (several, 3), **quality/opinion** (delicious, beautiful), **size** (tiny, expansive), **age** (new, infant), **colour** (magenta, white), **classification** (Egyptian, wooden) and **purpose or quality** (swimming/pool, rocking/chair). For example:

* She bought **a small, wooden rocking chair**. (adjectives: ‘small’ [size]; ‘wooden’ [classification]; ‘rocking’ [purpose])

See: [Types of adjectives](#_Types_of_adjectives), [Additional types of adjectives (determiners/pointers)](#_Additional_types_of).

### Selecting and positioning adjectives

Avoid using 2 or more adjectives that convey identical meanings. The repetition of words with similar meanings (synonyms) is called tautology. For example:

* The **beautiful** and **pretty** princess wore a golden tiara. (adjectives: ‘beautiful’ and ‘pretty’ are descriptive adjectives that have a similar meaning so should not be used together)

Instead, use a variety of precise adjectives to enhance description. For example:

* The **young** and **beautiful** princess wore a golden tiara. (adjectives: ‘young’ and ‘beautiful’ are descriptive adjectives related to different attributes)

Adjectives should be placed as close as possible to the person or thing they describe. Misplaced adjectives can occur when a noun is described by several words. For example:

* ‘Sam found a gold woman’s ring’ should be ‘Sam found a woman’s gold ring.’ (adjective: ‘gold’; describing the noun: ‘ring’)

See: [Types of adjectives](#_Types_of_adjectives), [Ordering adjectives](#_Ordering_adjectives).

## Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs in a sentence. They provide additional information and specificity about the action being performed, the quality being described or the way something is done (see Table 17).

Table 17 – adverbs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Adverbs providing details about the verb/verb group | Adverbs modifying an adjective | Adverbs modifying another adverb |
| Josie is leaving ****now****. (adverb: ‘now’ [time/when]; verb group being modified: ‘is leaving’)I ****always**** walk home. (adverb: ‘always’ [frequency/how often]; verb being modified: ‘walk’)We went ****there**** for my birthday. (adverb: ‘there’ [place/where]; verb being modified: ‘went’)I slept ****soundly**** even though there was a storm. (adverb: ‘soundly’ [manner/how]; verb being modified: ‘slept’) | My foot is **very** sore. (adverb: ‘very’ [degree]; adjective being modified: ‘sore’)Solli is **exceptionally** goodat swimming. (adverb: ‘exceptionally’ [degree]; adjective being modified: ‘good’)Mylo has **extremely** curlyhair. (adverb: ‘extremely’ [degree]; adjective being modified: ‘curly’)The roses in mum’s garden are **frequently** exquisite. (adverb: ‘frequently’ [how often]; adjective being modified: ‘exquisite’) | I was walking **too** slowlyand was late for school. (adverb: ‘too’ [degree]; adverb being modified: ‘slowly’ [manner/how])You have written your name **very** *carefully*. (adverb: ‘very’ [degree]; adverb being modified: ‘carefully’ [manner/how])I can balance on one foot **rather** well. (adverb: ‘rather’ [degree]; adverb being modified: ‘well’ [manner/how])The train is **sometimes** early. (adverb: ‘sometimes’ [frequency]; adverb being modified: ‘early’ [time/when]) |

### Types of adverbs

Adverbs provide additional information about circumstances such as time (when), place (where), manner (how), degree (to what extent) or frequency (how often).

#### Adverbs of time (when), how long (duration) and frequency (how often)

Adverbs of time indicate whensomething is happening, how longsomething is happening for or how often something occurs. For example:

* **adverbs of time (when)**: yesterday, today, soon, later, then, now, early, tomorrow
* **adverbs of time (how long)**: forever, overnight, briefly, so far, already
* **adverbs of frequency (how often)**: always, sometimes, usually, never, rarely, again, often, frequently.

Adverbs that indicate time can be in different positions in a sentence, typically at the beginning or end of a clause. For example:

* She will begin her new job **soon**. (adverb of time [when]: ‘soon’)
* The teacher **briefly** explained the concept before moving onto the next topic. (adverb of time [how long]: ‘briefly’)
* Giovanni **usually** walks in the park every morning. (adverb of frequency [how often]: ‘usually’)

#### Adverbs of place (where)

Adverbs of place specify the locationor positionof an action or event within a sentence. For example:

* **adverbs of place (point in space)**: upstairs, here, everywhere, nearby, inside, underneath, there
* **adverbs of place (direction)**: backwards, towards, along, across
* **adverbs of place (distance)**: for miles, far, nearby, just around the corner, far away.

Adverbs of place can be positioned either before or after the main verb in a sentence. They can also be placed at the beginning or end of a clause, depending on emphasis and clarity. For example:

* The keys were found **underneath** the lounge. (adverb of place [point in space]: ‘underneath’; verb group: ‘were found’)
* We walked **across** the bridge to get to the markets. (adverb of place [direction]: ‘across’; main verb: ‘walked’)
* **Far away**, in an unknown land, there lived a friendly ogre named Geoff. (adverb of place [distance]: ‘far away’; main verb: ‘lived’)

#### Adverbs of manner (how)

Adverbs of manner describe *how* actionsareperformed. They are often formed by adding the suffix ‘-ly' to adjectives. For example:

* **adverbs of manner (how)**: carefully, quietly, happily, quickly, ever so gently.

Like adjectives, adverbs of manner provide descriptive information in a sentence by modifying verbs. For example:

* Yuki finished her homework **quickly** so she could play outside. (adverb of manner [how]: ‘quickly’; modifying the verb: ‘finished’)

#### Adverbs of degree (to what extent)

Adverbs of degree (to what extent) indicate the extent, intensity or degree to which an action or quality is present. For example:

* **adverbs of degree (to what extent)**: just, only, almost, very, extremely, rather, completely

Adverbs of degree add nuance and specificity to language and enable shades of meaning and emphasis. For example:

* I am **extremely** tired. (adverbs of degree [to what extent]: ‘completely’; modifying the verb: ‘tired’)
* I am **rather** tired. (adverbs of degree [to what extent]: ‘rather’; modifying the verb: ‘tired’)

### Forming common adverbs

Many adverbs are formed by adding the suffix ‘-ly’ to an adjective. For example:

* describing **time**: ‘late’ (adjective) becomes ‘lately’ (adverb)
* describing **manner**: ‘rude’ (adjective) becomes ‘rudely’ (adverb)
* describing **frequency**: ‘frequent’ (adjective) becomes (frequently).

Some word endings may need to be modified when adding the suffix ‘-ly’. For example, if the adjective ends in:

* ‘-y’: change the ‘y’ to ‘i’ before adding ‘-ly’. For example, happy/happily.
* ‘-le’: change the ‘e’ to ‘-y’. For example, comfortable/comfortably.
* ‘-ic’: add ‘-ally’. For example, enthusiastic/enthusiastically.

**Note**: some adjectives can also end in ‘-ly’. To determine the difference between adverbs and adjectives in a sentence or phrase:

* if the word adds meaning to a verb, adjectiveor another adverb, it is an **adverb**. For example, ‘Hamish and Archie ran**quickly’**. (adverb: ‘quickly’; adding meaning to: ‘ran’ [verb])
* if the word adds meaning to a nounor pronoun, it is an **adjective**. For example, ‘She wore a **lovely** dress’. (adjective: ‘lovely’; adding meaning to: ‘dress’ [noun])

### Using more than one adverb

When multiple adverbs are used to modify a verb, separating them with commas helps to maintain clarity. For example:

* Maria completed the task **quickly**, **efficiently** and **meticulously**. (adverbs: 'quickly', 'efficiently' and 'meticulously'; verb being modified: 'completed')

**See:** [Commas to separate adverbs when more than one is used](#_Commas_to_separate_4).

## Adverbial phrases

An adverbial phrase is a group of words that provides information about where, when, with what, how far, how long, with whom, about what, as what(NESA 2024b). An adverbial phrase does not have a subject and a verb.

Adverbial phrases do the work of adverbs. They add meaning to, or modify, the action of **verbs**, **adjectives** or **other adverbs**. They tell how, when, where or why an action takes place.

### Types of adverbial phrases

#### Adverbial phrase of time (when)

An adverbial phrase of time tells when something is done. For example:

* Jacob rode his new bike **all weekend**. (adverbial phrase: ‘all weekend’; verb being modified: ‘rode’)

#### Adverbial phrase of place (where)

An adverbial phrase of place tells where something is done. For example:

* We walked **along the edge of** the **river**. (adverbial phrase: ‘along the edge of the river’; verb modified: ‘walked’)

#### Adverbial phrase of manner (how)

An adverbial phrase of manner tells how something is done. For example:

* I drove **erratically**. (adverbial phrase: ‘erratically’; verb modified: ‘drove’)

#### Adverbial phrase of reason (why)

An adverbial phrase of reason tells why something is done. For example:

* They played **to win the game**. (adverbial phrase: ‘to win the game’; verb modified: ‘played’)

Some adverbial phrases are also **prepositional phrases**. They begin with a preposition followed by a noun group. For example:

* I cut the string **with the scissors**. (prepositional phrase: ‘with the scissors’; preposition: ‘with’; noun group: ‘the scissors'; verb modified: ‘cut’)

A sentence can contain more than one adverbial phrase. For example:

* **In the cool of the evening**, the bats flew **across the sky**. (adverbial phrase [when]: ‘in the cool of the evening’; adverbial phrase [where]: ‘across the sky’)

When an adverbial phrase is at the beginning of a sentence, it is separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma. For example:

* **With great enthusiasm**, she tackled the challenging assignment. (adverbial phrase [how]: ‘with great enthusiasm’; ‘main clause: ‘she tackled the challenging assignment’)

[**Adverbial phrase**] + **comma** + **main clause**.

See: [Commas to separate an adverbial phrase from a main clause](#_Commas_to_separate), [Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in).

## Adverbial clauses

An adverbial clause is a type of dependent (subordinate) clause that modifies a verb, adjective or another adverb. They contain both a subject and a verb. Adverbial clauses are found in **complex sentences**. They provide information about the time, place, condition, reason, manneror purpose (NESA 2024b). For example:

* The Chinese lanterns floated through the evening sky **as the crowd below gazed in awe**. (main clause: ‘the Chinese lanterns floated through the evening sky’; adverbial clause: ‘as the crowd below gazed in awe’; subordinating conjunction: 'as’)

See: [Complex sentences](#_Complex_sentences), [Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in), [Clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–), [Subordinating conjunctions (in complex sentences)](#_Subordinating_conjunctions_(in).

## Appositives

An appositive is a noun or pronoun that is positioned beside another noun or pronoun to explain or identify it. An appositive often includes modifiers (NESA 2024b). Appositives contribute to sentence variety to keep writing engaging and prevent monotony.

Appositives can be single words or longer phrases that serve to add additional information or explanatory details to the nouns (person, place or thing) they modify.

An appositive usually follows the noun it describes and is contained within commas. For example:

* Blue Back Primary School’s new teacher, **Ally**, arrived early for her first day of work. (noun group/person: ‘Blue Back Primary School’s new teacher’; appositive: 'Ally’)
* The red fox, **a mammal found globally**, is a key species for tracking environmental change. (noun group/thing: ‘the red fox’; appositive: ‘a mammal found globally’)
* The city of Paris, **known as the City of Lights**, is famous for its romantic ambiance. (noun group/place: ‘the city of Paris’; appositive: ‘known as the City of Lights’)

A sentence with an appositive should make sense if the appositive is removed. For example:

* **with appositive**: My dog, a golden retriever, chased the cat.
* **without appositive**: My dog chased the cat.

**Main clause** + **comma** + [**appositive**] + **comma** + **main clause**.

Commas are not used when appositives are essential to the meaning of the noun they belong to. For example:

* My sister **Deborah** is a karaoke champion. (noun group: ‘my sister’; appositive: ‘Deborah’ [knowing ‘which sister’ **is** essential information in this sentence])

**Main clause** + [**appositive**] + **main clause**.

**Note**: appositives generally do not include a verb as this can change the explanation or additional details in a clause. For example: The cat, **who is a playful tabby**, enjoys lounging in the sun. (‘who is a playful tabby’ is an adjectival clause [not an appositive] because it contains the relative pronoun ‘who’ and the verb ‘is’)

See: [Commas with appositives](#_Commas_with_appositives), [Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in)

## Articles

An article is a special kind of adjective which describes a noun (Winch 2013) by ‘pointing to’ a specific person or thing (Derewianka 2022). It is classified as a ‘determiner'. There are 3 articles: ‘the’, ‘a’ and ‘an’.

See: [Additional types of adjectives (determiners/pointers)](#_Additional_types_of), [Definite and indefinite articles (pointers)](#_Definite_and_indefinite), [Noun groups](#_Noun_groups).

## Cause-and-effect statements

A cause-and-effect statement explains the relationship between a cause (event) and effect (what happens because of the event). Cause-and-effect statements can occur within or between sentences using a range of conjunctions and connectives, including:

* **Coordinating conjunctions (compound sentences)**: for, so
* **Conjunctive adverbs (compound sentences)**: consequently, therefore, thus, accordingly
* **Subordinating conjunctions (complex sentences/adverbial clause)**: because, since, as, so that, therefore, due to
* **Connectives (between sentences)**: if, unless, even though, as a result, for this reason.

Examples of cause-and-effect statements include:

* The students studied hard **so** they would get high grades. (cause: ‘the students studied hard’; coordinating conjunction: ‘so’; effect: ‘they would get high grades’ [compound sentence])
* Millie left her bunny at home; **consequently**, she was very sad. (cause: Millie left her bunny at home; conjunctive adverb: ‘consequently’; effect: ‘she was very sad’ [compound sentence])
* Habib decided to bring an umbrella **because** it was raining outside. (cause: ‘it was raining outside’; subordinating conjunction: ‘because’; effect: ‘Habib decided to bring an umbrella’ [complex sentence])
* The wind blew fiercely all night. **As a result**, many tree branches were knocked down by morning. (cause: ‘the wind blew fiercely all night’; connective: ‘as a result’; effect: ‘many tree branches were knocked down by morning’ [between sentences])

Depending on the importance of information, some statements are written with the:

* **effect before the cause.** When this occurs in a complex sentence, a comma is not used to separate the dependent (subordinate) clause from the main (independent) clause. For example:
* There were power outages across Melbourne last night (effect) **due to** the storms that swept the city (cause).
* **cause before the effect.** When this occurs in a complex sentence, a comma is used to separate the dependent (subordinate) clause before the main (independent) clause. For example:
* **Due to** the storms that swept the city (cause), there were power outages across Melbourne last night (effect).

See: [Compound sentences with a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS)](#_Compound_sentences_with), [Compound sentences with a conjunctive adverb](#_Compound_sentences_with_1), [Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in), [Clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma use)](#_Clause_position_–), [Connectives](#_Connectives).

## Cohesion (including cohesive devices and links)

Cohesive devices are words or phrases that indicate a relationship with other words, phrases, clauses or paragraphs across a text (NESA 2024b). Cohesion is the use of language features to link parts of a text to make it easy to follow and understand referents (a word, phrase or object that is referred to) in the text (NESA 2024b). Cohesion ensures ideas are connected and linked clearly and logically, creating a coherent piece of text. For example:

* **Emma** forgot **her** umbrella. **She** raced back to get itbefore the rain started. (cohesive device 1: ‘she/her’ [referring back to ‘Emma’]; cohesive device 2: ‘it’ [referring back to ‘her umbrella’])

### Subject–verb agreement (also known as noun–verb agreement)

Subject–verb agreement occurs when the writer or speaker selects the correct verb for the noun or noun group to which it is referring (NESA 2024b).

Subject–verb agreement is important in building cohesive links in a text by ensuring the grammatical relationship between the subject and verb remains consistent.

A **verb** can be singular or plural in number and must match the **subject** to which it relates. For example:

* The bike **was** here. (singular subject: ‘bike’; singular verb: ‘was’)
* The bikes **were** here. (plural subject: ‘bikes’; plural verb: ‘were’)

The key to correct verb agreement is this simple rule: If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.

### Noun–pronoun referencing

Noun–pronoun referencing (also known as noun–pronoun agreement) occurs where the correct pronoun is selected for the noun or noun group to which it is referring (NESA 2024b). Using pronouns in the place of nouns can make written language less repetitive and help build cohesion across a text.

When using a pronoun to refer to a noun, there should be agreement in **number**. If the noun/noun group it refers to is singular, the pronoun is also singular. If the noun/noun group it refers to is plural, the pronoun is plural. For example:

* **The young boy down the road** likes playing in the garden. **He** will stay outside all day whenever possible. (noun group: ‘the young boy down the road’ [singular]; personal pronoun: ‘he’ [singular])
* **Elephants** are intelligent. **They** display remarkable problem-solving skills when faced with challenging situations. (common noun: ‘elephants’ [plural]; personal pronoun: ‘they’ [plural])

Noun–pronoun references should also agree in **gender**.

**Note:** in an effort to avoid sexist statements, the plurals they and their are sometimes used in place of *his* or *her*, without regard for the rules of agreement.

#### Backward and forward noun–pronoun referencing

Pronouns can refer backwardsor forwardsto nouns:

* **Backward referencing** involves the pronoun referring back to the noun that was mentioned earlier. This is the most common type of pronoun referencing, as it contributes to a text’s clarity and cohesion. For example:
* **Xi** walked briskly down the street. **He** noticed a black cat. (proper noun: ‘Xi’; pronoun: ‘he’)
* **Forward referencing** involves the pronoun being introduced before the noun it references. This can create anticipation or suspense, as the reader does not know to whom the pronoun refers. For example:
* As **he** briskly walked down the street, **Xi** noticed a black cat. (pronoun: ‘he’; proper noun: ‘Xi’)

### Connectives

Connectives are words or groups of words that link ideas. They can be used between sentences or to introduce a new paragraph. Connectives provide ‘signposts’ for the reader, showing how the text is developing and what might come next (Winch 2013).

Connectives are like conjunctions; however, they should not be confused. Conjunctions join 2 clauses within sentences, and **connectives create links between sentences and longer sections of text**. Text connectives can be placed in various positions within a sentence, unlike conjunctions (Derewianka 2022).

When a sentence begins with a connective, a comma is needed to separate the connective from the rest of the sentence. For example:

* Jane didn’t like the rain. **As a result**, she decided to stay home and read a book.’ (connective: ‘as a result’ [links Jane’s actions to her attitude toward rain])
* The study found a significant improvement in the number of animals being born outside of their usual habitat. These findings, **consequently**, mean that further research needs to be conducted. (connective: ‘consequently’ [links the findings of the study to the need for further research])

#### Types of connectives

##### Temporal connectives

Temporal connectives are words that indicate when something is happening (NESA 2024b). For example:

* I want to go to the park. **Afterwards**, I think we should go to the zoo. (temporal connective: ‘afterwards’)

Commonly used temporal connectives include:

* **Temporal connectives**: first, next, finally, before, after, then, soon, earlier, afterwards, later, previously, in the end.

##### Conditional connectives

Conditional connectives are cohesive devices that describe the condition that needs to be met for something to happen. This may be in the form of a word (if) or phrase (in addition) (NESA 2024b). For example:

* The temperature in the Simpson Desert will continue to rise, thereby exacerbating drought conditions in the region. **If** this occurs, stock losses are inevitable. (conditional connective: 'if' [connecting the drought conditions to stock losses])

Commonly used conditional connectives include:

* **Conditional connectives**: as long as, even if, if, unless, otherwise, although, provided that, supposing that.

##### Causal connectives

A causal connective is a word or groups of words used as a cohesive device between sentences, when explaining *how* something works or *why* something happens (NESA 2024b). For example:

* Sophie missed her bus. **Consequently**, she arrived late for school. (causal connective: ‘consequently’)

Commonly used causal connectives include:

* **Causal connectives**: so, because, since, due to, as a result, consequently, therefore, for that reason, accordingly.

See: [Cause-and-effect statements](#_Cause-and-effect_statements).

### Word repetition

Word repetition involves repeating words, phrases, sounds or structural elements within a piece of writing or speech. Repetition can also occur through onomatopoeia, alliteration or rhyme. Word repetition is the strongest cohesive device (McDonald 2023) and is the simplest way to track participants through a text (Derewianka 2022). For example:

* The storm raged **on and on**,as it pounded the coastline with great force. (repetition of a phrase)
* **A small**, **brown mouse** poked **its** head out from behind the curtain. **He** looked left to right and before losing **his** courage, **he** darted across the room without **his** nemesis, Big Puss, noticing **him**. (repetition of participant: pronouns [such as ‘he’] and possessives [such as ‘his’])

### Word associations

Word associations involve the relationship between a word and other words that are semantically related in a text (NESA 2024b). Word associations can be used effectively as a cohesive device to link different parts of a text or even multiple texts. Words can be lexically cohesive (or connected) in different ways.

#### Types of word associations

##### Synonyms

A synonym is a word or phrase that has the same or a similar meaning to another word or phrase (NESA 2024b). Writers use synonyms to enhance and connect vocabulary concepts to keep the reader's interest and to create cohesion in a text (McDonald 2023). For example:

* Jane and Tom went for a **walk**. It was a pleasant **stroll**. (synonyms: ‘walk’ and ‘stroll’)

##### Antonyms

An antonym is a word or phrase that has the *opposite* meaning of another word or phrase (NESA 2024b). Antonyms are contrasting vocabulary in a text and they create cohesion through that contrast (McDonald 2023). For example:

* Jane and Tom went for a walk. Jane was **hot**, but Tom felt **cold**. (antonyms: ‘hot’ and ‘cold’)

##### Collocation

Collocation is a term used for words which typically occur together, making a text predictable (Derewianka 2022). For example:

* Jane and Tom went for a walk along the muddy **bank** of the **river** which had **overflowed** during the recent **floods**. (collocation: ‘muddy bank’, ’river’, ‘overflowed’, ‘floods’ [all words relating to ‘water’])

##### Hypernyms

A hypernym is a word that represents a broad or general category. Hypernyms help to organise concepts that are semantically connected. They are often used in classifications. For example, ‘animal’ is a hypernym for ‘dog’, ‘cat’ and ‘elephant.’

##### Word patterns (part/whole, person or thing/attributes, class/subclass)

Word patterns are particular ‘clusters’ of words in a text which are related in various ways (Derewianka 2022). For example:

* As part of the pheasant family (classification), peacocks (whole) have unique features like their colourful tail feathers (part), distinctive crest (part) and eye-catching markings (part), setting them apart as elegant and graceful birds.

### Substituting nouns with all-purpose words

All-purpose words can sometimes be used to substitute specific nouns as a cohesive device. They can also be used to replace verb groups, noun groups or whole clauses. This type of substitution can minimise repetition, add clarity or define meaning more precisely. For example:

* My best friend always surprises me with different **types of chocolate**. She gave me my favourite **one** last week. (noun group: ‘types of chocolate’; all-purpose word: ‘one’)
* I made **a lemon cake** at school. My mum made the **same** at home. (noun group: ‘a lemon cake’; all-purpose word: ‘same’)
* My neighbour **makes eggs and bacon for breakfast on Sundays.** We **do too**. (verb group: ‘makes eggs and bacon for breakfast on Sundays; all-purpose words: ‘do too’)

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used in sentences to link and express the relationship between words, phrases and clauses. They can increase writing clarity and provide more information to the reader. Conjunctions can connect ideas in both compound and complex sentences.

### Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions link together words, phrases or clauses that are grammatically ‘equal’ (Winch 2013). The most common coordinating conjunctions can be remembered using the FANBOYS acronym:

* **Coordinating conjunctions**: **f**or, **a**nd, **n**or, **b**ut, **o**r, **y**et, **s**o (FANBOYS).

#### Coordinating conjunctions (joining words and phrases)

Coordinating conjunctions can be used to join the same or similar parts of a text together. They can join both words and phrases. For example:

* Would you like a banana **or** pear? (coordinating conjunction: ‘or’; joining the objects: ‘banana’ and ‘pear’)
* Tracey **and** John were freezing after their walk. (coordinating conjunction: ‘and’; joining the subjects: ‘Tracey’ and ‘John’)
* The grizzly bears were large **but** friendly. (coordinating conjunction: ‘but'; joining the adjectives: ‘large’ and ‘friendly’)
* I am travelling to Darwin in March **and** Melbourne in May. (coordinating conjunction: ‘and’; joining the phrases: ‘Darwin in March’ and ’Melbourne in May’)

#### Coordinating conjunctions (in compound sentences)

**Coordinating conjunctions** are used in compound sentences. They serve to connect 2 main (independent) clauses of equal importance within a sentence. The most used coordinating conjunctions include: ‘for’, ‘and’, ‘nor’, ‘but’, ‘or’, ‘yet’, ‘so’ (FANBOYS).

Examples of **coordinating conjunctions** in compound sentences include:

* Jonty and Amelia were the very best of friends, **but** they lived on opposite sides of the country. (independent clause 1: ‘Jonty and Amelia were the very best of friends’; independent clause 2: ‘they lived on opposite sides of the country’; coordinating conjunction: ‘but’)
* Walking after dinner is relaxing, **yet I** rarely choose to get off the couch! (independent clause 1: ‘walking after dinner is relaxing’; independent clause 2: ‘I rarely choose to get off the couch’; coordinating conjunction: ‘yet’)

**Note**: conjunctive adverbs can also be used to create a compound sentence. They show relationships between ideas such as cause and effect, contrast, sequence or time. Examples of conjunctive adverbs include: ‘however’, ‘therefore’, ‘consequently’, ‘meanwhile, ‘nevertheless’.

See: [Compound sentences](#_Compound_sentences).

### Subordinating conjunctions (in complex sentences)

Subordinating conjunctions arefound in complex sentences that contain an **adverbial clause**. They are positioned at the beginning of a dependent (subordinate clause) and establish the relationship between the main (independent) clause and the subordinate clause.

Temporal, conditional and causal conjunctions are specific types of **subordinating conjunctions** that signal different relationships. Other types of subordinating conjunctions relate to comparison, position and concession. Examples include:

* **time (temporal conjunctions)**: after, as, as soon as, before, once, first, since, until, when, whenever, while, next
* **condition (conditional conjunctions)**: as long as, even if, if, unless, otherwise, although
* **cause-and-effect (causal conjunctions)**: as, because, since, due to
* **comparison (comparative conjunction)**: as, just as, than
* **place (positional conjunction)**: where, wherever
* **concession (concessional conjunction)**: although, even though, whereas, while.

Examples of **subordinating conjunctions** in complex sentences include:

* Once the movie ended, we decided to grab some ice cream. (main clause: ‘we decided to grab some ice cream'; adverbial [dependent] clause: ‘once the movie ended’; subordinating conjunction: ‘once’ [temporal])
* If you finish your homework early, you can watch your favourite show. (main clause: ‘you can watch your favourite show'; adverbial [dependent] clause: ‘if you finish your homework early’; subordinating conjunction: ‘if’ [conditional])
* She passed the exam with flying colours because she studied tirelessly. (main clause: ‘she passed the exam with flying colours'; adverbial [dependent] clause: ‘because she studied tirelessly’; subordinating conjunction: ‘because’ [causal])
* He couldn't see the stage as well as his friends could from their seats. (main clause: ‘he couldn’t see the stage'; adverbial [dependent] clause: ‘as well as his friends could from their seats’; subordinating conjunction: ‘as well as’ [comparative])
* She found the book where she had left it. (main clause: ‘she found the book'; adverbial [dependent] clause: ‘where she left it’; subordinating conjunction: ‘where’ [positional])
* Even though it was raining, they decided to go for a walk in the park. (main clause: ‘they decided to go for a walk in the park'; adverbial [dependent] clause: ‘even though it was raining’; subordinating conjunction: ‘even though’ [concessional])

Sometimes the same subordinating conjunction indicates different relationships. The subordinating conjunction ‘as’ is versatile and can be employed in various ways, depending on the context of the sentence. For example:

* I walked out the door **as** I was putting on my coat. (time: used to indicate simultaneous actions or events)
* **As** much as Mae tried, Ahri always managed to finish his homework first. (comparison: highlights the similarities between the 2 subjects or situations)
* The excursion was postponed **as** the bus broke down on the way to school. (subordinating conjunction: ‘as’ [cause-and-effect: signifies the ‘cause’ that leads to the particular ‘effect’])

See: [Complex sentences](#_Complex_sentences), [Dependent (subordinate) clauses](#_Dependent_(subordinating)_clauses), [Subordinating conjunctions (in complex sentences)](#_Subordinating_conjunctions_(in).

## Dialogue

Dialogue is a conversation between 2 or more people; the conversation between characters in a text; an exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue; or a literary work in the form of a conversation (NESA 2024b).

* Dialogue encompasses quoted speech but also includes the overall exchange of words and interaction between people or characters. For example:
* Just as Nicole was about to walk out the door, she turned and asked, “Would you like to come to the movies?”
* “I would love to,” replied Annabelle as she jumped up from the couch.

**Note**:the use of double quotation marks (“…”) and single quotation marks (‘…’) will often depend on a text’s style guide. It does not matter which is used, rather that there is consistency throughout a text (Winch 2013).

See: [Quoted speech (direct speech)](#_Quoted_speech_(direct).

### Dialogue at the beginning of a sentence

Dialogue can be used at the beginning of a sentence. When direct speech is at the beginning of the sentence:

* quotation marks are used to show where the direct speech begins
* a capital letter is used at the beginning of the first word within the quotation marks
* a comma is used at the end of the quotation but before the closing quotation mark. For example:
* “The park has a huge playground,” said Annabelle.
* a question mark or exclamation mark is used for an interrogative and an exclamatory sentence. For example:
* “Do you want to go to the park?” asked Annabelle.
* the text outside the quotation marks explains how the text was spoken (using a saying verb such as ‘said’, ‘answered’, ‘whispered’) and identifies who has just spoken
* a full stop is placed where the sentence ends.

See: [Quoted speech (direct speech)](#_Quoted_speech_(direct).

### Dialogue at the end of a sentence

Dialogue can be used at the end of a sentence: When direct speech is at the end of a sentence:

* the text explains who is about to speak and how the text was spoken (saying verb)
* a comma is placed before the opening quotation mark. For example:
* Annabelle asked, “Do you want to come to the movies as well?”

See: [Quoted speech (direct speech)](#_Quoted_speech_(direct).

### Dialogue that is interrupted

Dialogue that is interrupted is a technique used to:

* add variation between pieces of dialogue, preventing a repetitive pattern of ‘he said’, ‘she said’
* integrate character actions with their speech
* provide additional context or information about the speaker or the situation.

When dialogue is interrupted:

* quotation marks are used around all direct speech
* a comma is placed after the first spoken phrase, before the close of the quotation marks
* a comma is used after the dialogue tag. For example, ‘he said,’
* a lowercase letter is used to begin the second spoken phrase (if the sentence is split) or a capital letter is used if a new sentence is introduced
* sentence punctuation is used before the end of the second spoken phrase. For example:
* "We are excited to hear from Oscar, Chase and Lewis,” said the teacher, “because they have come all the way from Tasmania.”

See: [Quoted speech (direct speech)](#_Quoted_speech_(direct).

### Changing lines for each new speaker

When writing dialogue, begin a new line for each new speaker. For example:

* “Do you want to go to the park?" asked Annabelle as she looked up from the table.
* “That would be great. I think I will take my basketball,” replied Nicole.

### Internal dialogue

Internal dialogue, also known as inner monologue or internal thoughts, refers to the thoughts that occur within a character's mind. It provides an insight into the character's thoughts, feelings, motivations and reflections, often revealing their inner conflicts, doubts or contemplations. Internal dialogue is usually represented in writing using quotation marks. For example:

* “I should have left 10 minutes ago,” Katie thought as she glanced at the clock. “Now I'm going to be late for school.”

See: [Quoted speech (direct speech)](#_Quoted_speech_(direct).

## Embedded clauses and phrases

Both clauses and phrases can be positioned in the middle of a main clause. This is sometimes referred to as an ‘embedded’ clause or phrase. The term ‘interrupting clause’ can also be used to describe when one clause interrupts another. Embedded clauses and phrases are used to highlight or emphasise information or for stylistic reasons (Derewianka 2022).

Adjectival clauses are usually embedded after the subject and/or object they are modifying in the main clause. Commas are used to separate the clause that has been embedded. For example:

* Our librarian, **who gives amazing book recommendations**, is retiring next year. (main clause: ‘our librarian is retiring next year’; embedded adjectival clause: ‘who gives amazing book recommendations’)

Adverbial phrases and clauses can also be positioned in the middle of a main clause. Commas are required to separate the embedded phrase or clause from the main (independent) clause. For example:

* We would like, **in the meantime**, to go back to class. (main clause: ‘we would like to go back to class’; embedded adverbial [prepositional] phrase: ‘in the meantime’)
* I hid my homework, **when my mum asked if I had any**, in the bottom of my bag. (main clause: ‘I hid my homework in the bottom of my bag’; embedded adverbial clause: ‘when my mum asked if I had any’; subordinate conjunction: ‘when’)

See: [Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in), [Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in).

## Modality

Modality refers to aspects of language that suggest a particular perspective on subjects and/or events. Modality forms a continuum from high modality (always, must) to low modality (might, could) (NESA 2024b). A range of words and phrases can be used to express modality, including the use of modal verbs (auxiliaries), modal adverbs, modal adjectives (adjectivals) and modal clauses and phrases. Each of these can indicate varying degrees of modality.

Table 18 – words to indicate modality (modal words)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Modal word classification** | **High modality** | **Medium modality** | **Low modality** |
| **Modal verbs (auxiliaries)** | must, ought to, need to, has to, had to | will, would, should, is, to, was to, supposed to | can, may, could, might |
| **Modal adjectives (adjectivals)** | certain, definite, absolute, necessary, obligatory | probable, usual | possible |
| **Modal adverbs** | certainly, definitely, always, never, absolutely, surely, in fact | probably, usually, generally, likely | possibly, perhaps, maybe, sometimes |
| **Modal nouns** | certainty, necessity, requirement, obligation | probability | possibility |
| **Modal clauses and phrases** | It is essential (that) …I know (that) …It is obvious (that) … | I think (that) …In my opinion …It is likely (that) …It isn’t likely (that) …This suggests (that) … | I guess (that) … |

(Adapted from Humphrey et al 2012)

Modality can indicate an attitude or the degree of probability, occurrence, obligation or inclination. These can be described as:

* **probability**: helps convey the level of certainty or possibility associated with a particular statement
* **occurrence**: indicates the occurrence or non-occurrence of an event
* **obligation**: expresses a sense of duty or something that is required
* **inclination**: expresses a personal preference or willingness to do something.

### Modal verbs

Modal verbs form a continuum from high modality (always, must) to low modality (might, could). They are the most common way of expressing degrees of probability (Humphrey et al. 2012).

Modal verbs are a type of auxiliary (helping) verb which means they need to be used with other verbs or participles. Examples of commonly used modal verbs include:

* **probability**: may, might, can, could
* **occurrence**: will, always, never, typically
* **obligation**: must, should, have to, ought to
* **inclination**: would, want, wish, prefer.

Example sentences with modal verbs, include:

* **probability**: It may rain, so bring an umbrella. (modal auxiliary verb: ‘may’; main verb: ‘rain’)
* **occurrence**: She will visit us next weekend. (modal auxiliary verb: ‘will’; main verb: ‘visit’)
* **obligation**: You must complete the assignment by Friday. (modal auxiliary verb: ‘must’; main verb: ‘complete’)
* **inclination**: I would like to go to the skate park. (modal auxiliary verb: ‘would’; main verb: ‘like’)

When ‘not’ is added after a modal verb, it negates the modal quality it expresses. For example:

* She **can** swim. She **cannot** swim. (modal auxiliary verbs: ‘can/cannot’; main verb: ‘swim’)
* You **should** go. You **should not** go. (modal auxiliary verbs: ‘should/should not’; main verb: ‘go’)
* They **might** win. They **might not** win. (modal auxiliary verbs: ‘might/might not’; main verb: ‘win’)

See: [Auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs), [Types of auxiliary verbs](#_Types_of_auxiliary).

### Modal adjectives

Modal adjectives convey modality in relation to the qualities or characteristics of the nouns they are describing. They include:

* **probability**: possible, probable, certain, sure, definite, clear, obvious
* **occurrence**: frequent, consistent, inconsistent, unexpected
* **obligation**: necessary, essential, compulsory, obligatory
* **inclination**: enthusiastic, reluctant.

Example sentences with modal adjectives include:

* **probability**: It is **possible** that the plan will be approved today. (modal adjective: ‘possible’; noun being described: ‘plan’)
* **occurrence**: She has made **frequent** visits to the classroom. (modal adjective: ‘frequent’; noun being described: ‘classroom’)
* **obligation**: Eating fruits and vegetables is **necessary** for a healthy diet. (modal adjective: ‘necessary’; noun being described: ‘healthy diet’)
* **inclination**: He is **enthusiastic** about joining the team. (modal adjective: ‘enthusiastic’; noun being described: ‘team’)

See: [Types of adjectives](#_Types_of_adjectives).

### Modal adverbs

Modal adverbs convey modality in relation to the manner or degree of the verb they are describing. Modal adverbs are often created by adding suffixes to adjectives. The most common suffix used to form adverbs from adjectives is ‘-ly’. For example, ‘quick’ (adjective) becomes ‘quickly’ (adverb); ‘possible’ (adjective) becomes ‘possibly’ (adverb). Commonly used modal adverbs include:

* **probability**: possibly, certainly, surely, definitely, clearly, obviously
* **occurrence**: consistently, frequently
* **obligation**: necessarily, essentially
* **inclination**: reluctantly, enthusiastically.

Example sentences with modal adverbs include:

* **probability**: She is **possibly** going to the swimming carnival. (modal adverb: ‘possibly’; action being described: ‘going’)
* **occurrence**: The event will **likely** take place next month. (modal adverb: ‘likely’; action being described: ‘take place’)
* **obligation**: You must **absolutely** follow the safety rules. (modal adverb ‘absolutely’; action being described: ‘follow’)
* **inclination**: Jennifer **reluctantly** read her poem out to the class. (modal adverb: ‘reluctantly’; action being described: ‘read’)

### Modal nouns

Modal nouns convey modality in relation to the likelihood, necessity, or ability associated with actions or events. Unlike modal verbs, which directly express modality, modal nouns function as nouns within a sentence and are often accompanied by auxiliary verbs. Commonly used modal nouns include:

* **probability**: likelihood, chance, possibility, probability, certainty
* **occurrence**: occurrence, happening, eventuality
* **obligation**: necessity, requirement, duty, obligation
* **inclination**: inclination, preference, tendency, propensity.

Example sentences with modal nouns, include:

* **probability**: The **likelihood** of rain is high. (modal noun: ‘likelihood’; action being described: ‘rain’)
* **occurrence**: The **occurrence** of earthquakes in this region is relatively rare. (modal noun: ‘occurrence’; action being described: ‘earthquakes’)
* **obligation**: It is your **duty** to ensure that all safety protocols are followed in the laboratory. (modal noun ‘duty’; action being described: ‘following protocols’)
* **inclination**: My **tendency** for procrastination often results in me being late for class. (modal noun: ‘tendency’; action being described: ‘being late’)

## Narrative voice

The choice of narrative voice affects the reader's connection to characters and the story's overall tone. Writers choose a narrative voice based on the desired effect, the story's complexity and the depth of insight they want to provide into characters and events.

There are 3 types of narrative voice: first person, second person and third person. The types of pronouns used within each type of narrative voice changes. The pronouns reflect the type of narrative voice, providing insight into the perspective from which the story is being told. For example:

Figure 1 – pronoun use in narrative voice



See: [Pronouns](#_Pronouns), [Personal pronouns](#_Personal_pronouns).

### First person narrative voice

First person narration is presented through a character’s point of view and uses the pronouns ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’ or ‘our’. In this style, readers experience events from the viewpoint of the narrating character, who employs first-person pronouns to convey his or her observations (McDonald 2023). First person narration often creates a more personal and subjective experience. For example:

* **I** woke up to the sound of rain tapping against **my** window. As **I** got out of bed**, I** couldn't shake the feeling that something was about to change. (personal pronouns: ‘I’ [subject], ‘my’ [object])

See: [Pronouns](#_Pronouns), [Personal pronouns](#_Personal_pronouns).

### Second person narrative voice

Second person narrative voice is characterised by the use of ‘you’ as the pronoun, directly addressing the reader. It is less common in narrative fiction but is sometimes used for specific effect, such as creating a sense of immediacy, engagement or involvement. Writing in the second person can make the reader feel like an active participant in the story. For example:

* **You** enter the bustling marketplace. The vibrant colours of the stalls and the chatter of vendors overwhelm **your** senses. (personal pronouns: ‘you’ [subject], ‘your’ [object])

When creating texts in second person narrative voice, consider:

* Writing in the second person can be engaging but it can also be challenging to sustain for long narratives.
* Writers often use second person narrative voice for specific scenes or moments to heighten emotional impact.

See: [Pronouns](#_Pronouns), [Personal pronouns](#_Personal_pronouns).

### Third person narrative voice

Third person narrative voice relies on characters' names and the pronouns 'he’, 'she’, 'it’, ‘them’ and 'they’. These pronouns are used to describe the actions, thoughts, perceptions and decisions of the characters in the story (McDonald 2023). Third person narrative voice allows for a more expansive exploration of characters and events. For example:

* **Kaylie** noticed the dark clouds looming overhead. **She** hurried along, frantically searching for dry shelter as the rain descended on **her**. (character name: ‘Kaylie’; personal pronouns: ‘she’ [subject], ‘her’ [object])

See: [Pronouns](#_Pronouns), [Personal pronouns](#_Personal_pronouns).

## Nominalisation

Nominalisation is the process of forming nouns from other parts of speech (word groups). Nominalisation is often found in texts that contain abstract ideas and concepts (NESA 2024b), including in scientific writing. Nominalisation can be created by turning:

* actions (verbs) into things, concepts or people (nouns)
* descriptions of nouns and pronouns (adjectives) into things, concepts or people (nouns).

### Forming nouns from verbs

The process of forming nouns (things, concepts or people) from verbs involves:

* **creating a gerund** (by adding the suffix ‘-ing’ to a verb). For example: conduct/conducting (verb: ‘conduct’ + ‘-ing’)
* **adding a noun-forming suffix to a verb**. For example: conduct/conduction (verb: ‘conduct’ + ‘-ion’); apply/appliance (verb: ‘apply’ + ‘-ance’)

Table 19 – example noun-forming suffixes to create nouns from verbs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Verb | Noun-forming suffix | Noun |
| diffuse | **‘**-**ion’** meaning: ‘act or process’ | diffusion |
| mix | **‘**-**ure’** meaning: ‘the result of the act’ | mixture |
| measure | **‘**-**ment’** meaning: ‘state of being’, ‘act of’ | measurement |
| create | **‘**-**ure’** meaning: ‘the result of the act’ | creature |
| survive | **‘**-**al’** meaning: ‘having characteristics of’, ‘like’ | survival |
| resist | **‘**-**ance’** meaning: ‘an action or process’, ‘quality or state’, ‘amount or degree’ | resistance |
| insulate | **‘**-**or’** meaning: ‘a person or thing that performs an action’ | insulator |

**Note**: nominalisation can also occur by adding a noun-forming prefix (derivational prefix) to a verb. For example: action/reaction (‘re-’ + verb: ‘action’; ‘reaction’: noun)

### Forming nouns from adjectives

The process of forming nouns (things, concepts or people) from adjectives involves:

* **adding a noun-forming suffix to an adjective**. For example: dense/density (adjective: ‘dense’ + ‘-ity’)

Table 20 – example noun-forming suffixes to create nouns from adjectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Noun-forming suffixes** | **Noun** |
| real | ‘-**ity’** meaning: ‘state or condition of being’, ‘doing’ | reality |
| frequent | ‘-**cy’** meaning: ‘a state, condition, quality or characteristic’ | frequency |
| happy | ‘-**ness’** meaning: ‘state of’, ‘condition of’ | happiness |
| important | ‘-**ance’** meaning: ‘an action or process’, ‘quality or state’, ‘amount or degree’ | importance |

**Note**: morphemic spelling generalisations will impact on the way nominalised words are formed.

## Nouns

A noun is a word used to represent people, places, ideas and things (NESA 2024b).

### Types of nouns

#### Common nouns

Common nouns are the names of ordinary things that can be seen and touched. For example, ball, pencil, dog.

#### Proper nouns

Proper nouns are the names of a special or specific place, person or thing. Proper nouns start with capital letters. For example, Samantha, Sydney Opera House, Olympic Games, Cathy Freeman.

#### Collective nouns

Collective nouns are the names given to a group of persons or things. For example, bunch, litter, team.

#### Abstract nouns

Abstract nouns are the names of an idea, concept or feeling. Abstract nouns cannot be seen or touched. For example, kindness, love, truth.

#### Compound nouns

Compound nouns are 2 nouns together that have a meaning different from the individual nouns. They can be joined together as in ‘lighthouse’ or hyphenated, as in ‘half-brother’ (Winch 2013).

## Noun groups

A noun group (or phrase) is a word or number of words based upon a noun (Winch 2013). Providing detailed information about the person or thing engaged in a process is particularly important when writing texts such as narratives (including setting and character descriptions), and informative texts (such as providing information about a class of things).

A noun group can be a:

* **single word**. For example:
* **Books** are informative. (noun group: ‘books’)
* **phrase**:a phrase is a group of words that does not contain a finite verb and does not express a complete thought or idea. For example:
* **The thick book on the table** is mine. (noun group: ‘the thick book on the table’ [definite article: adjective] + descriptive adjective + noun + prepositional phrase)
* **clause**: a clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb. For example:
* **The book that I borrowed from the library** is due tomorrow. [noun phrase: ‘the book’ + noun clause/adjectival clause: ‘that I borrowed’ + prepositional phrase: ‘from the library’]

When expanding a noun group, details about the following can be included (Derewianka 2022:38):

* Which specific thing is being referred to?
* Who does it belong to?
* How many things are involved?
* What is the author’s opinion about this thing?
* What attributes does it have (such as size, shape, colour)?
* How does it compare with other things?
* What class of things does it belong to?

Information in a noun group can be provided both before and after the subject or object that is being described. Details positioned before the noun are referred to as **premodifiers** and those following are referred to as **postmodifiers** (or qualifiers). Qualifiers provide additional information and are often a prepositional phrase and/or an embedded adjectival clause. For example:

* I saw those five diligent university students in the library on Tuesday. (premodifier: ‘those five diligent’; noun [subject]: ‘students’; postmodifiers: ‘in the library’ [prepositional phrase])

Figure 2 – noun group structure



An **extended noun group** is a phrase that provides additional information about a **noun** in a sentence. It usually consists of a noun and other words, such as adjectives, determiners and prepositional phrases, that modify or describe the noun in more detail. Extended noun groups help provide specificity and clarity in writing by adding descriptive elements to nouns. For example:

* **The large, withering oak tree in our backyard** is over 100 years old. (extended noun group: ‘the large, withering oak tree in our backyard’ [including prepositional phrase: ‘in our backyard’])

See: [Adjectives](#_Adjectives), [Noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing), [Varying sentence lengths](#_Varying_sentence_lengths).

## Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun (NESA 2024b). Pronouns help reduce repetition within and between sections of text.

### Types of pronouns

#### Personal pronouns

**Personal pronouns** are used to represent people, places or things. They can be singular or plural. In a sentence, personal pronouns may represent:

* **the subject** (or part of the subject) of a clause or sentence. This is referred to as the subjective case and can be:
* singular: ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’. For example:
* **I** like to walk in the morning. (singular subject: ‘I’)
* plural: ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘they’. For example:
* **They** decided to catch up at lunchtime. (plural subject: ‘they’)
* **the object** (or part of the subject) of the clause or sentence. This is referred to as the objective case, including:
* singular: ‘me’, ‘you’, ‘him’, ‘her’, ‘it’. For example:
* Fred needs to give that to **me**. (singular object – referring to a person: ‘me’)
* plural: ‘us’, ‘you’, ‘them’. For example:
* The bikes belong to **them**. (plural object – referring to multiple people: ‘them’)

See: [Noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing).

#### Personal pronouns have number and gender

Understanding pronouns involves recognising how they match in both number and gender, ensuring grammatical precision and effective communication.

##### Personal pronouns – number (singular and plural)

There are singular (one person or thing) and plural (more than one person or thing) forms of personal pronouns, including:

* **singular**: ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’
* **plural**: ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘they’.

If the noun to which the pronoun refers is singular, the pronoun is also singular. For example:

* **John** is going to the store. **He** needs to buy groceries. (singular noun: ‘John’; singular pronoun: ‘he’)

If the noun to which the pronoun refers is plural, the pronoun is also plural. For example:

* **The teachers** are preparing their lessons. **They** are dedicated to their students. (plural noun: ‘the teachers’; plural pronoun: ‘they’)

##### Personal pronouns – gender

Pronouns indicate gender in language. Examples of pronouns and their gender include:

* masculine (male): ‘he’, ‘him’. For example:
* **Costa** went to the park and **he** enjoyed playing basketball. (noun: ‘Costa’; masculine pronoun: ‘he’)
* feminine (female): ‘she’, ‘her’. For example:
* **Kristen** is studying for an assessment and **she** is feeling confident. (noun: ‘Kristen’; feminine pronoun: ‘she’)
* common or non-binary gender (can be either male, female, neither or both): ‘they’, ‘them’, ‘their’. For example:
* **Alex** is going on holidays and **they** are excited for new adventures. (noun: ‘Alex’; common or non-binary gender pronoun: ‘they’)
* neuter (neither male nor female): ‘it’. For example:
* **The computer** crashed and **it** lost all its data. (noun: ‘computer’; neuter pronoun: ‘it’)

**Note**: personal possessive adjectives are words that function like pronouns but are only used with nouns (‘my’, ‘your’, ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘its’, ‘our’, ‘their’). For example, ‘Kaira loves to read. The book is **hers**.’(‘hers’: the possessive pronoun replaces the possessive noun phrase ‘Kaira’s book').

See: [Additional types of adjectives (determiners/pointers)](#_Additional_types_of), [Possessive adjectives (possessives)](#_Possessive_adjectives_(possessives)), [Demonstrative adjectives (demonstratives)](#_Demonstrative_adjectives_(demonstra).

#### Possessive pronouns

Possessive **pronouns** show ownership or possession. They stand alone in a sentence, **replacing** a noun. Examples include ‘mine’, ‘yours’, ‘his’, ‘hers’, ‘its’, ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’. To identify a possessive pronoun, ask: ‘Whose is it?’. For example:

* The book on the table is **mine**. (possessive pronoun: ‘mine’)
* The house is **theirs**. (possessive pronoun: ‘theirs’)

**Note**: [possessive adjectives (possessives)](#_Possessive_adjectives_(possessives)) do not replace nouns directly. For example, ‘**His** pyjamas have stripes.’ (possessive adjective: ‘his’ describes; noun: ‘pyjamas’)

See: [Noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing), [Possessive adjectives (possessives)](#_Possessive_adjectives_(possessives)).

#### Demonstrative pronouns

**Demonstrative pronouns** refer to a specific noun and are used for indicating particular people or things – often things that that can be pointed to (Winch 2013). Examples of demonstrative pronouns include ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘these’, ‘those’. For example:

* **This** is my book. (demonstrative pronoun: ‘this’)

**Note**: demonstrative adjectives help to identify which particular noun is being referred to. They also include ‘this’, 'that’, ‘these’ and ‘those’. For example, ‘**These** grapes are delicious.’ (demonstrative adjective: ‘these’ [points out which grapes specifically])

See: [Noun–pronoun referencing](#_Noun-pronoun_referencing), [Possessive adjectives (possessives)](#_Possessive_adjectives_(possessives)).

#### Interrogative pronouns

**Interrogative pronouns** are pronouns used to ask a question. They include who, whom, whose, which and what. Interrogative pronouns can be used to gather different types of information. For example:

* **who**: when asking about a person’s identity *or* role. For example:
* Who is going to organise the netball team?
* **whom**: when asking about the *object of an* action, particularly when referring to a person. For example:
* Whom did you invite to the party?
* **whose**:to ask about possession or ownership. For example:
* Whose book is on the desk?
* **which**: when choosing from a specificset of options. For example:
* Which book would you like to take home?
* **what**: to inquire about a thing, ideaor action. For example:
* What is that inside the bag?

See: [Interrogative sentences](#_Interrogative_sentences).

#### Relative pronouns

Relative pronouns are used in an [adjectival clause](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in) to form a dependent (subordinate) clause in a complex sentence. Common relative pronouns include ‘who’, ‘whom’, ‘whose’, ‘which’ and ‘that’ (Derewianka 2022).

See: [Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in).

## Punctuation

### Apostrophes

#### Apostrophes for contractions

A contraction is a shortened form of one or 2 words (one of which is usually a verb). In a contraction, an apostrophe takes the place of the missing letter or letters (NESA 2024b). Examples include:

* **common contractions**: don’t (do not), can’t (cannot), wouldn’t (would not), you’re (you are), I’ll (I will), I’d (I would)
* **irregular contractions**: won’t (will not), I’d (I would), shan’t (shall not).

#### Apostrophes for possession

##### Apostrophes for possession – singular

An apostrophe can be used to indicate possession (NESA 2024b).

When something is owned by a single person, place an apostrophe after the last letter of the owner, followed by the letter ‘s’. For example:

* This is **Mary’s** book. (singular person showing possession: ‘Mary’; the item being possessed/owned: ‘book’)

##### Apostrophes for possession – plural

When indicating possession for plural nouns, the general rule is to add an apostrophe after the ‘s’ at the end of the word. For example:

* The **dogs'** leashes are tangled. (noun: ‘leashes’; ‘owned’ by: ‘the dogs’ – plural)
* The **students’** work was impressive. (noun: ‘work’; ‘owned’ by: ‘the students’ – plural)

When a plural word ends in any letter other than ‘s’, an apostrophe is added, followed by the letter ‘s’. For example:

* The **children’s** toys were scattered across the room. (noun: ‘toys’; ‘owned’ by: ‘the children’ – plural)
* The **team’s** strategy was successful. (noun: ‘strategy; ‘owned’ by: ‘the team’ – plural)

When 2 or more people share ownership, only the last owner has an apostrophe. For example:

* We purchased a copy of **Jason and Mary’s** book. (compound subject who is showing joint possession ‘Jason and Mary’; the singular item being possessed/owned: ‘book’)

When 2 or more people each have ownership, all owners have an apostrophe. For example:

* **Arlee’s** and **Fred’s** giggles are infectious! (noun: ‘giggles’; ‘owned’ by: ‘Arlee’ and ‘Fred’)

##### Apostrophes for proper nouns ending in ‘s’

* When a possessive of a proper noun ends in the letter ‘s’, an apostrophe and another ‘s’ is added (even if the final ‘s’ is not pronounced). For example:
* **Jess’s** disbelief was evident when she heard the news. (noun: ‘disbelief’; proper noun: ‘Jess’)
* The possessive of plural proper nouns that end in the letter ‘s’ is written with an apostrophe only. For example:
* The **Joneses’** new car was the envy of the neighbourhood. (noun group: ‘new car’; proper noun: ‘Jones’; pluralised proper noun: ‘Joneses**’**’)

#### Apostrophe misconceptions

Apostrophes are primarily used in punctuation to show possession or ownership, or contraction or omission of a letter from a word (AERO 2023b). This can cause confusion with some words that sound similar but have different meanings and uses. This can include:

* **it's**: contraction for ‘it is’ or ‘it has’. For example:
* **It's** a beautiful day.
* **its**: shows possession, indicating that something belongs to or is associated with ‘it’. For example:
* The cat licked **its** paw*.*
* **he’s**: contraction for ‘he is’ or ‘he has’. For example:
* **He's** going to the store to buy some groceries.
* **his:** shows possession, indicating that something or someone belongs to or is associated with a male person or animal. For example:
* Ted forgot to take **his** keys when he went swimming.

### Bullet points and numbering

Bullet points and numbering are commonly used to present information in a clear and organised manner.

Bullet points present a list of items in a non-hierarchical or unordered manner. They draw attention to individual points without indicating a specific sequence or order. For example, a shopping list.

Numbering is used to present a list of items in a sequence of steps. It indicates a specific order. For example, a cooking method or scientific experiment.

### Capital letters

#### Capital letters at the beginning of a sentence

A capital letter is used as the first letter of the first word of every sentence. For example, ‘My dog’s name is Mylo. He loves to play.’

#### Capital letters for proper nouns

Capitalisation of proper nouns involves writing the first letter of a specific person, place or thing in uppercase. Proper nouns are the names of individual people, specific places and unique things. For example:

* **names of people**: John James Gray, Albert Namatjira, Li Cunxin, EB White, Ben (short for Benjamin or Benedict)
* **names of places**: Sydney, India, Flinders Street, New South Wales, Pacific Ocean, Uluru
* **names of organisations**: Microsoft, Rainbow Public School
* **days of the week and months**: Monday, January
* **titles and salutations**: Mrs Johnson, Dr Smith.

#### Capital letters for headings and subheadings

Headings and subheadings use capital letters and follow conventions such as:

* capitalising the first and last words
* capitalising all major words (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and some conjunctions)
* capitalising the first word after a colon when it is used between a title and subtitle. For example, The Art of War: Strategies for Success.
* Headings and subheadings do not capitalise articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet) or prepositions (unless they are the first or last word of the heading). For example, A Guide to Effective Writing.

**Note**: capitalisation rules for headings and subheadings often follow a style guide. Rules may vary depending on the guide which is why there may be variations in how heading and subheadings appear in different types of texts.

#### Capital letters in poetry

Capital letters are used at the beginning of traditional poetry, especially in certain forms like sonnets or rhymed verse. This helps readers identify the start of a new line and aids in the visual structure of the poem. For example:

**T**he sun is setting in the west,

**A**nd shadows dance upon the crest.

#### Capital letter for the personal pronoun ‘I’

The personal pronoun ‘I’ is always capitalised, regardless of its position in a sentence (I, I’d, I’ll, I’ve, I’m). For example:

* This weekend, **I’m** going to see Riley.

#### Capital letters for emphasis

Capitalisation can be used for emphasis, adding a persuasive or expressive element to written text. For example:

* **WOW**! What an incredible performance!
* The **SURPRISE** was absolutely unforgettable!

While capitalisation for emphasis can be effective, it must be used sparingly to maintain its impact. Overusing capital letters may diminish the intended effect.

#### Capital letters for abbreviations

**Abbreviations** can be used to shorten terms that are lengthy. Using abbreviations can make texts more concise. There are different types of abbreviations which can sometimes be confused. Examples of abbreviations include:

* **Acronyms**: acronyms are initialisms that make up a new word. Acronyms are usually written without full stops. When saying an acronym, the new word is said. Examples include:
* NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration
* PIN – Personal Identification Number.
* **Initialisms**: initialisms use only the first letters of each word in a group of words. Words that are not important are often left out. Initialisms do not need a full stop. When saying initialisms, each letter is said. Examples include:
* DIY – Do It Yourself
* NSW – New South Wales.

### Commas

A comma is a punctuation marker used to show separation between parts of a sentence, such as clauses or phrases, where separation is important to the meaning. Commas are also used to separate words, phrases or numbers in a series (NESA 2024b).

#### Commas to separate adjectives when more than one is used

A comma is used when 2 or more adjectives modify a noun. For example:

* It is a big**,** black dog. (adjectives: ‘big’, ‘black’; noun: ‘dog’)

If there is more than one adjective at the end of a clause, ‘and’ comes before the last adjective instead of a comma. For example:

* The dog is big **and** ferocious. (adjectives: ‘big’, ‘ferocious’; noun: ‘dog’)

When an extended list of adjectives is used, it is common to introduce the last adjective with ‘and’. For example:

* My dog wore his blue, green, white **and** yellow raincoat when we went walking. (adjectives: ‘blue’, ‘green’, ‘white’; final adjective: ‘yellow’ is introduced by ‘and’ to complete the list)

**Note**: depending on author preference, the complexity of the information and the style guide being used, a comma (called the Oxford comma) can be positioned before the ‘and’ in such lists. For example, ‘The chef prepared a delicious, aromatic, and mouthwatering dish for her friends.’

See: [Adjectives](#_Adjectives), [Using more than one adjective](#_Using_more_than).

#### Commas to separate nouns in a list

Commas can be used to separate nouns in a list. In a short list, the last item is preceded by the word ‘and’. For example:

* I bought some apples, oranges, pears **and** bananas at the shop on Monday. (nouns: ‘apples’, ‘oranges’, ‘pears’, ‘bananas’])

#### Commas to separate an adverbial phrase from a main clause

When an adverbial phrase is positioned anywhere in a sentence other than the beginning, it is not separated by a comma. For example:

* We like to eat our lunch **in the park**. (main [independent clause]: ‘we like to eat our lunch’; adverbial/prepositional phrase: ‘in the park’)

When an adverbial phrase appears at the beginning of a sentence, a comma is often used to separate it from the main clause. This adverbial phrase can take various forms, including **prepositional phrases** or **single adverbs**. The purpose of the comma is to indicate a slight pause and help clarify the structure of the sentence. For example:

* **Early every morning**, I go walking. (prepositional/adverbial phrase: ‘early every morning’; main [independent] clause: ‘I go walking’)
* **Recently,** we travelled to Sydney. (adverb: ‘recently’; main [independent] clause: ‘we travelled to Sydney’)

[**Adverbial phrase**] + **comma** + **main clause.**

**Note**: there may be cases where the use of a comma is optional, especially when the adverbial phrase is short. For example, ‘Late yesterday, we went to the park.’ (adverbial phrase: ‘Late yesterday’)

See: [Adverbial phrases](#_Adverbial_phrases).

#### Commas to separate a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause

Some complex sentences use a comma to separate the dependent (subordinate clause) from the main (independent) clause. This provides a visual pause that helps the reader to distinguish between the different parts of the sentence and comprehend the overall meaning more easily.

##### Commas and adverbial clauses

When a dependent clause comes **after** the main clause, a comma is not needed to separate the 2 clauses. For example:

* She went to the store **although she was feeling tired**. (main clause: ‘She went to the store’; dependent clause: ‘although she was feeling tired’; subordinating conjunction: ‘although’)

**Main clause** + [**subordinating conjunction** + **dependent clause**].

**Note**: a comma is sometimes used if either (or both) of the clauses are extended or if they contain complex information. For example, ‘Andy was still incredibly nervous, even though he had studied each night for his chemistry and biology exams.’ (main clause: ‘Andy was still nervous’; adverbial [extended] clause: ‘even thought he had studied each night for his chemistry and biology exams’; subordinating conjunction: ‘even though’)

When a dependent (subordinate) clause comes **before** the main (independent) clause, a comma is used to separate the 2 clauses. For example:

* **Although she was feeling tired**, she went to the store. (dependent clause: ‘although she was feeling tired’; subordinating conjunction: ‘although’; comma; main clause: ‘she went to the store’)

[**subordinating conjunction** + **dependent clause**] + **comma** + **main clause**.

When a dependent (subordinate) clause is positioned in the middle of a main clause, commas are used to separate the dependent clause from the main clause. This is sometimes referred to as an **embedded (or interrupting) clause**. For example:

* I will repair your fridge, **if you are available**, on Saturday afternoon. (main clause: ‘I will repair your fridge on Saturday afternoon’; dependent clause: ‘if you are available’; subordinating conjunction: ‘if’)

**main clause + comma + [subordinating conjunction + dependent clause] + main clause**

See: Complex sentences; Adverbial clauses; Embedded clauses and phrases

##### Commas and adjectival clauses

Adjectival clauses provide additional information about a noun or noun group it is describing, the dependent clause is separated with commas. For example:

* A tourist, **whom** I met on holidays, gave me this book. (main clause: ‘a tourist gave me this book’; adjectival clause: ‘whom I met on holidays,’; relative pronoun: ‘whom’)

**Note:** when an adjectival clause is essential to the meaning of the main clause, the dependent clause is not separated by commas. Adjectival clauses that begin with the relative pronoun ‘that’ usually signal an essential adjectival clause. For example, The car **that is parked across the driveway** belongs to my neighbour. (main clause: ‘the car belongs to my neighbour’; adjectival clause: ‘that is parked across the driveway’ [this information is considered essential to the meaning of the main clause]; relative pronoun: ‘that’)

See: [Adjectival clauses (in complex sentences)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in), [Clause position – adjectival clauses (including comma usage)](#_Clause_position_–_1).

#### Commas to separate adverbs when more than one is used

When more than one adverb is used to modify a verb in a sentence, separating them with commas helps to maintain clarity. For example:

* She sang the song **beautifully**, **passionately** and **confidently**. (adverbs: ‘beautifully’, ‘passionately’ and ‘confidently’; verb being modified: ‘sang’)

#### Commas with appositives

An appositive is a noun or pronoun that is positioned beside another noun or pronoun to explain or identify it (NESA 2024b). Appositives provide additional information or help to distinguish the noun or pronoun. An appositive is separated from the rest of the sentence with commas. For example:

* The city, **a bustling metropolis**, never sleeps. (noun group: ‘the city’; appositive: ‘a bustling metropolis’)
* My brother, **Chris**, is an excellent drummer. (noun group: ‘my brother’; appositive: ‘Chris’)

**Main clause** + **comma** + [**appositive**] + **comma** + **main clause**.

**Note:** when an appositive is considered **essential** to the meaning of the noun it belongs to, the information is embedded, and commas are not used. For example: My brother **Chris** is an excellent drummer. [noun group: ‘my brother’; appositive: ‘Chris’ (the brother’s name **is** essential information in this sentence)]

See: [Appositives](#_Appositives).

#### Commas to separate information displayed in parentheses (brackets)

A comma is used after parentheses to separate non-essential information from the main sentence. It helps to clarify the structure of the sentence and indicates that the information within the parentheses is additional or supplementary to the main point being made. For example:

* In school, students learn various subjects (such as English, mathematics and science), which can support learning throughout their whole life. (The names of the subjects inside the parentheses is considered to be non-essential information in this sentence.)

A comma is **not** used after parentheses if the information is considered essential information. For example:

* The school camp (which was held last week in Feathertop) was an enormous success for all involved. (The specific details about which camp is essential information in this sentence.)

#### Commas to separate information displayed in parentheses when acknowledging a source

When acknowledging a source or citation within parentheses, a comma is not used. The information within the parentheses is treated as a single unit. For example:

* A study on the colony of bats in the Sydney Botanical Gardens (White 2024) found that there have been close to 50 trees lost due to their activity.

### Dashes

A dash (–) is a punctuation mark that is longer than a hyphen and may be used **alone** or **in pairs**. Dashes are used for different purposes, including:

* to represent a range of values such as numbers, dates, or time, for example, ‘pages 10–20’, ‘Monday–Friday’
* to set off a phrase or clause for emphasis or a sudden change in thought, for example, ‘She finally spoke – after a long pause – about the incident.’
* to show that something being said has broken off, for example, ‘I finally –’.

**Note**:there are 2 main types of dashes: the en dash (–) and the em dash (—). Varying publishing or style guides may use these 2 types of dashes in specific ways. For example, an en dash is used to indicate a span of time or a range of numbers. An em dash is used to set off additional information or a shift in thought within a sentence.

#### Dashes for humorous and ironic effect

Dashes can be used for humorous and ironic effect, especially when interrupting a sentence or providing additional commentary. For example:

* Sarah had big plans for her weekend – bingeing her favourite TV shows and devouring a mountain of snacks. (The dash has been used for humorous effect to highlight the reality of the ‘big plans’ that Sarah had for her weekend.)
* After months of careful planning, the grand opening of the new restaurant was a great success – except for the fact that they ran out of food within the first hour. (The dash is used to create a contrast between the ‘success’ of the grand opening and the ironic outcome of running out of food.)

### Ellipsis

The points of ellipsis (...) indicate that something has been left out or indicate such things as surprise or suspense in an imaginative text (Winch 2013). They are represented as 3 full stops in a row.

An ellipsis is often used to indicate a thought which is trailing off, hesitation, or an incomplete sentence, leaving a sense of anticipation or open-endedness. This usage is prevalent in writing to convey a pause or suggest there is more to be said or understood. For example:

* Ali turned quickly, but before he could take another step ...

See: [Innovative punctuation in poetry](#_Innovative_punctuation_in).

### Hyphens

A hyphen (-) is a punctuation mark used to join words or word parts that have to do the job of one (Winch 2013). Some examples of using hyphens include:

* compound adjectives, for example, ‘high-speed car’, ‘well-written story’
* forming some compound nouns, for example, ‘father-in-law’, ‘sister-in-law’
* writing fractions, for example, ‘two-thirds’, ‘one-third’
* writing numbers between ‘twenty-one’ and ‘ninety-nine’
* special prefixes, for example, ‘self-esteem’, ‘self-aware’
* being placed at the end of a line break when a word (that is less than 6 letters or less than 2-syllables) cannot fit. In this instance, the word is broken between syllables or morphemes. For example, ‘data-base’, ‘re-cover’, ‘diction-ary’ (NESA 2022).

### Parentheses

Parentheses are also known as round brackets ( ) and are always used in pairs (Winch 2013).

#### Parentheses when enclosing additional information

Parentheses are used to enclose extra information such as an example, a comment or an explanation (Winch 2013). For example:

* Buy a kilogram of apples (Granny Smith or Pink Lady) for the pie recipe. (The text in parentheses ‘Granny Smith and Pink Lady’ is an example.)
* The television presenter (a friend of mine) finally won the entertainment award. (The text in parentheses ‘a friend of mine’ is a comment.)
* Zumba (a type of dance aerobics) is a very effective workout. (The text in parentheses ‘a type of dance aerobics’ is additional information.)

See: [Commas to separate information displayed in parentheses (brackets)](#_Commas_to_separate_5).

#### Parentheses when abbreviating names using acronyms

Parentheses can be used when abbreviating names or titles. They are placed around the acronym directly following the full name. The acronym can then be used throughout the text in place of the full name. For example:

* The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued new guidelines for flu prevention. (The text in parentheses ‘WHO’ is an acronym for ‘World Health Organisation’.)
* National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) plans to launch a new mission to explore Jupiter's moons. (The text in parentheses ‘NASA’ is an acronym for ‘National Aeronautics and Space Administration’.)

#### Parentheses when acknowledging a source

Parentheses are used for in-text citations following a specific citation style. A commonly used style includes (Name and date of information source).For example:

* Research conducted about the effectiveness of homework (Duke 2020) showed that reading was by far the most important area of focus.

#### Parentheses for humorous and ironic effect

Parentheses can be used for humorous and ironic effect, especially when providing additional commentary. For example:

* After hours of intense negotiations, the committee finally reached a decision (by flipping a coin), much to the amusement of onlookers.

### Innovative use of punctuation

Innovative use of punctuation can enhance the rhythm and meaning of a text. Punctuation can be adjusted to suit a range of purposes and create different effects in writing, such as:

* **points of ellipsis** (...): to convey suspense, sadness or mystery. For example:
* The door creaked open slowly …
* **italics**: for emphasis. For example:
* She was absolutely fuming.
* **double punctuation** (!?, !!, ??): to intensify the emotion or emphasis conveyed in a sentence. For example:
* She couldn't believe it — her artwork had been selected for the gallery exhibit!!
* **square brackets** [ ]and **braces** { }: used for editorial comments, corrections or additional information within a text. For example:
* The conference attendees [including several expert names here] for the keynote address. (square brackets: ‘including several expert names here’ [editorial comments])

Variations with the use of punctuation can have a significant impact on the way information is interpreted. For example:

* The class**, loud as usual,** arrived at the school library. (The pair of commas indicates that the information is non-essential [non-restrictive] to the overall meaning of the sentence.)
* The class **(loud as usual)** arrived at the school library. (The brackets emphasise the loudness of the class, suggesting a humorous observation of their volume.)
* The class **– loud as usual –** arrived at the school library. (The use of the dash makes the loudness of the class appear as the most important information.) (Quigley 2022).

See: [Punctuation](#_Punctuation).

#### Innovative punctuation in poetry

Punctuation choices impact the rhythm, meaning and tone of written texts. Examples of innovative punctation to suit purpose and effect include:

* **points of ellipsis** (...) to:
* create a distinctive **rhythm** that evokes a musical feel. For example:
* Quietly the sun goes down ... The noises sneak away ...
* indicate a **pause** and suggest the continuation of thoughts or the unspoken. This can add a layer of ambiguity, inviting the reader to interpret the spaces between the lines. For example:

In the garden of dreams
Petals open, secrets whisper...
Moonlight weaves stories...
Silence, a canvas of unspoken truths.

* **semicolons** (;) can be used at the end of a poetry line:
* when a close **connection** between lines is wanted. For example:

As sunset descends, the sky is scattered with colours;
A beacon of hope and gratitude for tomorrow.

* to indicate an extended **pause**. For example:

Beneath the moon’s soft glow,
untouchable silence descends;
A whisper intrudes,
awakening the night air.

* **hyphens** (-) can be used in poetry to create pauses, convey uncertainty or add emphasis. For example:

A small fleeting moment of joy-
the sound of laughter-
then, stillness.

See: [Punctuation](#_Punctuation).

#### Punctuating free verse poetry

**Free verse** poetry does not rely on consistent patterns of rhyme and meter. This type of text has minimal structure and follows no rules in terms of punctuation. Frequently used conventions in free verse poetry include:

* hyphens, change of stanza and line breaks may be used instead of commas to separate a clause or a phrase. For example:

In the stillness of the desert,

where hot air lingers

in the air-

creatures begin to stir

on the hot desert surface.

* italics may also be used to indicate emphasis, titles of foreign words, internal thoughts and dialogue. For example:

Chaos invades my mind, (word being emphasised: ‘chaos’)
a hurling cyclone of feelings.
Then a whisper within me:
Breathe and centre, this shall pass. (internal thought: ‘Breathe and centre, this shall pass’)

### Semicolons

A semicolon (;) is a punctuation mark that is used between 2 connected or balanced ideas in a sentence.

#### Semicolons in compound sentences

Semicolons are often used when the 2 independent clauses are closely related in meaning or when they are linked in terms of contrast. For example:

* She enjoys playing the piano**;** her brother prefers the guitar. (independent clause 1: ‘she enjoys playing the piano’; independent clause 2: ‘her brother prefers the guitar’)

[**Independent clause**] + **semicolon** + [**independent clause**].

A semi-colon can be used before a conjunctive adverb in a compound sentence. For example:

* We found all the missing pieces; **however**, we still couldn’t put the puzzle back together. (independent clause 1; ’we found all the missing pieces’; independent clause 2: ‘we still couldn’t put the puzzle back together’; conjunctive adverb: ‘however’)

[**Independent clause**] + **semicolon** + **conjunctive adverb** + **comma** + [**independent clause**].

See: [Punctuation in a compound sentence with a coordinating conjunction](#_Punctuation_in_a).

#### Semicolons in detailed lists

The use of a semicolon can be beneficial when separating items in a list where the individual items already contain commas. A semicolon helps to clarify the structure. For example:

* During our class field trip, we encountered 3 fascinating individuals: Tim, an avid gamer**;** Sarah, a talented artist**;** and Alex, a skilled musician. (list item 1: ‘Tim, an avid gamer’; list item 2: ‘Sarah, a talented artist’; list item 3: ‘Alex, a skilled musician’)

See: [Commas to separate nouns in a list](#_Commas_to_separate_2).

## Quoted (direct) and reported (indirect) speech

Quoted and reported speech are 2 ways of conveying what someone else has said, each with its own conventions.

### Quoted speech (direct speech)

Quoted speech is what someone has said or written in the exact words they said or wrote it (Winch 2013). Quoted speech is contained within quotation (speech) marks.

Quoted speech can be used in various contexts, including in:

* **dialogue**: a conversation or interaction between characters. For example:
* “Hey,” said Sara, “do you want to go to the park?”
* “Sure,” replied Matt and Cindy, “that sounds like a great idea!”
* **interviews**: when conveying the exact words of an interviewee. For example:
* The Williams family who observed the parade said, “We have never seen anything like it. It was the best ever!” Needless to say, they will try to be in the front row again next year.
* **speeches:** including in both formal speeches and public addresses. For example:
* “Good morning, everyone. I am excited to announce to you our new school initiative. In the coming term, we will be planting over a hundred trees along the boundary fence line. This is in response to our student survey which showed overwhelming support for greener school groups and a commitment to environmental sustainability.”
* **academic writing**: used to reference the words of experts, academics or primary sources. For example:
* As Dr Smith notes, ‘Bats play a crucial role in maintaining insect populations by consuming thousands of insects each night.’

See: [Dialogue](#_Dialogue), [Dialogue at the beginning of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the), [Dialogue at the end of a sentence](#_Dialogue_at_the_1), [Changing lines for each new speaker](#_Changing_lines_for).

### Reported speech (indirect speech)

Reported (or indirect) speech is an account – or report – of what someone has said or written but without using the exact same words. Reported speech does not require quotation marks and is often introduced by the word ‘that.’ For example:

* **direct speech**: “I am going to leave,” she said.
* **indirect speech**: She said that she was going to leave.

Direct speech that includes a question, or an exclamation, does not require a question mark or an exclamation mark when written as indirect speech. For example:

* **direct speech**: “Will you play basketball?” asked Vanessa.
* **indirect speech**: Vanessa asked if he would play basketball.
* **direct speech**: “The show was amazing!” said Amira.
* **indirect speech**: Amira said that the show was amazing.

When using reported speech, it is important to pay attention to changes in:

* **pronouns and verb tenses**: in direct speech, pronouns and verb tenses are used exactly as spoken. In indirect speech, pronouns may change to reflect the perspective of the speaker and verb tenses may shift (for example, present to past).
* **quotation (speech) marks**: direct speech is enclosed in quotation marks. Indirect speech is not enclosed in quotation marks.
* **word order**: word order often remains the same in direct speech. In indirect speech, the word order may change.

### Quotation marks to distinguish words authored by others

Using quotation (speech) marks to indicate the words of others is an important aspect of citation and referencing. When incorporating the words of another person, it is essential to clearly indicate that they are not your own words.

When directly quoting another person, their exact words are enclosed with double quotation marks. For example:

* Dr Fuller describes the new medical condition as a “potential risk to the elderly”.

A colon is used when introducing a quotation. For example:

* ‘She quoted Shakespeare's famous line: "All the world's a stage."’

When paraphrasing the words of another person, quotation marks are not used. However, it is still essential to acknowledge the idea to the original author. For example:

* According to Dr Fuller, the elderly are facing a potential medical risk as there are not enough vaccinations available.

See: [Dialogue](#_Dialogue); [Quoted speech (direct speech)](#_Quoted_speech_(direct), [Reported speech (indirect speech)](#_Reported_speech_(indirect).

## Sentence forms (structures)

A sentence is a collection of words that conveys a complete thought, typically containing a subject and a predicate (NESA 2024b).

The **subject** of a sentence tells ‘who is taking part’. It is the person (‘who’) or thing (‘what’) that does the action (verb).

The **predicate** contains a main verb and describes what the subject is doing, its state or appearance. It completes the thought started by the subject.

Examples of subjects and predicates include:

* **subject** + **predicate** (verb). For example:
* Ella laughed. (subject: ‘Ella’; predicate: ‘laughed’ [verb: ‘laughed’. It tells us what the subject did])
* **subject** + **predicate** (verb + object). For example:
* She ate an apple. (subject: ‘she’; predicate: ‘ate an apple’ [verb: ‘ate’; object: ‘an apple’])
* **subject** + **predicate** (verb + adverb). For example:
* The cat slept peacefully. (subject: ‘the cat’; predicate: ‘slept peacefully’ [verb: ‘slept’ + adverb: ‘peacefully’])
* **subject** + **predicate** (verb + complement/adjective group). For example:
* He is a doctor. (subject: ‘he’; predicate: ‘is a doctor’ [verb]: ‘is’; complement [subject]: ‘a doctor’)
* The sky is blue. (subject: ‘the sky’; predicate: ‘is blue’ [verb]: ‘is’; complement [subject]: ‘blue’)
* Cows are mammals. (subject: ‘cows’; predicate: ‘are mammals’ [verb]: ‘are’; complement [subject]: ‘mammals’)
* They painted the house red. (subject: ‘they’; predicate: ‘painted the house red’ [verb]: ‘painted’; complement [object ‘house’/‘red’)
* a **dummy subject** can be used in a sentence when there is no subject attached to the verb and the real subject is somewhere else in the clause. The most common dummy subjects are ‘it’ and ‘there’. For example:
* **It** is raining outside. (dummy subject: ‘it’ [related to the real subject ‘rain’])
* **There** was a spider creeping across the floor. (dummy subject: ‘there’ [related to the real subject: ‘a spider’])

**Note**: a **complement** (or adjective group)is the part of a sentence that provides additional information about the subject or object. It completes the meaning of a verb, adjective, or other element in a sentence, adding information necessary to understand the action or state expressed by the main elements.

**Note**: a **fragment** is a group of words that is not a grammatically complete sentence. It can lack either a subject, a verb or both. Sentence fragments are frequently used in spoken language, but written language requires complete sentences for precision, clarity and coherence (Hochman and Wexler 2017).

### Simple sentences

A simple sentence is a complete message that contains a subject and predicate, forming a single independent clause (NESA 2024b).

#### Main (independent) clauses

An independent clause is a unit of meaning and can stand alone as a complete sentence. It contains both a subject and a finite verb. For example:

* The cavoodle jumped on the bed. (subject: ‘the cavoodle’ (singular); finite verb: ‘jumped’ [singular, past tense])

An independent clause can include one or more phrases or groups, providing additional information about the subject*,* object or verb within the sentence. For example:

* **with a noun group**:The black, curly-haired cavoodle jumped. (subject/noun group: ‘the black, curly-haired cavoodle’; finite verb: ‘jumped’ [singular, past tense])
* **with a noun group and prepositional phrase**: The black, curly-haired cavoodle jumped on my sister’s bed. (subject/noun group: ‘the black, curly-haired cavoodle’; finite verb: ‘jumped’ [singular, past tense]; prepositional phrase: ‘on my sister’s bed’)
* **with an adverbial phrase, noun group and prepositional phrase**: In the morning, the black, curly-haired cavoodle jumped on my sister’s bed. (adverbial phrase: ‘in the morning’; subject/noun group: ‘the black, curly-haired cavoodle’; finite verb: ‘jumped’ [singular, past tense]; prepositional phrase: ‘on my sister’s bed’)
* **with an adverbial phrase, noun group, verb group and prepositional phrase**: In the morning, the black, curly-haired cavoodle jumped excitedly on my sister’s bed. (adverbial phrase: ‘in the morning’; subject/noun group: ‘the black, curly-haired cavoodle’; finite verb: ‘jumped’ [singular, past tense]; verb group ‘jumped excitedly’; prepositional phrase: ‘on my sister’s bed’)

See: [Finite verbs](#_Finite_verbs); [Noun groups](#_Noun_groups); [Adverbial phrases](#_Adverbial_phrases); [Verb groups](#_Verb_groups).

### Compound sentences

A compound sentence comprises of 2 or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (NESA 2024b). Both independent clauses are equally important. When expressing ideas that are of equal importance, using a compound sentence can increase clarity and interest for the reader.

#### Compound sentences with a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS)

Coordinating conjunctions show how ideas or events in 2 independent clauses are linked. They can also be used to link words or phrases, including those of equal importance. There are 7 main coordinating conjunctions: ‘for’, ‘and’, ‘nor’, ‘but’, ‘or’, ‘yet’ and ‘so’. They can be represented by the FANBOYS acronym:

* **for**: shows cause-and-effect, or explains the reason or purpose for something (the second clause explains the first). For example:
* Charlie loves swimming, **for** he lives near the beach.
* **and**: combines ideas (the second clause gives similar information that is of equal importance). For example:
* Charlie loves swimming **and** Archie loves running.
* **nor**: provides a non-contrasting negative idea (the second clause adds a negative statement that continues or complements the negative nature of the first clause). For example:
* Archie doesn’t like swimming, **nor** does he like digging in the sand.
* **but**: shows opposition or contrast (the second clause makes a statement that contrasts to the first clause). For example:
* Charlie loves swimming, **but** he hates getting sand in his fur.
* **or**: provides choice or an alternative action (the 2 clauses offer alternative actions that the subject[s] might do). For example:
* Charlie and Archie might go swimming **or** they might go to the park.
* **yet**: presents a contrast or exception (the second clause makes a statement that contrasts or contradicts with the first clause). For example:
* Charlie and Archie were best friends, **yet** they lived so very far apart.
* **so**: shows cause-and-effect (the second clause happens because of the first clause). For example:
* Charlie waited patiently, **so** he could go to the beach and play.

##### Punctuation in a compound sentence with a coordinating conjunction

A compound sentence can be punctuated in different ways depending on the content and length of the independent clauses. The use of a comma or a semicolon are the most frequently used conventions.

A comma is used to separate the independent clauses in a compound sentence. It is placed before the coordinating conjunction. For example:

* The children walked to school early, **so** they could play with their friends. (independent clause 1: ‘the children walked to school early’; coordinating conjunction: ‘so’; independent clause 2: ‘they could play with their friends’)

[**Independent clause**] + **comma** + **coordinating conjunction** + [**independent clause**].

When the subject of the main verb is the same in both independent clauses, the comma and the subject (in the second clause) may be omitted. For example:

* Charlie loved going to the beach with William **but** didn’t like walking on the hot sand. (independent clause 1: ‘Charlie loved going to the beach with Willliam’ [subject: ‘Charlie’]; coordinating conjunction: ‘but’; independent clause 2: ‘didn’t like walking on the hot sand’ [subject is inferred: ‘Charlie/he’])

If both independent clauses are short, the comma may also be omitted. For example:

* I woke up early **and** you didn’t. (independent clause 1: ‘I woke up early’; independent clause 2: ‘you didn’t’; coordinating conjunction: ‘and’)

A **semicolon** (;) can replace the coordinating conjunction between the 2 independent clauses to create a more precise and succinct compound sentence. For example:

* The sun sets in the west; the moon rises in the east. (independent clause 1: ‘the sun sets in the west’; independent clause 2: ‘the moon rises in the east’)

[**Independent clause**] + **semicolon** + [**independent clause**].

**Note**: coordinating conjunctions are sometimes used at the **beginning of a sentence** as a **connective**. This is often a feature of spoken language but can occur in written texts as well (Derewianka 2022). Starting a sentence with a coordinating conjunction can add variety to a piece of writing, emphasise a point or create a strong connection between ideas.

#### Compound sentences with a conjunctive adverb

Some adverbs, known as **conjunctive adverbs**, connect 2 main clauses of equal importance. They compare and contrast (‘equally’, ‘alternatively’) or establish links within texts (‘subsequently’, ‘furthermore’). For example:

* She knew a lot of people in her class; **however**, she felt alone. (independent clause 1: ‘She knew a lot of people in her class’; conjunctive adverb: ‘however’; independent clause 2: ‘she felt alone’)

Conjunctive adverbs help to express the relationship between 2 independent clauses. Examples of these relationships include:

* **Compare and contrast**: equally, similarly, alternatively, likewise, on the other hand, however
* **Addition**: furthermore, in addition, also, additionally, subsequently.

Example compound sentences containing a conjunctive adverb include:

* The city bustles with activity and noise; **on the other hand**, the suburbs offer a quieter and more peaceful environment. (independent clause 1: ‘the city bustles with activity and noise; conjunctive adverb: ‘on the other hand’ [compare and contrast]; independent clause 2: ‘the suburbs offer a quieter and more peaceful environment’)
* Willow is an excellent bread maker; **furthermore**, she is skilled at baking desserts. (independent clause 1: ‘Willow is an excellent bread maker’; conjunctive adverb: ‘furthermore’ [addition]; independent clause 2: ‘she is skilled at baking desserts’)

**Note**: additional conjunctive adverb categories include **cause-and-effect** (‘therefore’, ‘consequently’, ‘accordingly’) and **emphasis** (‘certainly’, ‘definitely’).

##### Punctuating a compound sentence with a conjunctive adverb

Conjunctive adverbs must be preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma, unlike other coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS). For example:

* The weather forecast predicts rain**; however,** the sun is still shining. (independent clause 1: ‘the weather forecast predicts rain’; independent clause 2: ‘the sun is still shining’; conjunctive adverb: ‘however’)

[**Independent clause**] + **semicolon** + **conjunctive adverb** + **comma** +[**independent clause**].

See: [Semicolons in compound sentences](#_Semicolons_in_compound).

### Complex sentences

A complex sentence is formed by adding one or more **dependent** (subordinate) clauses to a **main** (independent) clause. Complex sentences contain ideas that are interrelated. They often describe circumstances and convey relationships, such as cause-and-effect, contrast or elaboration.

#### Dependent (subordinate) clauses

A **dependent** (subordinate) clause:

* provides less important information than the main (independent) clause – it is there to add to the main idea in the main clause
* is a group of words that cannot stand alone or make sense on its own
* contains a subject and a finite verb.

There are 2 main types of dependent (subordinate) clauses: **adverbial clauses** and **adjectival clauses**.

An adverbial clause begins with a **subordinating conjunction**.For example:

* complex sentence with an adverbial clause: **After** the terrible storm passed, the sun emerged from behind the clouds. (main clause: ‘the sun emerged from behind the clouds’; adverbial clause: ‘after the terrible storm passed’)

An adjectival clause begins with a **relative pronoun**. For example:

* complex sentence with an adjectival clause: The book **that** I borrowed from the library was captivating. (main clause: ‘the book was captivating’; adjectival clause: ‘that I borrowed from the library’)

**Note**: noun clauses are another type of dependent (subordinate) clause that can be found in a complex sentence. They take the place of a noun in a sentence. This can include taking the place of a subject, a direct object, the object of a preposition or a predicate noun (Van Cleave 2014). For example: ‘I know that it will be holidays soon.’ (main clause: ‘I know’; noun clause: ‘that it will be holidays soon’; the noun clause is the object of the verb ‘know’). Noun clauses are not directly referred to in the Stage 2 or Stage 3 component of the English K–10 Syllabus.

See: [Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in), [Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in).

#### Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)

An adverbial clause is a type of **dependent (subordinate) clause** that modifies a verb, adjective or another adverb. It includes words that provide information about the time, place, condition, reason, manner or purpose (NESA 2024b).

The most common type of **adverbial clause** describes (or modifies) the main verb in another clause, typically the main (independent) clause. An adverbial clause generally answers a question related to when, where, how, why or to what extent the **action** occurred.

In an adverbial clause, a **subordinating conjunction** links details and circumstances to the main (independent clause). A subordinate conjunction begins – and becomes part of – the dependent clause in a complex sentence. This is different to a compound sentence where the coordinating conjunction is typically placed between the 2 independent clauses. Commonly used subordinating conjunctions include:

* **Time – including sequence (*when*):** after, as, as soon as, before, by the time, when, whenever, until, while, finally, since, once
* **Place (**where**)**:where, wherever, everywhere
* **Manner (**how**)**:although, whereas
* **Reason/cause-and-effect (**why**)**:consequently, because, since, as, therefore, due to, so/so that, causing.

Example complex sentences containing an **adverbial clause** (and subordinating conjunctions) include:

* We went for a walk in the park **after** the rain stopped. (main clause: ‘we went for a walk in the park’; adverbial clause: ‘after the rain stopped’; verb being modified: ‘went’; subordinating conjunction: ‘after’ – time/when)
* Mohammad spoke loudly **so that** everyone could hear. (main clause: ‘Mohammad spoke loudly’; adverbial clause: ‘so that everyone could hear’; verb being modified: ‘spoke’; subordinating conjunction: ‘so that’ – manner/how)
* The cake was burnt **although** it was still quite delicious. (main clause: ‘the cake was burnt’; adverbial clause: ‘although it was still quite delicious’; verb group being modified: ‘was burnt’; subordinating conjunction: ‘although’ – manner/how)
* **While** we were waiting for the bus, I saw Nonna. (main clause: ‘I saw Nonna’; adverbial clause: ‘while we were waiting for the bus’; verb being modified: ‘saw’; subordinating conjunction: ‘while’)

##### Clause position – adverbial clauses (including comma usage)

**Positioning the adverbial clause after the main clause**

An adverbial clause (a type of dependent clause) can be positioned **after** the main (independent) clause. When an adverbial clause is positioned after the clause it is describing, a comma is not used to separate the adverbial clause from the main (independent) clause. For example:

* I love going to the beach **when** the waves are not too big. (main clause: ‘I love going to the beach’; adverbial clause: ‘when the waves are not too big’; subordinating conjunction: ‘when’)

**Main clause** + [**subordinating conjunction** + **dependent clause**].

If a sentence contains one or more extended clauses with complex information, a comma can be used to separate the adverbial (dependent) clause from the main clause. For example:

* The eager and restless children decided to venture out into the stormy weather, **as** they had been couped up inside for at least a week. (main clause: ‘the eager and restless children decided to venture out into the story weather’; adverbial clause: ‘as they had been couped up inside for at least a week’; subordinating conjunction: ‘as’)

**Main clause** + **comma** + [**subordinating conjunction** + **dependent clause**].

**Positioning the adverbial clause before the main clause**

An adverbial clause can be positioned **before** the main (independent) clause. When an adverbial clause is positioned before the main clause, a comma is used to separate the adverbial clause (subordinate clause) from the main (independent) clause. For example:

* **When** the waves are not too big, I love going to the beach. (main clause: ‘I love going to the beach’; adverbial clause: ‘when the waves are not too big’; ‘subordinating conjunction: ‘when’)

[**Subordinating conjunction** + **dependent clause**] + **comma** + **main clause**.

**Embedding an adverbial clause (embedded clause)**

An adverbial clause can also be positioned in the **middle** of a sentence to interrupt the main clause with additional information. This can be referred to as an embedded clause. For example, ‘The group of students, **although they faced many challenges**, completed the project before the deadline.’ (main clause: ‘the group of students completed the project before the deadline’; adverbial clause: ‘although they faced many challenges’; subordinating conjunction: ‘although’).

#### Non-finite verbs in adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)

Verbs can be finite or non-finite. A **non-finite verb** cannot stand alone as the main verb in a sentence. It needs another verb to make sense (Winch 2013).

Non-finite verbs can be used to create **non-finite dependent (adverbial) clauses**. A non-finite clause is a ‘stripped back’ clause (Derewianka 2022) which does not have a direct subject (such as ‘you’, ‘the fairy penguin’, ‘Anh Do’), does not show modalityor tense(such as ‘could’ or ‘was’) or contain asubordinating conjunction(such as ‘which’, ‘once’ or ‘as’). Non-finite clauses are an ‘economical’ or ‘compacted’ style of written language (Derewianka 2022). For example:

* The student took a minute or two to think about it. (main clause: 'the student took a minute or two'; non-finite (adverbial) clause: 'to think about it'; non-finite verb: 'to think')

Non-finite verbs can be created with:

* **infinitives (created with ‘to-’)**: an infinitive is the base form of a verb preceded by the word ‘to’. For example, ‘to dance’; ‘to eat’; ‘to hear’; ‘to walk’; ‘to swim’; ‘to stay’ (Winch 2013). For example:
* **To improve** her health, she decided to start exercising regularly. (main clause: ‘she decided to start exercising regularly’; non-finite clause (infinitive phrase): ‘to improve her health’; non-finite verb: ‘to improve’)
* **participles (created with ‘-ing’ and ‘-ed’)**: are formed by adding ‘-ing’ (present participle) or ‘-ed’ (past participle) to the base form of a verb. Participles can function as non-finite verbs. For example:
* **Having examined the artefacts**, researchers concluded that the civilisation thrived during the Bronze Age. (main clause: ‘researchers concluded that the civilisation thrived during the Bronze Age’; non-finite clause (participle phrase): ‘Having examined the artefacts’; non-finite verb: ‘having’)
* **Shocked by the news**, the family quickly gathered their belongings and rushed to the hospital. (main clause: ‘the family quickly gathered their belongings and rushed to the hospital’; non-finite clause (participle phrase): ‘Shocked by the news’; non-finite verb: ‘shocked’)

See: Tense, [The simple form](#_The_simple_form), [Irregular past tense verbs](#_Irregular_verbs), [Past participles](#_Past_participles).

#### Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)

An adjectival clause is a type of **dependent (subordinate) clause** that operates as an adjective to give more information to a noun or pronoun in a sentence (NESA 2024b). Adjectival clauses are found in complex sentences. They typically begin with a **relative pronoun** (which is why they are sometimes called a ‘relative clause’). The most used **relative pronouns** are ‘who’, ‘whom’, ‘whose’, ‘which’ and ‘that’.

Adjectival clauses often come directly after the **noun group** they are describing or modifying. This can be after the subject **or** the object of the main clause. Commas are used to separate the adjectival clause from the main clause. For example:

* The environmental scientists, **who** are studying the effects of global warming, are visiting Mawson’s Hut in March. (main clause: ‘the environmental scientists are visiting Mawson’s Hut in March’; noun group/subject: ‘the environmental scientists’; adjectival clause: ‘who are studying the effects of global warming’; relative pronoun: ‘who’)
* My car is parked in front of the green house, **which** belongs to my neighbour. (main clause: ‘my car is parked in front of the green house’; noun group/object: ‘the house’; adjectival clause: ‘that belongs to my neighbour’; relative pronoun: ‘which’)

Specific **relative pronouns** are used when modifying different subjects or objects in a sentence. This includes:

* the relative pronouns ‘who’ and ‘whom’ are used when referring to **people**. ‘Who’ is used when describing the subjectof a sentence, and ‘whom’ is used to describe the object. For example:
* My cousin, who lives next door, came over to play. (main clause: ‘my cousin came over to play’; adjectival clause: ‘who lives next door’; relative pronoun: ‘who’; noun group/subject: ‘my cousin’)
* I like the class captain, whom you chose. (main clause: ‘I like the class captain’; adjectival clause: ‘whom you chose’; relative pronoun: ‘whom’; noun group/object: ‘the class captain’)
* the relative pronoun ‘whose’ is used toindicate possessionor associationwith **people**. For example:
* The boy, **whose** bike was stolen, reported the incident to the police. (main clause: ‘the boy reported the incident to the police’; adjectival clause: ‘whose bike was stolen’; relative pronoun: ‘whose’; noun group: ‘the boy’)
* the relative pronouns ‘which’ and ‘that’ are used when referring to **animals**, **places** or **things**. For example:
* I caught the bus, **which** goes past the shops, to my friend’s house. (main clause: ‘I caught the bus to my friend’s house’; adjectival clause: ‘which goes past the shops’; relative pronoun: ‘which’; noun group: ‘the bus’)
* The city, **that** was filled with lights, was beautiful. (main clause: ‘the city was beautiful’; adjectival clause: ‘that was filled with lights’; relative pronoun: ‘that’; noun group: ‘the city’)

**Note**: sometimes a relative clause can begin with a relative adverb, such as ‘when’, ‘where’ or ‘why’ (Derewianka 2022; Van Cleave 2014). When these words are used as a relative adverb, they must directly follow the noun or pronoun it is describing. For example: I remember the day **when** we first met. (main clause: ‘I remember the day’; adjectival clause: ‘when we first met’: relative adverb: ‘when’; noun group: ‘the day’)

See**:** [Relative pronouns](#_Relative_pronouns)**,** [Complex sentences](#_Complex_sentences)**,** [Dependent (subordinate) clauses](#_Dependent_(subordinateing)_clauses).

##### Clause position – adjectival clauses (including comma usage)

Adjectival clauses are located after the subject or the object they are describing. This means that a sentence will not start with an adjectival clause.

An adjectival clause is separated from the rest of the sentence with a **comma** to indicate that the information is **not essential**. This includes when the clause is positioned at the end of a sentence. For example:

* My friend wore a hat, which had stripes. (main clause: ‘my friend wore a hat’; adjectival clause: ‘which had stripes’; relative pronoun: ‘which’; noun group: ‘a hat’ [the object of the main clause])

**Main clause** + **comma** + [**relative pronoun** + **dependent clause**].

An adjectival clause can be positioned in the middle of the independent clause. This is sometimes referred to as an **embedded clause**. Commas are included on either side of the adjectival clause. For example:

* My daughter, **who** sang at the concert last night, studied classical music for many years. (main clause: ‘my daughter studied classical music for many years’; adjectival clause: ‘who sang at the concert last night’; relative pronoun: ‘who’; noun group: ‘my daughter’ [the subject of the main clause])

**Main clause** + **comma** + [**relative pronoun** + **dependent clause**] + **comma** + **main clause**.

**Note**: if the information in the adjectival clause is considered **essential** to the meaning of the sentence, commas are not used to separate the clause from the main clause. For example, People **who drive too fast** should get a speeding fine. (main clause: ‘people should get a speeding fine’; adjectival clause: ‘who drive too fast’; relative pronoun: ‘who’; describing: ‘people’ [the information in the adjectival clause is essential to overall meaning])

Appositives can also provide additional details about a noun. Unlike an adjectival clause, an appositive does not contain a verb. For example, My son’s cat, **a black and white tabby**, enjoys lounging in the sun. (main clause: ‘my son’s cat enjoys lounging in the sun’; appositive: ‘a black and white tabby’. The appositive does not contain a relative pronoun or a verb.)

See: [Dependent (subordinate) clauses](#_Dependent_(subordinating)_clauses), [Embedded clauses (essential/defining adjectival clauses)](#_Embedded_clauses_(essential), [Commas to separate a dependent (subordinate) clause from a main (independent) clause](#_Commas_to_separate_1), [Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adjectival_clauses_(in), [Relative pronouns](#_Relative_pronouns), [Commas](#_Commas).

### Varying sentence lengths

Sentence lengths can be varied through the amount of detail provided in groups, phrases and clauses. Providing details about when, where and why can easily expand sentences (Hochman and Wexler 2017). Sentence length can be varied through:

* noun groups, including expanded noun groups, used to provide details about the subjects and objects in sentences. For example:
* **The sleek, silver sports car with tinted windows and racing stripes** zoomed past us. (noun group: ‘the sleek, silver sports car with tinted windows and racing stripes’)
* adverbs, adverbial phrases (including prepositional phrases) and adverbial clauses to provide details about circumstances. For example:
* **After completing his homework**, Tom finally went to bed. (adverbial clause: ‘after completing his homework’]; subordinating conjunction: ‘after’)
* appositives to provide additional details about nouns. They can create more diverse and interesting sentence structures while adding richness and depth. For example:
* Tom**, a diligent student**, finished his homework and finally went to bed. (appositive: ‘a diligent student’; describing the noun: ‘Tom’)
* non-finite clauses to add descriptive detail and vary sentence structure. Non-finite clauses provide an economical, ‘compacted’ study of writing that displays a more advanced use of clause structure. For example:
* **Exhausted from hours of studying**, Tom finally went to bed. (non-finite clause: ‘exhausted from hours of studying’)

See: [Noun groups](#_Noun_groups), [Adverbs](#_Adverbs), [Adverbial phrases](#_Adverbial_phrases), [Adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in), [Appositives](#_Appositives), [Non-finite verbs in an adverbial clause (in a complex sentence)](#_Non-finite_verbs_in).

### Varying sentence forms (structures)

Using simple, compound and complex sentences of varying lengths serves several purposes, contributing to variation and readability in writing. A variety of sentence forms (structures) can create different effects. For example, short simple sentences can create suspense in a narrative, while complex sentences can support an in-depth understanding of content and relationships in factual texts.

Varying sentence forms (structures) within a text increases reader engagement, conveys complex ideas and enhances clarity. Different sentence structures can be used for a variety of purposes. These may include:

* **simple sentences** to convey concise information or emphasise key points. For example:
* Tom finally went to bed. (independent clause/simple sentence: ‘Tom finally went to bed’)
* **compound sentences** to show relationships between ideas or actions. For example:
* Tom finally went to bed, **but** he couldn’t fall asleep. (independent clause 1: ‘Tom finally went to bed’; coordinating conjunction: ‘but’; independent clause 2: ‘he couldn’t fall asleep’)
* **complex sentences** to expand on what is happening in the main clause. For example:
* Tom finally went to bed **because** his homework was finished. (independent clause: ‘Tom finally went to bed’; dependent clause with subordinating conjunction ‘because his homework was finished’)

**Note**: compound-complex sentences are also common in written texts. They convey nuanced relationships between ideas and typically contain at least 2 independent (main) clauses and one or more dependent (subordinate) clauses. For example:

* **After** finishing his difficult homework, Tom finally went to bed, **but** he couldn’t fall asleep. (dependent clause: ‘after finishing his difficult homework’; subordinating conjunction: ‘after’; independent clause 1: ‘Tom finally went to bed’; independent clause 2: ‘he couldn’t fall asleep’; coordinating conjunction: ‘but’)

## Sentence functions

Sentence functions refer to the various roles or purposes that sentences serve within communication. Sentences can convey information, express emotions, ask questions, issue commands and perform other communicative functions. Sentences can be declarative, exclamatory, imperative or interrogative.

### Declarative sentences

Declarative sentences are statements which provide facts, evidence or details. They are the most common type of sentence. In a statement, the subject is usually followed by the verb group. Declarative sentences usually end with a full stop. For example:

* Mr Fox was the most wonderful husband of all.

### Exclamatory sentences

Exclamatory sentences are statements that express a strong emotion, such as surprise, excitement or fear. An exclamation mark is used at the end of an exclamatory sentence. For example, ‘I can’t wait to board the plane!’

Almost any type of sentence can be made into an exclamation, such as:

* **a statement** (declarative sentence), which usually ends in a full stop, can be made into an exclamation if it conveys an emotion. For example, ‘There’s a mouse in the kitchen!’
* **a command** (imperative sentence), especially when there are direct orders rather than a polite request, can be an exclamation. For example, ‘Do not move a muscle!’
* **interjections** (words that are usually exclaimed in urgency or surprise) are commonly used in texts. These can be single words and are often used in dialogue. For example, ‘“Help!” shrieked Myra.’

### Imperative sentences

An imperative sentence is a complete sentence conveying a direct command, request, invitation, warning or instruction, typically directed to an implied person (NESA 2024b). Imperative sentences can end with a full stop or an exclamation mark. For example:

* Pass the ball to your left. (instruction)
* Put your hands on your head and do not move! (direct command)

### Interrogative sentences

An interrogative sentence asks a direct or indirect question (NESA 2024b). Interrogative sentences can be used to initiate conversations, express viewpoints, or create engagement by inviting the reader to consider a particular topic or perspective. Interrogative sentences include direct questions, indirect questions and rhetorical questions.

#### Direct questions

A direct question is a sentence that asks a question and expects an answer in response. A direct question requires a question mark. Many direct questions start with interrogative pronouns, such as when, who, where, why and how, followed by an auxiliary verb (see Table 20). For example:

* What time is the meeting?

Table 21 – question frames

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interrogative pronouns | Question forming auxiliary verbs | Example sentences created with a range of interrogative pronouns and question forming auxiliary verbs |
| Who? | is … | Who is coming for dinner? |
| When? | did … | When did World War II occur? |
| Where? | can … | Where can I find information on Spain? |
| What? | would … | What would you like to know? |
| How? | will … | How will we get there? |
| Why? | might … | Why might practicing kindness be important? |

When a question does not begin with an interrogative pronoun (such as ‘who’, ‘when’ or ‘where’), the order of words is changed. The auxiliary verb comes first, followed by the subject and then the rest of the verb group. For example:

* **interrogative sentences (question)**:
* **Have** the children gone to the park? (auxiliary verb: ‘have’; subject: ‘the children’)
* **Do** the children want to go to the park? (auxiliary verb: ‘do’; subject: ‘the children’)

#### Indirect questions

An indirect question always ends in a full stop. This type of question states what has been asked, rather than directly asking a question. It does not repeat the speaker’s exact words and usually does not require an answer. An indirect question never ends in a question mark. Examples include:

* He asked me if I knew where the cat was.
* I was wondering what time the movie starts.

#### Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions are asked to provoke thought rather than require an answer (NESA 2024b). Rhetorical questions can be used to engage a reader’s interest and encourage them to consider a particular perspective. For example:

* Did you ever stop to think about the environmental impact of our daily habits?
* Do you believe technology is connecting us or driving us further apart?

### Exclamatory and interrogative sentences

Sentences beginning with ‘what’ and ‘how’ can either be an interrogative or exclamatory sentence. The only way to know which punctuation mark to use is to understand the meaning of the sentence in context. For example:

* What a beautiful sunset! (‘what’ signals an exclamatory tone, conveying the speaker’s emotional response to the sunset; an exclamation mark is required)
* What time does the sun set? (‘what’ signals a question to understand details about time; a question mark is required)

## Tense

Tense refers to time. It tells us when the process or action in a sentence is taking place. Tense refers to the form of the verb that indicates when something is happening in relation to the speaker’s time: past, present or future (NESA 2024b). Each of the tenses has a number of different forms. These are:the simple form, the continuous form, the perfect form and the perfect continuous form (see Table 21).

Table 22 – tenses in their 4 forms

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ****Form**** | Definition | Past tense | Present tense | Future tense |
| ****Simple**** | The **simple form** consists of the basic form of the action. | I/you walked.He/she/it walked.We/you/they walked. | I/you walk.He/she/it walks.We/you/they walk. | I/you will walk.He/she/it will walk.We/you/they will walk. |
| ****Continuous**** | The **continuous form** states that the action or process ‘is’, ‘was’ or ‘will be’ continuing (duration). | I was walking.He/she/it was walking.We/you/they were walking. | I am walking.He/she/it is walking.We/you/they are walking. | I/you will be walking.He/she/it will be walking.We/you/they will be walking. |
| ****Perfect**** | The **perfect form** states that the event, action or process ‘is, ‘was’ or ‘will be’ completed (completion). | I/you had walked.He/she/it had walked.We/you/they had walked. | I/you have walked.He/she/it has walked.We/you/they have walked. | I/you will have walked.He/she/it will have walked.We/you/they will have walked. |
| ****Perfect continuous**** | The **perfect continuous form** combines the perfect and continuous forms to state both the duration and completion of the action. | I/you had been walking.He/she/it had been walking.We/you/they had been walking. | I/you have been walking.He/she/it has been walking.We/you/they have been walking. | I/you will have been walking.He/she/it will have been walking.We/you/they will have been walking. |

### The simple form

The simple form of tense refers to the **base form** of the verb that **describes an action or state**. It is the most straightforward way of expressing when an action occurs, such as: ‘walk’, ‘cry’, ‘smile’, ‘sing’.

The conventions for simple tense change slightly when describing present, past and future events:

* **simple past tense**: the action has already taken place. When writing in past tense, ‘-ed’ is typically added to the base form of the verb. For example:
* We **walked** to school. (subject: ‘we’; base form of the verb + ‘-ed’: ‘walked’)
* **simple present tense**: the action is taking place now. When writing in present tense, use the base form of the verb; however, if the subject of the verb is ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘it’, add an ‘-s’ (or ‘-es’) to the base form of the verb. For example:
* I **walk** to school. (subject: ‘I’; base form of the verb: ‘walk’)
* She **walks** to school. (subject: 'she’; base form of the verb + ‘-s’: ‘walks’)
* **simple future tense**: the action will take place at a point of time in the future. When writing in future tense, use the auxiliary verb ‘will’, followed by the base form of the verb. For example:
* You **will walk** to school. (subject: ‘you’; ‘will’ + base form: ‘will walk’)
* They **will walk** to school. [subject: ‘they’; ‘will’ + base form: ‘will walk’)

### The continuous form

The continuous form of tense indicates an action that is **ongoing or in progress at a specific point in time**. It refers to duration. In the continuous form:

* **past continuous tense**: refers to an action that was ongoing at a particular moment in the past. This tense is formed by combining the simple past tense of the verb ‘to be’ (was, were) with the present participle (typically the base form ending in ‘-ing’) of the main verb. This creates a verb known as a present participle. For example:
* The bears **were hibernating**. (subject: ‘the bears’; auxiliary verb: ‘were’; present participle: ‘hibernating’. This sentence illustrates an action that was ongoing in the past, specifically the hibernation of the bears.)
* **present continuous tense:** refers to ongoing actions or situations happening in the present moment. The emphasis is on the ongoing nature of an action or situation in the present. This tense is formed by combining the simple present tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to be’ (am, is, are) with the present participle of the main verb (typically the base form ending in ‘-ing’). For example:
* The bears **are hibernating**. (subject: ‘the bears’; auxiliary verb: ‘are’; present participle: ‘hibernating’. This represents an ongoing process, as bears are currently in the process of hibernating.)
* **future continuous tense**: refers to actions or events that will be ongoing at a specific point in the future. It emphasises the continuous nature of an action that is expected to occur. This tense is formed by using the simple future tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to be’ (will be), along with the present participle of the main verb (typically the base form ending in ‘-ing’). For example:
* The bears **will be** hibernating. (subject: ‘the bears’; auxiliary verb: ‘will be’; present participle: 'hibernating’. This sentence indicates that in the future, bears will be in the process of hibernating.)

### The perfect form

The perfect form of tense indicates that **the event**, **action or process ‘is’**, **‘was’ or ‘will be’ completed in different time periods**. It emphasises completion. In the perfect form:

* **past perfect tense**: refers to actions that were completed before a particular moment in the past. It is formed by using the simple past tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to have’ (had), followed by the past participle of the main verb (typically the base form ending in ‘-ed’ or ‘-en’). For example:
* He **had finished** his homework. (subject: ‘he’; auxiliary verb: ‘had’; past participle: ‘finished’. This sentence indicates that he completed his homework before a specific point in the past.)
* **present perfect tense:** refers to actions that have been completed before the present moment. It is formed by using the simple present tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to have’ (have/has) followed by the past participle of the main verb. For example:
* He **has finished** his homework. (subject: ‘he’; auxiliary verb: ‘has’; past participle: ‘finished’. This sentence indicates that he completed his homework before the present.)
* **future perfect tense:** refers to actions that have been completed before a specific moment in the future. It is formed by using the simple future tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to have’ (will have), followed by the past participle of the main verb. For example:
* He **will have finished** his homework. (subject: ‘he’; auxiliary verb: ‘will have’; past participle: ‘finished’. This sentence indicates that he completed his homework before a specific time in the future.)

### The perfect continuous form

The perfect continuous form combines the perfect and continuous forms to describe **ongoing events**, **actions or processes that occur over a period of time**. It uses the verbs ‘to have’ and ‘to be’ with the present participle. It includes both duration and completion. In the perfect continuous form:

* **past perfect continuous tense**: refers to actions that were ongoing or completed before a particular moment in the past. It is formed by using the simple past tense of the auxiliary verbs ‘to have’ (had) and the past participle of the auxiliary verb ‘to be’ (been), followed by the present participle of the main verb (base verb typically ending with -ing). For example:
* Raif **had been planting tulips.** (subject: ‘Raif’; auxiliary verb: ‘had been’; present participle: ‘planting’. This sentence indicates that he was continuously involved in planting tulips and this activity was completed before a specific point in the past.)
* **present perfect continuous tense: refers to actions that started in the past, are continuing in the present moment and may still be ongoing. It is formed by using the simple present tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to have’ (have/has) and the past participle of the auxiliary verb ‘to be’ (been’), followed by the present participle of the main verb. For example:**
* Raif **has been planting** tulips. (subject: ‘Raif’; auxiliary verb: ‘has been’; present participle: ‘planting’. This sentence indicates that he started planting and is continuing to plant in the present.)
* **future perfect continuous tense: refers to actions that have been completed before a specific moment in the future. It is formed by using the simple future tense of the auxiliary verb ‘to have’ (will have), the past participle of the auxiliary verb ‘to be’ (been’), followed by the present participle of the main verb. For example:**
* Raif **will have been planting** tulips. (subject: ‘Raif’; auxiliary verbs: ‘will have been’; present participle: ‘planting’. This sentence indicates that he started planting and will continue to plant until a specific time in the future.)

### Timeless present tense

**Timeless present tense** describes events using present tense, regardless of when they occurred. It refers to actions that do not change. Even though these events may have occurred in the past, the use of present tense gives them a timeless quality allowing speakers and writers to emphasise the ongoing, unchanging nature of actions. Timeless present tense is frequently used in informative texts. For example:

* The sun **rises** in the morning. (‘rises’: general fact about the sun’s daily movement)
* Water **boils** when it gets hot. (‘boils’: expresses a timeless relationship between heat and water boiling)

### Irregular past tense verbs

Many well-known verbs do not take the standard ending ‘-ed’ (or ‘-d’ if the base form already ends in ‘-e’) when they are used in the **past tense** or as **past participles**. Some irregular verbs look very different from the base form as they usually take on different endings, and the vowel of the verb often changes. For example:

* I **drove** to the shops. (base verb: ‘drive’; irregular form: ‘drove’)
* I **swam** in the river. (base verb: ‘swim’; irregular form: ‘swam’)
* I **wrote** my name. (base verb: ‘write’; irregular form: ‘wrote’)

Most common irregular verbs do not follow a distinct pattern and need to be learned. Some common irregular verbs include:

* **base form:** be, become, choose, have, know, ride, shake, swim, wear, write
* **simple past tense**:was/were, became, chose, had, knew, rode, shaken, swam, wore, wrote
* **past participle**:been, become, chosen, had, known, ridden, shook, swum, worn, written.

**Note**: the simple past tense of regular verbs is usually formed by adding the ending ‘-ed’ (or ‘-d’ if the base form already ends in ‘-e’) to the base form of a verb. For example: walk/walked; jump/jumped.

See: [Tense](#_Tense); [Verbs](#_Verbs).

### Past participles

Some verbs need anauxiliary **verb**, such as ‘have’ and ‘be’ to form their tense. These are called **past participles**. For example:

* I *have* **eaten** my lunch. (auxiliary verb: ‘have’, past participle: ‘eaten’)
* She *has* **gone**. (auxiliary verb: ‘has’, past participle: ‘gone’)
* The assignment *has been* **given** to the teacher. (auxiliary verb: ‘has been’, past participle: ‘given’)

Frequently used auxiliary verbs that signal past participles include ‘been’, ‘have’ and ‘had’, as well as the past tense forms ‘were’ and ‘was’ (see Table 22).

Table 23 – past participles

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ‘Base’ verb (infinitive) | Irregular past tense verb | Past participle (needs auxiliary verb) |
| do | **did (**We *did* the laundry.) | **done (**We *have* **done** the laundry.) |
| drive | **drove (**I *drove* the car.) | **driven (**I *have* **driven** the car.) |
| go | **went (**She *went* to the shop.) | **gone (**She *has* **gone** to the shop.) |
| ring | **rang (**I *rang* the bell.) | **rung (**I *have* **rung** the bell.) |
| take | **took (**I *took* the ball with me.) | **taken (**I *have* **taken** the ball with me.) |
| write | **wrote (**I *wrote* a letter.) | **written (**I *have* **written** a letter.) |
| give | **gave (**She *gave* him a flower.) | **given (**She *has* **given** him a flower.) |

### Shifting between past, present and future tense

The control of tense involves a deliberate shift between past, present and future tense across a text according to purpose.

* An information text can shift between tense to effectively convey the historical context, present-day relevance and future implications of the subject matter being discussed. For example:
* In the past, recycling was **[simple past tense]** primarily seen as a way to manage waste and conserve resources. Today, recycling is **[simple present tense]** recognised as a fundamental pillar of sustainable living, with communities worldwide embracing recycling programs and initiatives. As technology advances **[continuous present tense],** recycling methods will become **[simple future tense]** more efficient and innovative, paving the way for a greener future.
* A narrative text can shift between tense to indicate changes in time, perspective or narrative focus. For example:
* As she walks through the forest, Jane reminisces about her childhood adventures **[****simple present tense]**. What fun she had playing and swimming at the beach with her brothers. She would walk around the rock pools for hours, looking for hidden treasures – mostly shells – she could take home to admire **[simple past tense]**. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Jane hears a noise behind her **[simple present tense]**.

See: [Tense](#_Tense).

## Verbs

A verb is a doing, being or having word (Winch 2013). Verbs are words that describe what is happening. Different types of verbs include action, thinking, feeling, saying and relating (NESA 2024b).

### Types of verbs

#### Action verbs

Action verbs refer to the actual physical things we do (‘jump’, ‘eat’, ‘play’). They convey what someone or something does by depicting activities or processes – the ‘doings’ and ‘happenings’ in various contexts. For example:

* They **danced** all night.

Action verbs are used in most texts, with considered differences based on the context and purpose of what is being written (Derewianka 2022). For example:

* **procedures** use actions in the form of commands. For example:
* **Lay** the bookshelf on a flat surface.
* **Follow** the assembly instructions step-by-step.
* **Tighten** the screws securely as you go.
* **narratives** use creative examples of action verbs to describe ‘action sequences’. For example:
* Megan **sprinted** through the forest. Her heart **pounded** with each stride.
* Quietly, I **snuck** out of my room and **tiptoed** into my big sister’s bed.
* **recounts** and texts, such as historical accounts, use action verbs to construct a series of events. For example:
* We **clambered** over the utility course to finally **reach** the flying fox. Step-by-step, we **climbed** up the platform and with our knees **shaking**, we **waited** for our turn.
* Cyclone Tracey **devastated** Darwin on 24 December 1974 with winds that **pulverised** buildings, **leaving** the city completely **obliterated**.

**Note**: it is important to remember that the choice of more expressive action verbs makes an action more vivid and precise. For example: ‘Harry **ran** out the door’ compared to ‘Harry **dashed** out the door.’ (‘dashed’ is a vivid verb choice that conveys a sense of speed and urgency, enhancing the description of Harry's action.)

#### Saying verbs

Saying verbs refer to a spoken action or verbal expression. They explain how something is spoken (‘tell’, ‘say’, ‘whisper’, ‘said’, ‘explain’). For example:

* He **whispered** to his sister.

Saying verbs are most frequently found in narratives with dialogue. In this context, they provide insight into how characters speak and interact with others.

As a general guideline, to test if a verb is a ‘saying verb’, ask whether it can be followed by words such as ‘that’, ‘whether’ or ‘what’ (Derewianka 2022). For example:

* Jaxx **stammered** that he didn’t want to join in with the others. (saying verb: ‘stammered’)
* Mrs Potter **inquired** whether the council was finished with the road repairs on Edmond Street. (saying verb: ‘inquired’)
* Sai and Amr **explained** whatthey were thinking. (saying verb: ‘explained’)

#### Sensing verbs (including thinking, feeling and perceiving verbs)

Sensing verbs are verbs related to our 5 senses. They are often used to describe what humans, or non-humans given human-like qualities, think, feel, desireand perceive. Sensing verbs include **thinking**, **feeling** and **perceiving** verbs. For example:

* **thinking verbs**: wonder, remember, forget, reflect, imagine, believe, understand
* **feeling verbs**: love, like, fear, enjoy, dislike, appreciate, regret
* **perceiving verbs**: see, observe, notice, smell, hear, taste, explore, sense.
* As a general guideline, to test if a verb is a ‘sensing verb’, ask whether it can be followed by the word ‘that’. Sensing verbs are usually written in simple tense (Derewianka 2022). For example:
* The highly valued team members **understood** thatthe deadline was fast approaching and they needed to complete the project promptly. (sensing verb: ‘understood’)

Sensing verbs are used to express processes of *cognition*, including:

* **thinking verbs** which express what someone is thinking (‘know’, ‘think’, ‘believe’, ‘imagine’, ‘wonder’). For example:
* She **forgot** his name.
* **feeling verbs** which express what someone is feeling (‘calm’, ‘hate’, ‘admire’, ‘prefer’). These verbs convey a range of emotions. For example:
* Kerry **likes** baked beans.
* **perceiving verbs** whichexpress actions of perception and involve the use of the senses (seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling). For example:
* I carefully **observed** the intricate patterns of the butterfly's wings.

#### Relating (linking) verbs

Relating verbs do not show an action, thought or feeling. Rather, they link the subject of the sentence to a word or phrase that describes or classifies the subject. They help provide more details about the subject or define the subject. The most common relating verbs are ‘be’ and ‘have’ and variations on these (Derewianka 2022).

* **‘Being’ verbs**: is, am, are, were, was, be, being, been.
* **‘Having’ verbs**: has, have, had.

Relating verbs link the subject of a clause to either a **noun** or **noun group**, or an **adjective** or **adjectival phrase**. For example:

* A cow **is** a mammal. (subject: ‘a cow’; relating verb: ‘is’; linking to: a *noun* group ‘a mammal’ [classifying])
* The cow **was** brown. (subject: ‘the cow’; relating verb: ‘was’; linking to: an *adjective*: ‘brown’ [describing])
* Some cows **have** horns. (subject: ‘some cows’; relating verb: ‘have’; linking to: a noun ‘horns’ [object])

See: [Nouns](#_Nouns), [Noun groups](#_Noun_groups), [Adjectives](#_Adjectives), [Adjectival clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Adverbial_clauses_(in), [Auxiliary verbs](#_Auxiliary_verbs).

#### Finite verbs

A finite verb is a verb that has a subject, shows tense and can stand alone as the main verb in a sentence. A finite verb is important in a sentence and clause because it indicates the ‘action’ or ‘state’ being performed by the subject and helps convey the time frame in which the action occurs (tense). For example:

* The rabbit **bounded** across the field. (subject: ‘the rabbit’ (singular); finite verb: ‘bounded’ [singular, past tense])
* Owls **are** nocturnal creatures. (subject: ‘owls’ (plural); finite verb: ‘are’ [plural, present tense])

See: [Sentence forms (structures)](#_Sentence_forms_(structures)), [Non-finite verbs in adverbial clauses (in a complex sentence)](#_Non-finite_verbs_in), [Tense](#_Tense), [Subject–verb agreement (also known as noun–verb agreement)](#_Subject-verb_agreement_(also).

### Verb groups

A verb group (sometimes known as a ‘verb phrase’) is a word or group of words built around a verb. It is sometimes referred to as a complex verb or a compound verb (NESA 2024b). Verb groups consist of a main verb and other elements that modify or complete the meaning of the main verb. For example:

* Wendy and Pearl **walked** to the shops. (verb: ‘walked’)
* Chelsea **went swimming**. (verb group: ‘went swimming’; ‘went’ is the main verb and ‘swimming’ functions as a *complement* which describes the action in more detail)
* Mavis **stopped and waited**. (verb group: ‘stopped and waited’. Both ‘stopped’ and ‘waited’ are main verbs, forming a *compound verb group*. The conjunction ‘and’ connects the 2 actions.)

**Note**: compound verbs, with one subject and 2 actions, in the context of [compound sentences](#_Compound_sentences) are also referred to as a verb group.

### Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs (also known as ‘helping verbs’) can be part of a **verb group**. They are positioned beforethe main verb and are important because they give a clear sense of whensomething is occurring (tense). For example:

* They **were sick**. (main verb: ‘sick’; auxiliary verb [past tense]: ‘were’)

#### Types of auxiliary verbs

There are different types of auxiliary verbs.

##### Relating verbs as auxiliary verbs

Relating verbs can be used as auxiliary verbs in a **verb group**. They are used to connect the subjectto themain verb (compared to their use as a relating verb to connect a nounor noun group, or an adjective or adjectival phrase). Relating verbs that can be used as auxiliary verbs include:

* **relating verb as auxiliary verbs**: is, am, are, were, was, be, being, been, has, have, had.

Example sentences containing an **auxiliary verb** include:

* Alyce **is** running. (subject: ‘Alyce’; auxiliary verb: ‘is’; main verb: ‘running’; tense: present).
* Alyce **has** blonde hair. (subject: ‘Alyce’; relating verb ‘has’; connecting to noun group: ‘blonde hair’)

##### Forming questions with auxiliary verbs

Some auxiliary verbs can switch places with their subjects to **form questions**. These include:

* **question forming auxiliary verbs**: do, does, did.

Example sentences containing a **question forming auxiliary verb** include:

* **Did** you go running? (subject: ‘you’; auxiliary verb: ‘did’; main verb: ‘go running’)
* **Does** global warming impact on the ocean heights? (subject: ‘global warming’; auxiliary verb: ‘does’; main verb: ‘impact’)

See: [Interrogative sentences](#_Interrogative_sentences).

##### Modal auxiliary verbs

Modal auxiliary verbs describe the likelihoodor certaintybeing expressed. Relating verbs that can be used as **modal auxiliary verbs** include:

* **modal auxiliary verbs**: shall, will, should, would, may, might, must, can, could.

Example sentences containing a **modal auxiliary verb** include:

* Alistair **will** excel in his exams. (subject: ‘Alistair’; modal auxiliary verb: ‘will’; main verb: ‘excel’)
* Everyone **must** take responsibility for protecting the environment by reducing their carbon footprint. (subject: ‘everyone’; modal auxiliary verb: ‘must’; main verb: ‘take responsibility’)

##### Forming negative sentences with auxiliary verbs

Some auxiliary verbs can be made **negative**. To form a negative, the word ‘not’ can be placed between the auxiliary verb and the main verb. For example:

* They **will not** attend the student council meeting. (subject: ‘they’: negative auxiliary verb ’will not’; main verb: ‘attend’).

See: Modality, [Modal verbs](#_Modal_verbs).

**Note**: negatives can be contracted. For example, will not/won’t, did not/didn’t, is not/isn’t.

### Multi-word verb groups – phrasal verbs

Sometimes, verbs are combined with an adverb or preposition, or both an adverb and a preposition to form a single unit of meaning (‘sit down’, ‘get out’, ‘wake up’, ‘turn up’, ‘give in’, ‘look up’, ‘run away’). These multi-word verb groups are called **phrasal verbs**. They are typically used in informal speech. For example:

* Can you **look up** the word in the dictionary? (phrasal verb: ‘look up’ [meaning: find])
* She always **puts off** doing her homework until the last minute. (phrasal verb: ‘puts off’ [meaning: procrastinates])
* We need to **clean up** the kitchen before guests arrive. (phrasal verb: ‘clean up’ [meaning: tidy])

### Verb sentence openers

Verb sentence openers are used in **imperative sentences** that give a request, instructionor command. There is no subject in a sentence that begins with a verb, as the subject is often implied to be ‘you’ (the person reading the sentence). For example:

* **Mix** the ingredients thoroughly to create a smooth batter.
* **Fold** the laundry carefully and place it in the drawer.

See: [Imperative sentences](#_Imperative_sentences).

### Verb choices

Writers often intentionally choose verbs and/or verb groups to ensure their writing is precise and detailed. This involves selecting words that accurately convey the intended action and provide specific information about how the action occurs.

#### To achieve precision

Precise verb choices help to convey the intended action *or* meaning clearly to the reader. When verbs are specific, and accurately depict the action, it reduces the likelihood of ambiguity or misunderstanding. For example:

* ‘The giant **exploded** in laughter’, instead of, ‘The giant **laughed** loudly’ (NESA 2022). (precise verb: ‘exploded’ [gives more information about the degree of the giant’s laughter])
* ‘The dog **trotted** across the street’, instead of, ‘The dog **walked** across the street’. (precise verb: ‘trotted’ [implies a specific type of movement that may also indicate emotion])
* ‘She **edged** towards the cliff’, instead of, ‘She **walked slowly and cautiously** towards the edge of the cliff’. (precise verb: ‘edged’ [replaces the combination of 2 adverbs ‘slowly’ and ‘cautiously’])

#### To add detail

**Descriptive verbs** and **verb groups** allow the reader to paint a vivid picture in their mind. By adding detail to their writing, writers can create an engaging text. For example:

* ‘He **leisurely strolled** to the park’, instead of, ‘He **went** to the park’. (detailed verb group: ‘leisurely strolled’ [gives more information about howthe subject walked])
* ‘She **skilfully prepared** dinner, **chopping** vegetables with precision’ instead of, ‘She **cooked** dinner’. (detailed verb group: ‘skilfully prepared’ and additional verb ‘chopping’ [gives more information about howthe subject cooked])
* ‘He aspired **to climb** the mountain’, instead of ‘He **climbed** the mountain’. (infinitive verb: ‘to climb’ [to convey potential action])

# References

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