AS/A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

UNDERSTANDING...

THE LANGUAGE LEVELS

**Practical Approaches to the Language Levels**

Your teacher will have introduced you to a wide variety of different language features and terminology, but there is a lot you can do to remind yourself regularly of these and of the effects they create.

**Language Levels Activities:**

1. Choose a text you have come across today: this could be a news story, a Tweet, a flyer through the post. Apply the colour-coded language levels on the next page to investigate the effects of linguistic choices made by the writers. The grid is differentiated to reflect the relative levels of difficulty of the components listed in the framework.
2. Use the [WJEC Online Examination Review](https://oer.wjec.co.uk/) material to assess the quality of the candidate responses using the language levels grid.
3. Highlight relevant and irrelevant aspects of responses and then improve these exemplars in the light of this your assessment.
4. Produce colour-coded grids of terminology of your own understanding of the language levels – make sure you target your learning on terms and features you are less certain about.
5. Test yourself regularly on the glossary of terms at the end of this booklet.

|  |
| --- |
| **OVERVIEW**: Genre, Audience, Purpose, Level of formality, Register, Key attitudes |
| **LEXIS** |
| **Word classes:** Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, Pronoun, Determiner  **KEY**  Basic  Increasingly competent  Apt and precise  Collocation  Colloquialism  Cliché  Pre-modification, Post-modification, Apposition, Complement  Pun  Lexical field |
| **SEMANTICS** |
| Semantic field  Connotation / Denotation  Euphemism / Dysphemism  Metaphor, Personification, Simile |
| **GRAMMAR** |
| Minor sentence, Simple sentence, Compound sentence, Complex sentence  Fronted adverbial  Fronted conjunction  Parallel pattern  Parenthetical structure  Unusual syntax  Imperative sentence  Declarative sentence |
| **PRAGMATICS** |
| Cultural reference  Humour / Sarcasm  Rhetoric / Hypophora  Hyperbole  Direct address  Tripling  Syndetic / Asyndetic lists |

**Activity 1**: Read the following sentences.

1. \*A the tree broken is.
2. \*The baby sleeping cot in.
3. \*A jumps horse under the fence because too much there is noise.
4. \*Ball kicks boy the.
5. \*Students has writed a essay.
6. \*Some dogs happy are running above the beach.

Can you work out what is wrong?

1. Rewrite the sentences so that they make sense.
2. Try to describe the problems in each case.

We can recognise when sentences are not well-formed because we have an inbuilt knowledge of grammar. This knowledge helps us construct meaningful sentences and identify why the examples above are unacceptable.

Learning about the grammar of a language formalises our instinctive knowledge—it gives us the terminology to describe language in use precisely and the ability to communicate more effectively.

Definitions of ‘language’

**Noun**

**language** ‎([*countable*](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Glossary#countable)*and*[*uncountable*](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Glossary#uncountable), *plural* [**languages**](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/languages#English))

1. ([*countable*](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Glossary#countable)) A [body](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/body) of [words](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/word), and set of methods of combining them (called a [grammar](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/grammar)), understood by a [community](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/community) and used as a form of [communication](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/communication).  (*Wiktionary*)

language, *n.* (and *int.*)

**Pronunciation:**  Brit. /ˈlaŋɡwɪdʒ/, U.S. /ˈlæŋɡwɪdʒ/

**Etymology:**  < Anglo-Norman *langage*, *language*, *langwage*, *laungage*, *launguage* and Old French ...  [(Show More)](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/105582?rskey=YuUy7V&result=1&isAdvanced=false)

**1.**

**a.** The system of spoken or written communication used by a particular country, people, community, etc., typically consisting of words used within a regular grammatical and syntactic structure. Also *fig.*  (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

**Identifying Word Class**

**Activity 2:** Identify the word class of the highlighted word in each context provided below. Answers are provided at the end of this activity, but don’t cheat!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EXAMPLE** | **WORD CLASS** |
| **The** dog ran down our road. |  |
| The old apple **tree** fell over in the storm. |  |
| The **book** was on the table. |  |
| Can you **book** the table for tonight? |  |
| The **daily** service to London was suspended. |  |
| You should eat ten portions of fruit and veg **daily**. |  |
| I’ve thrown the **daily** in the bin. |  |
| I want **more** cake. |  |
| I want **more**. |  |
| The sky is **more** cloudy than yesterday. |  |
| Romantic **love** is central to all romcom plots. |  |
| We **love** Nando’s chicken. |  |
| C’mon **love**, we’re going to be late! |  |
| They did their **shopping** yesterday. |  |
| We were **shopping** at Tesco for two hours. |  |
| I know **these** people. |  |
| **These** are definitely the best. |  |
| That was the **fast** train to London. |  |
| He ran as **fast** as he could. |  |
| I can **fast** for two days and eat well for five. |  |
| The **fast** begins tomorrow morning. |  |
| I **like** cake and I’m **like** “stay back it’s mine.” |  |
| i got 1 **like** |  |
| The tree is **like** a withered skeleton. |  |
| So how do you, **like**, get there? |  |
| It seemed **like** you didn’t care. |  |
| She asked me **whether** I was hungry (or not). |  |
| I can make the **best** pizza in the world. |  |
| What she liked **best** was to sit in the sun. |  |
| The **best** is yet to come. |  |
| I bet I can **best** you any day. |  |
| The grazing **herd** looked content. |  |
| I’m going to **herd** them towards the gate. |  |
| You **disappointed** me yesterday. |  |
| The **disappointed** child began to howl. |  |
| The government has **disappointed** voters. |  |

How many did you get right? If there are any terms that you are unsure of, check them in the Glossary at the end of this booklet.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EXAMPLE** | **WORD CLASS** |
| **The** dog ran down our road. | DETERMINER |
| The old apple **tree** fell over in the storm. | NOUN |
| The **book** was on the table. | NOUN |
| Can you **book** the table for tonight? | VERB (BASE FORM) |
| The **daily** service to London was suspended. | ADJECTIVE |
| You should eat ten portions of fruit and veg **daily**. | ADVERB |
| I’ve thrown the **daily** in the bin. | NOUN |
| I want **more** cake. | DETERMINER |
| I want **more**. | PRONOUN |
| The sky is **more** cloudy than yesterday. | ADVERB |
| Romantic **love** is central to all romcom plots. | NOUN |
| We **love** Nando’s chicken. | VERB (PRESENT TENSE) |
| C’mon **love**, we’re going to be late! | VOCATIVE |
| They did their **shopping** yesterday. | NOUN |
| We were **shopping** at Tesco for two hours. | VERB (PRESENT/-*ING* PARTICIPLE) |
| I know **these** people. | DETERMINER |
| **These** are definitely the best. | PRONOUN |
| That was the **fast** train to London. | ADJECTIVE |
| He ran as **fast** as he could. | ADVERB |
| I can **fast** for two days and eat well for five. | VERB (BASE FORM) |
| The **fast** begins tomorrow morning. | NOUN |
| I **like** cake and I’m **like** “stay back it’s mine.” | 1: VERB (PRESENT TENSE); 2. QUOTATIVE |
| i got 1 **like** | NOUN |
| The tree is **like** a withered skeleton. | PREPOSITION |
| So how do you, **like**, get there? | FILLER |
| It seemed **like** you didn’t care. | SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION (INFORMAL) |
| She asked me **whether** I was hungry (or not). | SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION |
| I can make the **best** pizza in the world. | ADJECTIVE |
| What she liked **best** was to sit in the sun. | ADVERB |
| The **best** is yet to come. | NOUN |
| I bet I can **best** you any day. | VERB (BASE FORM) |
| The grazing **herd** looked content. | NOUN |
| I’m going to **herd** them towards the gate. | VERB (INFINITIVE) |
| You **disappointed** me yesterday. | VERB (PAST TENSE) |
| The **disappointed** child began to howl. | ADJECTIVE (PAST/-*ED* PARTICIPLE) |
| The government has **disappointed** voters. | VERB or ADJECTIVE (PAST/-*ED* PARTICIPLE) |

**Investigating data: Testing your knowledge of the language levels**

**Activity 3**: The corpus of data on the next two pages consists of ten headlines taken from a range of daily newspapers published on 13 January 2014.

The first sentence of each report is included as context to make the focus of the news story clear, but just use the headlines in your answers to the following questions:

(a) Identify and write down **three** lexical or semantic effects used in the headlines that are typical of newspaper reporting. Describe each one using accurate terminology and briefly explain the effects created in each case.

(b) Identify and write down **two** different phonological techniques used in the headlines. Describe each one using accurate terminology and briefly explain the effects created in each case.

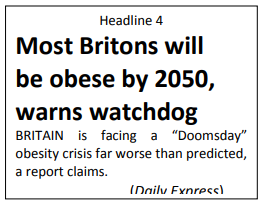
(c) Identify and write down **five** different grammatical structures used in the headlines. Describe each one using accurate terminology and briefly explain the effects created in each case.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Textual example of lexis/semantics** | **Terminology to describe it** | **Effect it creates** |
| **1.** |  |  |
| **2.** |  |  |
| **3.** |  |  |
| **Textual example of phonological techniques** | **Terminology to describe it** | **Effect it creates** |
| **1.** |  |  |
| **2.** |  |  |
| **Textual example of grammatical structures** | **Terminology to describe it** | **Effect it creates** |
| **1.** |  |  |
| **2.** |  |  |
| **3.** |  |  |
| **4.** |  |  |
| **5.** |  |  |



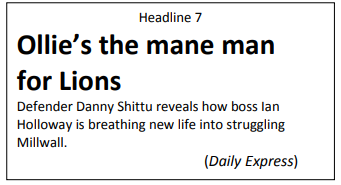


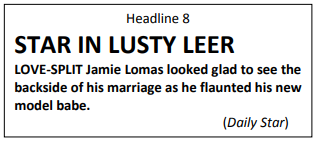
















Here are some examples of the responses you could have given. Check with your teacher if you mentioned an example that is not included in this list or any you are unsure about.

**a) lexical and semantic effects**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Example** | **Terminology** | **Effect** |
| sin/bishop; mane/Lions; Spies/licence | Lexical sets | Linked to topic of report |
| mane (non-standard spelling) man | Collocations | Creates a colloquial, conversational tone |
| licence to speed | Disrupted collocations | Create humour through shared knowledge |
| op | Clipping | Suggests familiarity with the  topic/shared knowledge; practical—saves space |
| mane man | Word play/pun | Creates humour |
| Kym; Ollie | Terms of address | Informal, suggesting familiarity |
| cattle/ferrets | Juxtaposition | Creates humour |
| OMG | Initialism | Appealing to a particular  audience with shared knowledge |
| lusty | informal language | Typical tabloid emphasis on celebrity  and sexuality |

**b) phonological techniques**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Example** | **Terminology** | **Effect** |
| warns watchdog; mane man; lusty leer | Alliteration | Emphatic; light-hearted tone; eye-catching |
| Spies/licence | Assonance / Rhyme | Light-hearted tone for trivial news  item |
| Kym’n; they’re; Ollie’s | Elision | Conversational tone |
| spies/licence/speed | Sibilance | Emphatic |
| mane = main | Homophone | Humorous |
| Kym (come) | Vowel substitution | Humorous |

**c) grammatical structures**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Example** | **Terminology** | **Effect** |
| Headline 3  Headline 4  Headline 2  Headline 9 | Verb phrases  (present tense)  (future time)  (progressive aspect)  (passive voice) | Present tense = sense of immediacy/ currency  Future time = indication of imminent change  Progressive = reference to ongoing action  Passive voice = subject (i.e. governmental body) not important |
| Headlines 3, 7 | Simple sentence | Straightforward, accessible – effective hook to main story |
| Headline 1 | Compound sentence | Two short coordinated simple clauses with monosyllabic lexis, creating a playful style |
| Headlines 9, 10 | Complex sentence | Still short, but contain embedded subordinate clauses providing additional information |
| Headline 1 | Vocative | Informal, conversational; creates  a sense of direct engagement |
| Headlines 4, 5 | Quoted clause + quoting clause | Provides authority/source for claims made in the headlines |
| Headlines 6, 8 | Elliptical sentence | Humorous: implicit form of engagement |
| Headlines 1, 2 | Grammatical mood (imperative) | Conversational, informal style |

**Activity 4**:

a. Identify any distinctive use of lexical sets or semantic fields in the texts below. Describe the features you find using appropriate terminology in the table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TEXT** | **EXAMPLES OF LEXICAL / SEMANTIC FIELD** | **TERMINOLOGY TO DESCRIBE THE FEATURE** |
| 1 |  |  |
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| 2 |  |  |
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**Key for transcripts**

(.) micropause

(2) timed pause (in seconds)

{*laughter*} paralinguistic features

**me** emphatic stress

🡩despite🡩 raised pitch

🡫yes🡫 lowered pitch

GOOD increased volume

accel speech that is getting faster (underlined)

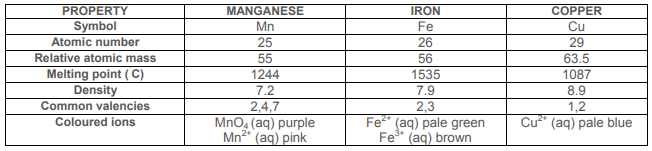
**Text 1 Public information film voiceover (2003)**

shopping on the internet’s just like normal shopping (2) it can save you **time** and 🡩money🡩 too (3) but make sure **you** get a **real** address (.) not just a **web** address (1) a **real** phone number not just a mobile (.) 🡩**and**🡩 print a **record** of what you’ve ordered (3) if you don’t know who’s for real on the net (.) you might end up with virtually (1) **nothing**

**Text 2 GCSE Chemistry text book**

**What is special about transition metals?**

Transition metals have special qualities. They all have a high melting point, they occur low in the Reactivity Series, they are hard and dense, and they can form more than one kind of ion. Many of them form coloured compounds and they function as catalysts.



**Text 3 Estate agents’ details (2015)**

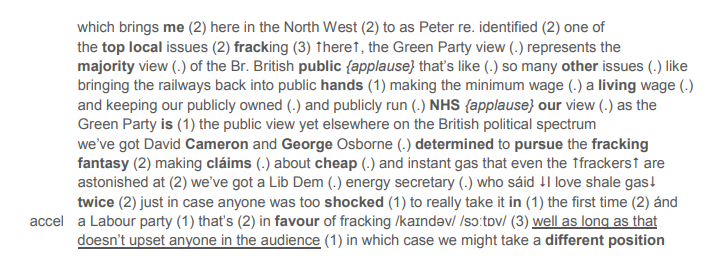
This is a fantastic opportunity to acquire a superb property that is full of traditional charm and character yet has been fully modernised and upgraded to a high standard. Ty’n-y-Coed is a four bedroom semidetached home offering an impressive reception hall, brand new kitchen diner, utility room, spacious lounge, four bedrooms set over two floors, with the master bedroom housing an ensuite, dressing room and balcony with far reaching views. The refitted stylish bathrooms are of a high standard. Well situated in a beautiful, semi-rural village, offering superb views, a great local pub plus well regarded local schools. This unique property offers rural living yet has the M4 on its doorstep and is an easy commute into the city centre. With beautiful gardens and a useful courtyard area which offers a range of outbuildings, this property is one to view!

**Text 4 The Girls’ Empire Annual (1905)**

*How to be Strong*

Before proceeding to describe the exercise which forms this month’s work, I find that it is necessary to call your attention to two or three simple rules in what is called hygiene. The first is this. Don’t worry! Worry has killed more women than hardwork ever will. It is true that there is a natural tendency in the majority of women to worry, and often over trifling things; still, this must be overcome or you will find your health is greatly upset, and the good resulting from these exercises almost nullified. Take the famous advice of “Punch” to heart—DON’T. The second is this. Take a proportionate physical exercise, according to the amount of mental strain or brain work you have to undergo. At night, when you take your exercise, prior to going to bed, never make the excuse that you have had a very fagging day and your brain feels done up. Then is just the time when you need vigorous physical exercise to counterbalance mental strain. … The third rule I want to point out is—always have plenty of fresh air in your bedroom! Many a girl rises from bed in the morning feeling heavy and depressed who would be one of the brightest and merriest of girls if she sleep only with her bedroom window partly open so that the foul air could escape and fresh air take its place.

**Text 5 Conference speech by the Green Party leader, Natalie Bennett (2014)**



b. To show that you have engaged with the texts, write a 4 or 5 sentence overview making connections between them.

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c. Annotate the extracts using appropriate terms and make notes on:

* + the purpose
  + the intended audience
  + the text type
  + the effects created by the lexical choice.

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d. Analyse and evaluate the lexical choices made by the speakers and writers in these texts. In your response, you should explore the links between the choices made and the meaning.

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**Understanding verb phrases**

The verb phrase is the one element that **must** be present in a grammatical sentence.

It can be made up of one verb (*The train* ***arrived*** *late.*) or more than one word (*The train* ***will be arriving*** *late*).

In order to analyse verb phrases, it is useful to know the following key terms:

* auxiliary vs lexical verb

*The cat* ***might have been scratching*** *at the door all night.*   
 mod aux prim auxs lex

* finite vs non-finite verb

*The cat* ***was scratching*** *at the door all night.* prim aux lex  
 fin n-fin

**Finite and non-finite verb phrases**

A **finite verb phrase** is marked for tense and occurs in a main clause (MCl), or in a subordinate clause (SCl) after a subordinating conjunction (e.g. *because, until, before, as, whether*) or after a relative pronoun (*who, which, that*).

*The bird* ***flies*** *through the bushes. The bird* ***flew*** *up until it* ***became*** *a small spec.* lex lex lex  
 fin fin fin

finite VP (present) finite VP (past) finite VP (past)  
 MCl MCl SCl

A **non-finite verb phrase** cannot change its form. The verb in a non-finite verb phrase will be an -*ing* (present) participle, an *-ed/-en* (past) participle, or an infinitive (*to + base form verb*).

***Pushing*** *through the bushes, the child* ***found*** *the perfect spot for a picnic.* lex lex  
 n-fin fin

non-finite VP finite VP (past)  
 SCl MCl

***To win*** ***is*** *the best thing in the world!* lex lex  
 n-fin fin

non-finite finite  
 VP VP  
 SCl MCl

**The structure of finite verb phrases**

A verb phrase functions as the **predicator** in a main clause.

P FUNCTION

*The rain* ***should not have started*** *until this afternoon.*

mod aux prim aux lex

n-fin n-fin

VP FORM

The structure of the verb phrase shapes the meaning of a sentence. We can look for five distinctive features:

1. tense (present or past)
2. voice (active or passive)
3. aspect (progressive or perfective)
4. modality
5. grammatical mood.

**TENSE**

A **finite verb phrase** is always marked for tense (present or past). This can be seen in the form of a single lexical verb or the first auxiliary in a longer verb phrase.

*The sea* ***has been*** *rough.*  *The sea, which* ***was*** *rough,* ***looked*** *very cold.* prim aux lex lex lex  present *-ed* participlepast past

present tense finite VP past tense finite VPs

We can test to see if a verb phrase is finite by changing the tense.

*The sea* ***had been*** *rough. The sea, which* ***is*** *rough,* ***looks*** *very cold.*

**VOICE**

Most sentences are in the active voice – in an unmarked form (the subject is followed by the predicator).

S P O

*The wolf* ***hunted*** *the terrified deer.*

Using the passive voice creates a marked form where the elements of a sentence are rearranged:

1. the grammatical object of the active sentence moves to the front and becomes the subject
2. the grammatical subject of the active sentence is omitted, or added in a prepositional phrase (the agent phrase) after the verb phrase.

S P A

*The terrified deer* ***was hunted*** *(by the wolf).*

A **passive verb phrase** is made up of the verb *to be + -ed/-en* participle.

*I* ***found*** *a Roman coin. A Roman coin* ***was found*** *(by me).* lex prim aux lex  
 fin fin n-fin

active passive  
 finite VP finite VP

We can use a passive verb phrase where we don’t know the agent, to avoid giving the subject away, or where the agent of the verb is not important.

*The light* ***was broken*** *on Friday night.* (agent not known)

*The body* ***was left*** *on the river bank.* (agent concealed)

*The strengths of the various acids* ***were measured****.*  (agent not important)

Rearranging the elements of an active sentence can also place greater emphasis on the object.

*The proposals* ***have been rejected*** *by the committee.* (object foregrounded for   
 emphasis)

**ASPECT**

The aspect of a verb phrase indicates the time scale of the verb – how long an action or state has been going on.

A **progressive verb phrase** is made up of the verb *to be + -ing* participle. It describes a temporary action that is ongoing.

*The sun* ***is setting*** *over the horizon. The sun* ***was setting*** *over the horizon.* present progressive past progressive  
 VP VP

Stative verbs do not usually have a progressive form.

\**I* ***am believing in*** *Father Christmas. \*He* ***is seeming*** *sad.*

A **perfective verb phrase** is made up of the verb *to have + -ed* participle. It describes an action which has continued up to the present, or a completed action where the effects are still relevant or have importance.

*They* ***have lived*** *there for fifty years. They* ***had lived*** *there for fifty years.*   
 prim aux lex prim aux lex  
 fin n-fin fin n-fin

present perfective past perfective  
 VP VP  
(action continued up to the present) (continuing action up to a point in the past)

**MODALITY**

The modality of a verb phrase allows writers and speakers to communicate shades of meaning. A **modal verb phrase** is made up of modal auxiliary + base form verb (an infinitive without the preposition *to*). Only one modal auxiliary can be used in a verb phrase.

*Library* ***must shut*** *at eight o’clock. The dog* ***ought to be*** *on a lead.* mod aux lex mod aux lex

Modal auxiliaries do not change their form for present and past tense, but they can indicate past and present time. A modal verb phrase is therefore described as finite.

**GRAMMATICAL MOOD**

The form and structure of the verb phrase in a main clause can tell us the grammatical mood of a sentence.

An unmarked finite verb phrase is used in a **declarative** sentence. This is the most common sentence mood and it is used to make statements. All the examples cited so far have been examples of declaratives.

The **interrogative** mood is used to ask questions. In a sentence where the verb phrase has an auxiliary, this will be moved to the initial position (before the subject). The order of subject and predicator is inverted.

*I* ***have*** *always* ***liked*** *cats.* ***Have*** *you always* ***liked*** *cats?* prim aux lex prim aux lex

Where there is no auxiliary, the primary auxiliary *do* is used with abase form verb after the subject. This auxiliary will be finite – reflecting the tense of the declarative. It is described as a ‘dummy’ auxiliary because it has no semantic weight.

*I* ***give*** *money to Oxfam.* ***Do*** *you* ***give*** *money to Oxfam?*  fin VP fin prim aux lex  
 (present) (present)

*I* ***finished*** *reading my book.* ***Did*** *you* ***finish*** *reading your book?* fin VP fin prim aux lex  
 (past) (past)

The **imperative** mood is used to form a command. The verb phrase has a base form verb and no subject. The shortest grammatical sentence possible is an imperative verb phrase.

***Sit down*** *now!* ***Go****!*

The **subjunctive** is a formal mood that is found more frequently in writing than in speech. It often expresses unreal meaning (imaginary or hypothetical situations). A subjunctive verb phrase often uses a basic verb form instead of a third person *-s* inflection (this is more common in older texts)*.* It is common in conditional *if* clauses and *that* clauses:

*If she* ***be*** *… If a man* ***haue*** *not … I suggest that he* ***leave*** *at once.*

In some subjunctive verb phrases, the verb *to be* is used in the plural form for a singular subject.

*If it* ***were*** *known, there would be an outcry.*

**The structure of non-finite verb phrases**

Non-finite verb phrases are found in subordinate clauses: they can fill a clause site or they can be embedded in noun phrases (as post-modifiers).

*They* ***stood*** *together* ***laughing*** *loudly.* ***Hidden*** *by the dark, he* ***waited****.* finite VP n-fin VP n-fin VP fin VP  
 MCl SCl SCl MCl

*The wall* ***painted*** *yesterday* ***was*** *still wet. The dog* ***barking*** *incessantly* ***looked*** *vicious.*  n-fin VP fin VP n-fin fin VP  
 embedded SCl MCl embedded SCl MCl

**Verb phrase patterns**

The following table lists the different patterns of auxiliaries that can be found in a verb phrase.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SUBJECT** | **MODALITY** | **PERFECTIVE ASPECT** | **PROGRESSIVE**  **ASPECT** | **PASSIVE VOICE** | **LEXICAL VERB** |
| The glass |  |  |  |  | breaks/broke |
| may |  |  |  | break |
|  | has/had |  |  | broken |
|  |  | is/was |  | breaking |
|  |  |  | is/was | broken |
| may | have |  |  | broken |
| may |  | be |  | breaking |
| may |  |  | be | broken |
|  | has/had | been |  | breaking |
|  | has/had |  | been | broken |
|  |  | is/was | being | broken |
| may | have | been |  | breaking |
| may | have |  | been | broken |
| may |  | be | being | broken |
|  | has/had | been | being | broken |
| may | have | been | being | broken |

**Activity 5: Identifying verb phrases**

Read the following extracts and label the verb phrases. You need to think about:

* whether the verb phrase is finite or non-finite
* whether the verb phrase is in a subordinate or main clause
* the tense, voice, aspect, modality and grammatical mood of each verb phrase.

**Extract 1**

Urban Dictionary’s users range from creatively rebellious teenagers who write openly about

their lives in their definitions, to hip twentysomethings and thirtysomethings with unique and

entertaining insights into the definitions of emerging words, to not quite so hip ’rents and

teachers who want to know why their kids or students keep referring to them as “hella

bootsy,” to serious students of the English language from all over the world. The content of

Urban Dictionary has become the irreverent calling card of a linguistic generation.

**Extract 2**

*May 14th*, 1800.—Wm. and John set off into Yorkshire after dinner at half-past two o'clock,

cold pork in their pockets. I left them at the turning of the Low-wood bay under the trees. My

heart was so full that I could hardly speak to W. when I gave him a farewell kiss. I sate a

long time upon a stone at the margin of the lake, and after a flood of tears my heart was

easier. The lake looked to me, I knew not why, dull and melancholy, and the weltering on the

shores seemed a heavy sound.

**Extract 3**

My Lord, you know I neuar comytted any offence, wherby I should submyt my selfe, more

then that I was bound in duty of a wyffe to doe to you; I beseache you charge me

partecularly, that I may know my faults. I am assured, that non leueing, could be more

dutyfull, trew, faythfull, and carefull to a husband, then I haue euar ben to you; I haue

sought all means to haue pleased you and many years, you thought well of me.

**Extract 1**

Urban Dictionary’s users **[range]** from creatively rebellious teenagers who **[write]** openly

fin VP/MCl fin VP/SCl

present tense present tense

declarative

**[about]** their lives in their definitions, to hip twentysomethings and thirtysomethings with

unique and entertaining insights into the definitions of emerging words, to not quite so hip

’rents and teachers who **[want] [to know]** why their kids or students **[keep] [referring]** to

fin VP/SCl n-fin VP/SCl fin VP/SCl n-fin VP/SCl

present tense present tense

them as “hella bootsy,” to serious students of the English language from all over the world.

The content of Urban Dictionary **[has become]** the irreverent calling card of a linguistic   
 fin VP/MCl   
 present perfective

declarative

generation.

**Extract 2**

*May 14th*, 1800.—Wm. and John **[set off]** into Yorkshire after dinner at half-past two o'clock,

fin VP/MCl

past tense

declarative   
cold pork in their pockets. I [**left]** them at the turning of the Low-wood bay under the trees.

fin VP/MCl

past tense

declarative

My heart **[was]** so full that I **[could** hardly **speak]** to W. when I **[gave]** him a farewell kiss. I

fin VP/MCl fin VP/SCl fin VP/SCl

past tense past tense past tense  
 declarative modal: ability

**[sate]** a long time upon a stone at the margin of the lake, and after a flood of tears my heart

fin VP/MCl

past tense

declarative

**[was]** easier. The lake **[looked]** to me, I **[knew]** not why, dull and melancholy, and the

fin VP/MCl fin VP/MCl fin VP/MCl

past tense past tense past tense   
 declarative declarative declarative

weltering on the shores **[seemed]** a heavy sound.

fin VP/MCl

past tense

declarative

**Extract 3**

My Lord, you **[know] Ø** I neuar **[comytted]** any offence, wherby I **[should submyt]** my

fin VP/MCl fin VP/SCl fin VP/SCl

present tense past tense past time

declarative modal: obligation

selfe, more then that I **[was bound]** in duty of a wyffe **[to doe]** to you; I **[beseache]** you

fin VP/SCl n-fin VP/SCl fin VP/MCl

past tense present tense

passive declarative

**[charge]** me partecularly, that I **[may know]** my faults. I **[am]** assured, that non leueing,

fin VP/MCl fin VP/SCl fin VP/MCl

imperative present time present tense

modal: permission declarative

**[could be]** more dutyfull, trew, faythfull, and carefull to a husband, then I **[haue** euar **ben]** to

fin VP/SCl fin VP/SCl

past time present tense

modal: possibility perfective

you; I **[haue sought]** all means **to haue pleased]** you and many years, you **[thought]** well

fin VP/MCl n-fin VP/SCl fin VP/MCl

present perfective past tense

declarative declarative

of me.

PRONOUNS VS DETERMINERS

pro-, prefix

Latin, ‘for’, ‘on behalf of’

[Linguistics](https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151666#eid28458827).  [After [pronoun *n.*](https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/152548#eid28202738)] Prefixed to grammatical terms to denote that an element is used in place of another for the sake of conciseness, esp. to avoid repetition.

**Pronouns** replace nouns (noun phrases). They therefore stand alone.

***The sky*** *was changing.* ***It*** *had been clear, but was quickly filling with black clouds.* (noun phrase) (pronoun)

**Determiners** always occur with a noun. They frame the field of reference: specific (e.g. ***the*** *car*), general (e.g. ***a*** *car*), quantity e.g. (e.g. ***some*** *cars*), comparative (e.g. ***more*** *cars*), demonstrative (e.g. ***this*** *car*), possessive (e.g. ***my*** *car*).

**Possessive pronouns** and **possessive determiners** usually have distinctive forms, but some of the third person forms are the same.

You can check the function of a possessive word by seeing whether it is followed by a noun or not. If there is a noun, the word is a possessive determiner. If there is no noun, the word is a possessive pronoun.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **POSSESSIVE FORMS** | | |
| **NUMBER** | **DETERMINERS** | **PRONOUNS** |
| **SINGULAR** | my coat | mine |
| your coat | your**s** |
| his coat  her coat  its coat | his  her*s*  its |
| **PLURAL** | our coats | our**s** |
| your coats | your**s** |
| their coats | their**s** |

Task

1. Circle the possessive forms in the Facebook posts on the next page. Then identify whether they are

* possessive noun phrases
* possessive pronouns
* possessive determiners.

1. The set of data on the next page is made up of posts from a range of different Facebook pages.

Read the data then answer the question below. You should use appropriate terminology and provide relevant supporting examples.

**Use your knowledge of contemporary English to analyse and evaluate the ways in which contextual factors affect how writers use language in these Facebook posts.**

**TEXT 1 (Vicki J. Hurst – personal page, shared cat meme)**

I am telling you. I’m not a cat. My mom says I’m her baby and my mom is always right.

**TEXT 2 (Amazon Kindle – sponsored)**

Browse a new selection of Kindle Books discounted to £1 each. Read on your Kindle or download our free Kindle Reading app to read on a tablet, phone or device.

**TEXT 3 (Cool Creativity – group page, craft projects)**

I wish my school had such amazing ideas!! Let your kids teachers know about their site when you go to school today.

**TEXT 4 (Deb Davies – personal page)**

Sam Garwood his birthday was fab – happiest 6yr old ever couldn’t of aksed for more lots of fab pressies yours was favrite!!!

**TEXT 5 (Local Landscape & Seascape Photographers – group page, photo sharing)**

camera or Phone its all about “THE EYE” and his is always good

**TEXT 6 (Irish Wildlife Trust – group page, environmental charity)**

Everything on Earth is borrowed … There is no “mine” or “Yours” … there is only “Ours” … Even Time Is borrowed. We kill over a Plot of Land, that belongs only to our Mother Earth. All you have is what you came with … and what you will leave with … Your Spirit.   
 Native American proverb

**TEXT 7 (Joyce Edmunds – group page, local village)**

they parked in our street riverside a few of them but we didn’t have no problems

**TEXT 8 (Contact seller – group page, local sell and swap shop)**

Stunning prom dress from City Prom in purple Excelent condition. Size 12 but I would say it’s fit a 10 to. Was my daughters. Hers went down well with mates. Not too much bling. Fitted style pick up Monmouth. £26

**TEXT 9 (Dave Bright – personal page)**

My daughter said her friend's kid's teacher said he always gives 110%. Daughter said "I hope that wasn't his maths teacher"

**TEXT 10 (Buttercup Education – group page, early years outdoor education)**

It's a new week and we are so excited for all of the fun we have planned for our little Buttercups. Don't forget we have Stay & Play sessions at both our sites. It's a great way to get to know us, or just come along for their next outdoor adventure!

FACEBOOK POSTS

POSSESSIVE FORMS

possessive noun phrases possessive pronouns possessive determiners

**Vicki J. Hurst (personal page – shared cat meme)**

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Browse a new selection of Kindle Books discounted to £1 each. Read on your Kindle or

download our free Kindle Reading app to read on a tablet, phone or device.

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I wish my school had such amazing ideas!! Let your kids teachers know about their site

when you go to school today.

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 Native American proverb

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camera or Phone its all about “THE EYE” and his is always good

**Contact seller (group page – local sell and swap shop)**

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Buttercups. Don't forget we have Stay & Play sessions at both our sites. It's a great way to

get to know us, or just come along for their next outdoor adventure!

KEY TERMS

COMMA SPLICING

This occurs where a comma is used to connect two independent clauses. If there are two finite (tensed) verbs with no connecting word, a full stop must be used to separate the clauses, or a connecting word must be added.

I **ran around** after the baby all day, it **was** tiring.

finite VP finite VP

MCl MCl

two main clauses → full stop NOT comma OR add connecting word

I **ran around** after the baby all day. It **was** tiring.  
 two separate main clauses (full stop)

I **ran around** after the baby all day, which **was** tiring.  
 relative pronoun (relative clause)

I **ran around** after the baby all day and it **was** tiring.  
 co-ordinating conjunction

TASK: COMMA SPLICING

1. Read the extract below and identify where there are comma splices.
2. Analyse and evaluate how the writer uses comma splices and other linguistic techniques to characterise the main protagonist. You should use appropriate linguistic terminology in your response.

The extract is taken from *Pigeon English*, a novel by Stephen Kelman published in 2011. It is the story of Harri Opoku, an eleven-year-old boy who has recently moved to a housing estate in South London from Ghana in Africa. The language he uses blends Ghanaian English with London youth speak. In this extract, Harri describes some of the new experiences he has in London. (EDUQAS Component 2, 2019)

We always go to the market on Saturday. It’s all outside so you get proper cold waiting for Mamma to pay, you have to keep your mouth closed to stop your teeth escaping.

The launderette is a shop just for washing machines. It’s at the bottom of Luxembourg House. The washing machines don’t belong to any one person, they’re for everybody who lives in the flats. You have to pay them money to make them work.

I swear by God, I thought I was dreaming at first. It didn’t even feel real. I thought under the ground was just mud and bones and the creatures who live there, when I saw the tunnels and all the lights and people, I just had to pinch myself. There was even a man playing a violin. He had long hair in a ponytail even if he was a man. Asweh, the whole thing just felt brutal. Have you ever been on the tube? There’s a million people everywhere all going too fast. They don’t talk to you, they just chook2 you out of the way with their elbows. The stairs you go down are moving, they’re the same as the ones at the airport. You can pretend like it’s asasabonsam’s teeth3 trying to eat you.

1 brutal: exciting fun 2 chook: jab   
3 asasabonsam’s teeth: a vampire-like monster in West African folklore

NARRATIVE  
COMMA SPLICES

We always go to the market on Saturday. It’s all outside so you get proper cold waiting for Mamma to pay, you have to keep your mouth closed to stop your teeth escaping.

The launderette is a shop just for washing machines. It’s at the bottom of Luxembourg House. The washing machines don’t belong to any one person, they’re for everybody who lives in the flats. You have to pay them money to make them work.

I swear by God, I thought I was dreaming at first. It didn’t even feel real. I thought under the ground was just mud and bones and the creatures who live there, when I saw the tunnels and all the lights and people, I just had to pinch myself. There was even a man playing a violin. He had long hair in a ponytail even if he was a man. Asweh, the whole thing just felt brutal. Have you ever been on the tube? There’s a million people everywhere all going too fast. They don’t talk to you, they just chookyou out of the way with their elbows. The stairs you go down are moving, they’re the same as the ones at the airport. You can pretend like it’s asasabonsam’s teeth trying to eat you.

COMMAS IN EME TEXTS

Using appropriate linguistic terminology, explain the function of the commas in the following Early Modern English extracts.

**TEXT 1** is an extract from a handbill published in 1652 when the first coffeehouse in London was opened by Pasqua Rosee. Handbills were a popular form of advertising in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

THE Grain or Berry called Coffee, groweth upon little Trees, only in the Deserts of Arabia.  
 It is brought from thence, and drunk generally throughout all the Grand Seigniors Dominions.1  
 It is a simple innocent thing, composed into a Drink, by being dryed in an Oven, and ground to Powder, and boiled up with Spring water.

1 the Grand Seigniors Dominions: the Grand Seignior was the ruler of Turkey

**TEXT 2** is an extract from *The Pleasante Historie of John Winchcomb*, a novel by Thomas Deloney published in 1597.

It is the story of John Winchcomb (known as Jack), a weaver who becomes wealthy through hard work, commitment and honesty. Jack inherits his master’s cloth-making business and becomes a successful merchant – in the sixteenth century, woollen cloth was the main export industry in England. In this extract, Jack meets the father of his bride-to-be.

But, father (quoth Jacke Of Newberie), what will you bestow with her? Marry, heare you (quoth the old man), I cham1 but a poore man, but I thank God, because che2 heare very good condemnation3 of you in euery place, therefore chil4 giue you Twentie nobles5 and a weaning calfe, and when I die and my wife, you shall haue all my goods.

1 cham – phonetic spelling to reflect pronunciation (I am)

2 che - phonetic spelling to reflect pronunciation - I hear

3 condemnation: mistaken use of a similar sounding word - commendation (praise)

4 chil: phonetic spelling to reflect pronunciation - I will

5 nobles: gold coins

Text 1

comma separating subject and verb where the subject contains a subordinate clause (typical of EME)

THE Grain or Berry called Coffee, groweth upon little Trees, only in the

comma separating adverbial (PrepP modified by adverb) from rest of  
 clause – to emphasise rare/exclusive product (uncommon in PDE)

Deserts of Arabia.

comma before ‘and’ – perhaps to focus attention on   
 the contrasting adverbials of place – the PrepPs   
 ‘from thence’ and ‘throughout …’   
 (Oxford comma still used in PDE)

It is brought from thence, and drunk generally throughout all the Grand

Seigniors Dominions.

comma separating non-finite SCl (post-modifying ‘thing’??) from MCl

It is a simple innocent thing, composed into a Drink, by being dryed in

MCl comma separating A from related NFCl

(uncommon in PDE)

an Oven, and Ø ground to Powder, and Ø boiled up with Spring water.

Oxford commas – to indicate the stages of the process clearly (polysyndeton)

Text 2

comma separating a vocative from the main clause (still used in PDE, but would have a second comma after the vocative)

MCl

But, father (quoth Jacke Of Newberie), what will you bestow with her?

comma separating quoting clause ‘(quoth …)’ from quoted clause ‘what will you …?’ (still used in PDE)

comma separating an interjection from the main clause (still used in PDE)

MCl

Marry, heare you (quoth the old man), I cham …

MCl MCl

comma dividing two main clauses – comma splice  
 (loose structure of speech – still used by PDE novelists)

comma before the co-ordinating conjunction ‘but’ (still used in PDE)

I cham but a poore man, but I thank God, because che heare very good

MCl comma before subordinating   
 conjunction ‘because’ (uncommon in PDE)

condemnation of you in euery place, therefore chil gue you …

MCl

comma dividing two main clauses – comma splice

(characterisation – lower status)

comma before ‘and’ (Oxford comma still used in PDE)  
 i.e. if the conjunction co-ordinating nouns (‘… nobles   
 and … calfe’) is distinguished from the conjunction   
 co-ordinating clauses, the sentence is easier to read

therefore chil giue you Twentie nobles and a weaning calfe, and

when I die and my wife, you shall haue all my goods.

MCl

comma separating adverbial clause from main clause (in PDE, we would normally also have a comma at the beginning of the clause before the conjunction ‘when’ OR no commas)

# Some tricky terms

# Apostrophes

It is helpful to be able to label the different uses of the apostrophe. The **omissive apostrophe** marks dropped letters (e.g. in EME past participles: *drop’d*, *turn’d*; enclitics: *can’t, she’s*; proclitics: *‘twas, d’you*), The **possessive apostrophe** marks possession (e.g. *the boy’s kite, the workers’ strike*).

# Collective nouns

A collective noun refers to a group of people (e.g. *team*, *committee*, *jury, army*), things (e.g. *fleet, squadron, ream*) or animals (e.g. *herd*, *flock*, *litter*, *pack*). A collective noun can take a singular or a plural verb form depending on whether the meaning focuses on individual members of the group or not (e.g. *The committee was in agreement*. OR *The committee* *were in agreement*.)

# Comma splice

This occurs where a comma is used to connect two independent clauses. If there are two finite (tensed) verbs with no connecting word, a full stop must be used to separate the clauses (e.g. I **ran around** after the baby all day, it **was** tiring i.e. two finite verb phrases = two main clauses → full stop NOT comma). [Exercise](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_47.htm) from the University of Bristol.

# Common nouns vs concrete nouns

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| COMMON | **NOUNS** | PROPER |
| concrete abstract |

Common noun is a broad term to describe any nouns which are not proper nouns. Where proper nouns classify specific people, places, organisations and times, common nouns denote types of people, objects or concepts.

Concrete nouns are a subset of common nouns. Concrete nouns denote something you can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch such as people (e.g. *man, child, teenager, teacher*), animals (e.g. *cow, zebra, robin, dormouse*), places (e.g. *forest, town, beach, cliff*) and things (e.g. *pencil, book, computer, car*). Concrete nouns also have a position in time and place and can be measured. This is a semantic classification—it is based on the meaning of nouns. Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether a noun is concrete or abstract.

# Exclamative sentences

Exclamative is a very precise grammatical term to describe sentences that begin with *What* (e.g. *What a fantastic day it’s been!, What a clever dog you are!*)or *How* (e.g. *How quickly she ran!, How nice is that!*) and end with an exclamation mark. Exclamative clauses can also begin with an auxiliary verb (e.g. *Didn’t they do well!*). They can occur in an elliptical form without the subject and predicator (e.g. *What a fantastic day!, How nice!*).

# Fillers vs interjections

Fillers *(*e.g. *um, err)* are linguistic padding: they can mark hesitancy, or points where we pause to think. They have no semantic function in a sentence, but are common in informal conversation. In PDE, *so,* *like and y’know* are examples of high frequency fillers.

Interjections are used to indicate an emotion or to give heightened intonation to an utterance (e.g. *wow!*, *no!, please, ouch! brrr!, sweet!, cool!*) – they are often exclamatory (accompanied by an exclamation mark). Interjections can also be used to express uncertainty or disbelief (e.g. *what*?, *huh?, really?*) – they are often accompanied by a question mark. A phonemic representation like *pfff* is an interjection rather than a filler because it has a semantic function – it communicates a sense of disapproval.

# Foregrounding

Foregrounding (or fronting) requires a change in the standard order of elements in a sentence – something other than the subject has to come first in a declarative sentence, or other than a base form verb in an imperative or an auxiliary in an interrogative sentence.

A S P C

***Suddenly****, the sky went dark.* [fronted adverbial - declarative]

AdvP

A P A

***For the last time****, sit down.* [fronted adverbial – imperative]

PrepP

A P S P

***Now*** *can I go?* [fronted adverbial – interrogative]  
 AdvP

C S P

***Scary*** *it was.* [fronted complement – declarative]

AdjP

# Lexical (main) vs auxiliary verbs

The lexical verb in a sentence carries the main weight of the meaning. It can stand alone (e.g. *The tree fell in the storm.*) or be supported by auxiliary verbs (e.g. *be, have, do*, modal).

It is important to remember that the primary verbs (*to be*, *to have*, *to do*) can function as lexical or auxiliary verbs depending on their position in the verb phrase.

*I [****have****] two dogs.* (lexical) *I [****have*** *given] him a present.* (auxiliary).

*I [****am****] happy to be here.* (lexical) *They [****are*** *playing] football later.* (auxiliary)

*I [****do****] taekwondo on Saturday.* (lexical) *I [****do*** *believe] in climate change*. (auxiliary)

# Past tense vs past participle

For regular verbs, the form of the past tense and the past participle is the same and can be recognised by the *-ed* inflection. However, simple past tense verbs stand alone in the verb phrase (e.g*. I [****walked****] to school.*) and past participle verbs will follow an auxiliary (e.g. *I [have* ***finished****] the book.* OR *The book [was* ***finished****]*.). Past participles can also be used as modifiers (e.g. *The* ***finished*** *book lay on the table.*)

For irregular verbs, the past participle is different to the past tense form:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VERB** | **PAST TENSE** | **PAST PARTICIPLE** |
| to write | wrote | have written |
| to eat | ate | have eaten |
| to come | came | have come |
| know | knew | have known |

# Plural nouns

A plural noun is marked to show ‘more than one’: regular nouns take an *-s* inflection (e.g. *tree → trees, story → stories*); irregular nouns change their spelling, often changing the vowel (e.g.  *man → men, tooth → teeth, mouse → mice*). Plural nouns always take a plural verb form (e.g. *Some people were late*.).

# Pronoun vs determiners

Pronouns replace nouns (noun phrases). They therefore stand alone.

***The sky*** *was changing.* ***It*** *had been clear, but was quickly filling with black clouds.* (noun phrase) (pronoun)

Determiners always occur with a noun. They frame the field of reference: specific (e.g. ***the*** *car*), general (e.g. ***a*** *car*), quantity e.g. (e.g. ***some*** *cars*), comparative (e.g. ***more*** *cars*), demonstrative (e.g. ***this*** *car*), possessive (e.g. *my car*).

Possessive pronouns and possessive determiners usually have distinctive forms, but some of the third person forms are the same.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NUMBER** | **POSSESSIVE DETERMINERS** | **POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS** |
| ***SINGULAR*** | my coat | mine |
| your coat | your**s** |
| his coat  her coat  its coat | his  her**s**  its |
| **PLURAL** | our coat | our**s** |
| your coat | your**s** |
| their coat | their**s** |

You can check whether a possessive word is a determiner or a pronoun by seeing whether it is followed by a noun or not. If there is a noun, the word is a determiner. If there is no noun, the word is a pronoun.

# Proper nouns

A proper noun is the name of a specific person, place or time. Proper nouns can occur in the subject site of a sentence (e.g. ***Christmas*** *is fun*.) or the object site (e.g. We *gave* ***Philip*** *a present*).

# Superlatives

Superlatives are formed by adding an -*est* inflection to a monosyllabic or disyllabic adjective (*calmest, brightest, littlest*), or to monosyllabic adverbs that have no inflection (*hardest*, *fastest*) – the form of these superlative adverbs is the same as for the superlative adjectives.

*The* ***fastest*** *car in the race was red. The red car went* ***fastest****.* Adj Adv

Longer adjectives and adverbs form the superlative using the **adverb** *most* – the superlative is made up of *most* + adjective or *most* + adverb.

*The* ***most beautiful*** *building in the world . The tall girl spoke* ***most politely****.* superlative Adj superlative Adv

It is incorrect to describe *most* as a superlative. The grammatical structure of a superlative consists of an adverb of degree + adjective/adverb. Where *most* occurs with a noun, it is a determiner; where it stands alone it is a pronoun.

*I hate* ***most*** *dogs. Give me* ***most*** *(of it). Give the* ***most*** *to me.* det pron pron

# Vocatives

A vocative is the word we use to name a person when we are addressing them (*Hey,* ***you****! How’****ya*** *doing?*), attracting their attention (e.g. ***Julie****, are you listening?*) or invoking them (e.g. *I wish,* ***BFF****, you were here with me now.*). It is unusual to have more than one vocative in a sentence. Vocatives stand outside the traditional clause elements and are usually separated from the main clause by commas. They can occur at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence.

***Jonno*** *(.) where you been?*

*I know (.)* ***idiot*** *(.) what I’m doing.*

“*It’s good to see you here today,* ***Mrs Moore***,” said the doctor.

Vocatives occur in speech (or in written representations of spoken language), but there are some written contexts where we may address someone directly (e.g. a letter, text message).

SUbordinate clauses

There are six main types of subordinate clause:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subordinate clauses** | | |
| Finite  (the verb is tensed) | relative  (*who*, *which*, *whose*, *that*) | [The people who commit a crime] usually live locally. |
| noun  (*that*) | It appears [that a large amount of cash has been taken]. |
| adverbial  (*because*, *since*, *although*, *when*, *after*, *while*, *as*, *unless*, *even though* etc.) | [If I’m liable for the stolen money], I’m finished. |
| Non-finite | *to-*infinitive | She tried [to grab him]. |
| -*ing* participle clauses | [The two blokes running round the corner] were the thieves. |
| -*ed* participle clauses | [Hooded up and masked], you could only see the boys’ eyes |

Often, finite subordinate clauses will have what appears to be a simple sentence embedded in them.

I’m not being funny when [I say] [the dog is safe].

I think [they were in there less than twenty minutes].

It is important, however, to look at the word that precedes the tensed clause (or to recognise where a word may have been omitted) – this will help to establish whether the clause is independent (MCl) or part of a dependent clause (SCl).

I’m not being funny [ when I say] [Ø the dog is safe].   
 subordinating conj *that* - subordinating conj SCls

I think [Ø they were in there less than twenty minutes].   
 *that* - subordinating conj SCl

In analysis, it is important that identification of clauses is always tied to a discussion of meaning and the effects created.

TASK: clauses

Read through the extracts below taken from a Channel 4 documentary about a secondary school in Salford. It focuses on interactions between the Head of Year 7 Miss Bland, and two misbehaving Year 7 students Billy and Tiger.

Identify:

1. any simple main clauses
2. any subordinate clauses and their type.

Comment on the effects created in each case.

**EXAMPLE**

S P O A

MB = [I] [couldn’t give] [a fiddler’s about anyone else] [at this moment in time] (l.18)

MCl

simple utterance (one VP)

* the latch-on reflects MB’s dominant role – she prevents B continuing his turn
* the simple utterance allows MB to make a clear, emphatic statement – she is not prepared to listen to excuses
* the time adverbial (prepositional phrase) emphasises the significance of the current interaction
* her dismissive tone is seen in the idiomatic slang NP indicating that B’s utterance is irrelevant (elliptical because of the audience i.e. sanitised by removing the expletive).

**EXTRACTS FOR ANALYSIS**

1. VO: news of Billy and Tiger’s bad behaviour has reached Miss Bland (l.1)
2. B: most of the teachers say I’m clever and all that (l.5)
3. B: it’s just like when I get bored that’s when I’m most likely to play up   
    because I start (.) /fɪdʒɪtɪn/ and all that and get in trouble off teacher   
    (ll.5-7)
4. MB: you know what self-destruct means? (l.9)
5. MB: we **can’t** have this boys (1) so (.) I’m /gʌnə/ put you on report (.) so it’s   
    in /jɜː/ interests to work /aːd/ (.) to get good comments (ll.28-9)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Extract** | **Examples of simple main clauses** | **Examples of subordinate clauses (and type)** | **Effect** |
| **1** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

ANALYSIS and comment

S P O

1. VO: [*news of Billy and Tiger’s bad behaviour*][*has reached*][*Miss Bland*]

MCl

simple utterance (one VP)

* the function of the VO is to manage the discourse by marking topic changes
* the utterance prepares the viewers for the meeting that is about to take place (linked to the head noun *news* in the post-modified NP)
* the present perfect verb phrase establishes a development (action in the past with present relevance).

S P O

1. B: [*most of the teachers*] [*say*] [Ø *I’m clever and all that*]

MCl embedded subordinate *that*-clause

complex utterance (two VPs: MCl + SCl)

* although complex, this utterance has a straightforward construction: subordinate *that*-clause after reporting verb ‘say’
* it is a statement of fact – B recounts what he’s been told (reported speech) and therefore does not have to decide on the content of the utterance
* the multi-word hedge construction *and all that* mitigates the positive comment – it allows B to avoid what his peers may describe as boasting.

S S P C

1. B: [*it’s just like*][*when I get bored*][*that’s*][*when I’m most likely to play up*]

RelCl MCl RelCl embedded NFCl

A [*because I start* (.) /fɪdʒɪtɪn/ *and all that and get in trouble off* *teacher*].   
 ACl conj

complex utterance - with multiple subordinate clauses

* the loose structure of the utterance reflects B working out an explanation for his bad behaviour (probably to camera)
* the opening clause is a hedge (perhaps providing thinking time)
* the first relative clause (*when* = ‘the time at which’) establishes the context of the bad behaviour (adjective phrase *bored*)
* the demonstrative pronoun *that* places grammatical emphasis on the preceding relative clause (anaphoric reference)
* the second relative clause uses the idiomatic multi-word non-finite verb *to play up* as a euphemism (less explicit than references to bad behaviour in other turns)
* the adverbial reason clause (*because*) explains what happens.

S P O

1. MB: [Ø] [you] [know] [what self-destruct means]?

aux lex NCl

complex utterance

* the interrogative mood functions as a speaker-initiated check: MB does not complete her previous utterance in order to check that B understands the adjective *self*-*destruct*
* the omitted periphrastic ‘do’ is typical of informal conversation (MB is making her speech relatable – convergence)
* the subordinate clause establishes what needs to be checked (denotation of key word).

S P O S P O

1. MB: [we] [**can’t** have] [this] [boys] (1) so (.) [I] [’m /gʌnə/ put] [you]

MCl voc conj MCl

A dum S P A delayed S  
 [on report] (.) so [it] [’s] [in /jɜː/ interests] [to work /aːd/] (.)

conj MCl NFCl

delayed S

Ø [to get good comments].

NFCl

compound-complex utterance

* the sequence of co-ordinated main clauses allows MB to retain her turn (dominant speaker)
* the opening simple utterances establish a clear statement of MB’s position and intention (the *new strategy* referenced in the VO, ll.20-1)
* the extra position (*it’s …*) allows B to place stress on the delayed subjects – the non-finite clauses focus B and T’s attention on what they need to do.

**KEY TERMS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS GLOSSARY**

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

abstract noun A noun that denotes a concept or thing with no physical qualities e.g. *courage, welcome, doom*.

accelerando A term used to describe speech that is getting faster (marked *accel* on transcripts).

accent The distinctive manner of pronouncing language associated with a particular region, social group etc.

acceptable A term used to describe any language use that native speakers feel is allowed.

accommodation A term used to describe the changes people make to their speech, prosodic features and gestures in order to emphasise or minimise the differences between them.

acronym An abbreviation formed by taking letters from a series of words, which is pronounced as a word e.g. *radar, NATO, LOL*.

active voice A grammatical structure in which the subject is the actor in a sentence e.g. *The dog chewed the bone*.

adjacency pair A sequence of two connected utterances by different speakers one after the other. This may take a range of forms: question/answer; greetings; complaint/explanation or remedy; statement/affirmation; command/action etc. e.g. *Shut the window*. → *Sure*.

adjective A word that defines attributes of a noun and that can occur before the noun (e.g. *the red tulip*) or after a stative verb (e.g. *the tulip was red*), and can often express contrasts (e.g. *the smaller flower was reddest*).

adjective phrase A group of words with an adjective as the head e.g. *really quick, amazingly scary to do*.

adjunct An adverb that provides more information about a verb, answering the questions when? how? where? e.g. *The baby often* (time) *sleeps fretfully* (manner) *upstairs* (place).

adverbial A clause element which provides additional information about time, manner, place and reason in a sentence e.g. *He will come today*. (noun); *He will come up the mountain*. (prepositional phrase); *He will come because he is desperate*. (subordinate clause).

adverbial clause A dependent clause introduced by a subordinating conjunction such as *after, since, when, as, because*, which functions as an adverbial element within a sentence e.g. *We left in the morning as soon as it was light*.

adverb phrase A group of words with an adverb as the head e.g. *very quickly, too quickly for comfort, more quickly than I cared for*.

adverb A word that defines the action of a verb (e.g. *the rain fell heavily*), that can act as an intensifier (e.g. *really loud*), that can express contrasts (e.g. *more crucially, most crucially*), and that can function as a sentence connector (e.g. *Nevertheless, I would not be voting for the candidate after that*).

affix A bound morpheme which is used to form a new word e.g. *declutter, beautiful*.

agreement A term used to describe the relationship between words (also called concord).

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

alliteration A term to describe the repetition of consonants or consonant clusters at the beginning of words in close proximity e.g. *Conservatives on course to conquer after commentators got it wrong*.

ambiguity A term used to describe language with multiple meanings e.g. *Police looking into Sinkhole* i.e. investigating (‘looking into’ = multi-word verb) OR looking (‘into Sinkhole’ = prepositional phrase of place).

anaphoric reference A term to describe referencing in which a pronoun points backwards to an earlier noun phrase e.g. *The storm caused devastation. It felled trees, ripped tiles from roofs and demolished garden fences*.

antithesis A rhetorical device which sets two contrasting ideas in opposition—there will often be grammatical patterning to draw attention to the linked ideas e.g. *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times* …

antonyms Words that are opposite in meaning or associations e.g. *foreign/local, winter/summer*.

apposition A noun phrase, separated from the rest of the sentence with commas, dashes, or brackets, which elaborates on the noun phrase preceding it e.g. *The Daily Mail, a tabloid with a strong Conservative ideology, described Cameron’s election results as a “stunning outright victory”*.

appropriate A term used to describe any language use that is seen as suitable for the context in which it is used.

archaic A term describing lexis, syntax or orthography that is no longer used.

aspect The timescale of the action expressed by the verb phrase, which may be complete (perfective) or ongoing (progressive).

assimilation In phonology, the way in which the sounds of one word can change the sounds of neighbouring words in connected speech.

assonance A term used to describe the repetition of vowel sounds e.g. *Old age should burn and rave at close of day/Rage, rage, against the dying of the light*.

asyndetic A term used to describe a list of words, phrases or clauses that are not connected by a conjunction e.g. *I believe in government of the people, by the people, for the people*.

attributive A term used to describe modifiers that precede the noun they are describing e.g. *an unsatisfactory result*.

auxiliary verb A verb that precedes the lexical verb in a verb phrase e.g. *I do believe in fairies. He may visit. Do you want to come? Peter has finished the book. The rain was falling all day. She did not run yesterday*.

back channelling Interactive features such as minimal responses (e.g. *mm, yeah, ahh*) that demonstrate a participant is listening and paralinguistic features (e.g. laughter) that show affirmation, but which do not disrupt the speaker’s turn.

back-formation A process for forming words in which an affix is removed from an existing word creating a new word in a different word class e.g. *babysit* (verb) from *babysitter* (noun).

base The minimal form of a word to which affixes can be added.

bi-nomial pair An expression containing two words joined by a conjunction (usually *and/or*), often with a fixed order (collocation) e.g. *scream and shout, make or break, hustle and bustle*.

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

blend A word formed by combining two or more words to create a new word combining the meaning of the originals (also called portmanteau words) e.g. *webinar → web + seminar*.

borrowing Introducing a loan word from one language into another.

bound morpheme A prefix or suffix that can only occur attached to a free morpheme e.g. *unhappy, driver, cars, exchange*.

cardinal number The basic form of a number e.g. *one, ten, three thousand*.

caretaker speech The distinctive speech adults use when they talk to young children.

cataphoric reference A term to describe referencing in which a pronoun points forwards to a later noun phrase e.g. *He’s ahead of the pack. And it’s Many Clouds still at the front and over the last fence now*.

clause A group of phrases which usually has a tensed verb phrase

cliché An image that has lost its original meaning or novelty through overuse e.g. *only time will tell, frightened to death, the quiet before the storm*.

clipping The creation of a new word with the same word class and denotation by dropping a syllable (also called truncation) e.g. *Thurs, spec, flu, phone*.

closed class A group of words with a grammatical function (e.g. determiners, pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions) to which new words are rarely added.

cleft sentence A sentence which has been rearranged with a dummy subject *it* + *to be* followed by the focus of the sentence and a relative clause e.g. *It is school traffic that slows everything down on a weekday*.

cohesion Linguistic connections which link elements of a discourse.

coinage The construction and addition of new words to the word stock.

collective noun A noun that refers to a group, which may take a singular or plural verb form depending on whether the group is seen as a single cooperative body or a collection of individuals.

collocation A recognisable group of words that frequently occur together e.g. *there you go*.

colloquialism An informal word, phrase or pronunciation, often associated with informal speech.

comment clause A commonly occurring clause in speech which adds a remark to another clause e.g. *I mean …, I think ...*

comparative A form used for comparisons of adjectives or adverbs e.g. *colder, more ludicrous* (adjectives); *more calmly* (adverb).

complement A clause element that adds extra information about the subject after a copula verb (e.g. *The skylark’s song was memorable*.) or the object (e.g*. I painted the wall purple*.)

complex sentence A sentence made up of one main clause and at least one subordinate clause e.g. *Choosing stone for the garden wall* (subordinate clause) *was* (main clause verb phrase) *very complicated because there were so many options in the garden centre* (subordinate clause).

compound A word or phrase made up of at least two free morphemes e.g. *wallpaper, small-talk*.

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

compound-complex A sentence made up of at least two coordinated main clauses and at least one subordinate clause e.g. *The car park was full* (main clause) *because there was building work* (subordinate clause), *but it made no difference to the shoppers* (main clause) *who were determined to get what they had come for* (subordinate clause).

compound sentence A sentence made up of at least two main clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction e.g. *The sky was dark* (main clause) *and the wind whipped our hair* (main clause).

concrete noun A noun that refers to physical things like people, places, objects and substances.

conjunct An adverb that has a linking function e.g. *nevertheless, however, instead*.

conjunction A closed class word used to join other words or phrases together e.g. *bread and butter pudding* (coordinating); *I liked her since she was always ready to help* (subordinating).

connotations The associations linked to a word that go beyond its denotation.

consonant cluster A group of consonants occurring at the beginning of a word e.g. *stream, thread, plot*.

context The circumstances (social, historical, geographical, cultural, physical) in which speech and writing take place.

contraction A shortened word e.g. *can’t, won’t, we’re*.

convergence A process in which two speakers adapt their language and pronunciation to reduce the difference between them.

coordinating conjunction A word that joins words, phrases, clauses or sentences of equal grammatical status e.g. *and, or, but*.

copula verb A verb that is followed by a complement e.g. *be, seem, appear, grow, become*.

count noun A noun that refers to things that can be counted, and which has a plural form e.g. *computer/computers*.

declarative A grammatical mood where the subject is followed by the verb in a sentence which expresses a statement e.g. *The balloon flew over the mountain*.

degree adverb An adverb which indicates the extent of a quality e.g. *very, really, quite, nearly, so*.

deixis A term describing expressions that rely on the context for interpretation e.g. *there, over here, that high*.

demonstrative A term used to describe pronouns and determiners that distinguish between similar items e.g. *this/that, these/those*.

denotation The dictionary meaning of a word.

deontic modality A modal verb expressing ability, necessity or obligation e.g. *can, could, may, must, shall, should*.

dependent clause A clause which cannot stand alone (also called subordinate clause).

derivation A term to describe words that are formed by adding affixes to create new words e.g. *slow + ness, arriv(e) + al, simpl(e) + ify*.

descriptive An approach to language based on observation of language in use, focusing on appropriateness and acceptability rather than on making judgements.

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

determiner A closed class word which only occurs at the beginning of a noun phrase and which defines the number and definiteness of the noun e.g. *the dog, some flowers, a mistake, that list*.

dialect A language variety with distinctive lexis and grammar used by speakers with common regional, social or cultural backgrounds.

dialect levelling The reduction in differences between dialects caused by language contact and mass media.

direct object A clause element that is directly affected by the action or process of the verb e.g. *The racing-driver crashed the car*.

direct speech A form of speech in which the actual words spoken are recorded, usually between speech marks e.g. *He looked down at the floor and muttered, ‘Well, it wasn’t my fault.’*

discourse Any spoken or written language longer than a sentence.

discourse markers Words or phrases that stand outside the clause and act as fillers, topic changers, hedges etc. e.g. *well, right, y’know, I mean, basically*.

disjunct A sentence adverb allowing the speaker or writer to comment on the content or style of a sentence e.g. *honestly, fortunately for you, clearly*.

divergence A process in which two speakers adapt their language and pronunciation to increase the difference between them.

double negative A structure in which more than one negative particle is used in a single verb phrase e.g. *He didn’t never tell lies.*

dummy word A word which fills a grammatical function in a clause, but which has no meaning e.g. *It is Jack who should be apologising. Do you want a cup of tea*?

dynamic verb A verb which expresses an action rather than a state and which has a progressive form e.g. *I was picking apples*.

-*ed* participle A nonfinite verb formed by adding an *–ed* inflection to the base of regular verbs (or which has an irregular form), which occurs with an auxiliary in a tensed verb phrase, or by itself as a nonfinite clause (also called a past participle) e.g. *The girl (had swum) for miles. The window broken by the stone (had been repaired).*

elision The omission of sounds in connected speech.

ellipsis The omission of part of a sentence that can be understood by the context. e.g. *The sprinter had broken the world record, Ø reached a new PB and Ø charmed the crowds*.

embedded clause A subordinate clause which functions as a part of a clause element e.g. *The fireworks which lit up the sky had cost a fortune* (post-modifying subject noun phrase). *They had done enough to achieve victory* (post-modifying object noun phrase).

emphatic stress Emphasis placed upon syllables or words in spoken discourse

enclitic An unstressed morpheme which joins phonetically to the preceding word e.g. *don’t, I’d.*

end focus The positioning of information at the end of a clause for emphasis

enjambement The overlapping of meaning from one line to another in verse without punctuation.

enumerators Cardinal and ordinal numbers.

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

epistemic modality A modal verb expressing a speaker’s assessment of the reality or likelihood of an event taking place e.g. *can, may, might, must, should, will, would*.

etymology A study of the origins and history of words.

euphemism A word that replaces another which is seen as taboo or social unacceptable.

exclamation The tone communicated by the use of an exclamation mark e.g. *We were only joking!*

exclamative A sentence beginning with how or what in the initial position to communicate strong feelings e.g. *what an insult!; how unbelievable is that!*

existential ‘there’ A sentence in which *There* is used as a dummy subject with a delayed subject occurring after the verb to be for emphasis e.g. *There was litter everywhere*.

exophoric reference A term to describe referencing in which a lexical item points to the wider linguistic context e.g. *That man there is my brother*.

false start An utterance that is started, left incomplete, and then restarted with a different grammatical structure e.g. *and Si.. Glen Johnson; they are (.) it’s impossible; I felt that it (.) people were everywhere*.

field An area of meaning linked to the subject matter of a discourse (e.g. physics) which will contain linked lexical items e.g. *gravity, relativity, spacetime, Einstein, Newton, density gradient*.

figurative language A term used to describe any language use that is non-literal, using devices such as metaphors, similes etc. to create poetic and descriptive effects.

filled pause A voiced hesitation in spoken language.

filler Words, usually with no semantic value, which are inserted into speech either from habit or to give a participant thinking time as they search for a word e.g. *er, um, ah*.

finite A term used to describe verb phrases marked for tense, person and number.

foregrounding A change in the order of clause elements to draw attention to a particular linguistic item (also called fronting) e.g. *In winter, I’m really moody*.

form The class of a word or the type of phrase.

free morpheme The smallest meaningful unit of language that can occur by itself.

function The role of words, phrases or clauses within a sentence e.g. modifiers in a noun phrase.

function word Closed words like prepositions, conjunctions, determiners etc. that express grammatical functions within a sentence.

future time A verb phrase that indicates actions/processes that have not yet taken place using the modal will, the multi-word verb *to be + going to*, or the simple present in subordinate clauses.

gradable A term to describe adjectives and adverbs that can be compared (e.g. *colder, coldest*) or intensified (e.g. *so cold*).

grammatical mood A term describing the relationship between the verb phrase and the intention of a sentence e.g. making a statement (declarative); asking a questions (interrogative); telling someone to do something (imperative); communicating something hypothetical (subjunctive).

head word The main linguistic item in a phrase.

hedging The use of mitigating words or sounds to lessen the impact of an utterance e.g. *I think, I’m not an expert but …, somewhat, it’s possible that …*

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

hesitation The repetition of the initial sound of a letter e.g. *s. straight; th. um (.) the very obvious*.

homonym Words with the same sound and form but different meanings e.g. *rock* (noun, aggregate of solid mineral matter) and *rock* (verb, move gently back and forwards).

homophone Words with the same sound but different spelling and meaning e.g. flower/flour.

hyperbole Exaggeration or overstatement used as a rhetorical device to heighten feelings.

hypercorrection A process of overcompensation where speakers use non-standard forms in the belief that they are more formal or correct e.g. *She gave it to John and I*.

hypophora A rhetorical device in which a speaker or writer poses a question and then provides the answer.

idiolect A term used to describe the characteristic speech of an individual, including distinctive features of pronunciation, lexis, and grammar.

idiom A distinctive expression in which the meaning is not a literal interpretation of the individual words e.g. *She jumped the gun when she sent in that complaint yesterday*. i.e. ‘acted too fast’.

imperative A grammatical mood expressing a directive using a verb in the base form with no subject e.g. *Sit. Don’t eat it. Stop*.

implicature A term used to describe what a hearer infers from an utterance.

inclusive A term used to describe a first person plural reference (e.g. *we, us*) that includes the speaker as well as the addressee(s).

independent clause A clause that can stand alone, has a tensed verb phrase, and makes sense by itself (also called a main clause).

indirect object The animate being that receives the action of the verb, which comes before the direct object, or after it in the form of a prepositional phrase e.g. *The cat brought Sandra a mouse* OR *The cat brought a mouse to Sandra*.

indirect speech A form of speech which reports what someone else has said, where the subordinator that introduces words spoken e.g. *The teacher said that I could pass*.

infinitive A non-finite base form verb which usually occurs with the preposition to e.g. *to sit*.

inflection The marking of a grammatical relationship with a suffix e.g. plural and possessive nouns, verbs participles (-*ing*, -*ed*).

-ing participle A non-finite verb formed by adding an -*ing* inflection to the base form of a verb, which occurs with an auxiliary in a tensed verb phrase, or by itself as a non-finite clause (also called a present participle) e.g. *The girl was crying for ages. The leaves falling from the trees carpeted the ground*.

initialism A word formed from the first letters of a sequence of words pronounced letter by letter e.g. *NHS, BBC, OMG*.

initial position A term used to describe the first site in a sentence, clause, phrase or word. intensifier An adverb that adds emphasis e.g. *so, very, really*.

interactive feature Distinctive non-verbal utterances that affirm (e.g. *mm, yes*), show agreement (e.g. feature laughter), add reinforcement (e.g. echo utterances).

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

interjection A closed class group of words and phrases that communicate emotions or spontaneous responses which are not part of the grammatical structure of a clause e.g. *hey!, oh dear!*

interrogative A grammatical mood expressing a question, in which the subject and the verb are inverted e.g. *Has she got a cat? Would they buy a book? Does he want to come?*

interruption The ending of one speaker’s turn by the intervention of another speaker, which may be a non-cooperative challenge, or may be the result of multiple participants with equal status in a conversation.

intonation The quality or tone of voice in speech, which can stay level, rise or fall.

intransitive A verb which requires no object to complete its meaning (e.g. *The baby smiled*.)—some verbs can be both intransitive (e.g. *The family ate*.) and transitive (e.g. *The family ate the meal*.)

irony A way of writing or speaking in which the intended meaning appears to be the opposite of what is actually said e.g. *Thanks so much for taking the bins out!* (i.e. bins have not actually been taken out = implicit criticism).

latch-on A smooth link between different speakers in a spoken exchange.

lexical cohesion Links created between words as a result of their related meanings.

lexical diffusion The gradual spread of linguistic change.

lexical set A group of words linked by a common word class, which may also have related meanings.

lexical verb The verb in a verb phrase that carries the main meaning (also called a main verb) e.g. *The man fell. The children had finished. The car should have arrived by now*.

lexis The term used to describe the vocabulary of a language.

liaison A process that changes the pronunciation of words at boundaries, usually inserting /*r*/.

loan word A word borrowed from another language e.g. *tortilla*.

main clause A clause that can stand alone, has a tensed verb phrase, and makes sense (also called an independent clause)

malapropism A misuse of words that sound similar e.g. *fire distinguisher* for *fire extinguisher*.

marked theme A linguistic unit that occurs at the front of a sentence replacing the subject (the theme of a sentence) e.g. *In the middle of winter, you don’t expect crocuses to flower*.

metaphor A figurative use of language in which one thing is seen in terms of something else e.g. *He was at a crossroads and didn’t know which road to take* (= making choices in life).

metonymy The use of an attribute to represent the whole e.g. the *stage* = *theatre*.

minimal pair/set Two or more words that are identical except for one phoneme occurring in the same place which changes the meaning e.g. *pin/pan, shot/pot, din/dip/did/dig*.

minor sentence A sentence or utterance that lacks one or more of the clause elements (e.g. *three samosas*—said to a server on the deli counter), often formulaic in structure (e.g. *Sure!*—in response to a question).

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

modal verb An auxiliary that alters the meaning of the lexical verb in terms of likelihood, ability, permission, obligation etc. e.g. *we must go* (obligation); *we might go* (possibility); *we will go* (prediction).

mode A term used to describe whether language use is written, spoken, or multi-modal.

modifier A word used to add descriptive detail to another word e.g. *the slow train; the train screeched wildly*.

monitoring features Expressions which allow a speaker to check that the hearer is still listening, has understood etc. e.g. *if you remember …, would you believe … , you know*.

monosyllabic Having one syllable.

morpheme The smallest unit of meaning e.g. *dog* (free); *re-* (bound).

morphology The study of the structure of words in terms of morphemes.

multi-word verb A verb which has a particle e.g. *the police kicked in the door* (verb + adverb = phrasal verb); *the girl looked at the painting* (verb + preposition = prepositional verb).

negative The use of particles or words to deny what is asserted by a verb e.g. *The tree has not grown. The child never sat down. I ate nothing*.

neologism The creation of a word from existing lexical items e.g. *electracy*—the skills and facility needed to make full use of the communicative potential of new electronic media (modelled on ‘literacy’).

non-count noun A noun referring to things which cannot be counted and which often do not have a plural form e.g. *traffic, applause*.

non-finite verb Verb forms that are not marked for tense, person or number e.g. base forms, infinitives, -*ing* (present) and –*ed* (past) participles.

non-finite clause A dependent clause introduced by a non-finite verb, which can function as a postmodifier (e.g. *The family running for the bus were clearly late*.) or as a clause element (*Deprived of love, pets don’t thrive*.)

non-standard Language that does not conform to the standard prestige form which is used as a linguistic norm.

noun An open class word with a naming function, often with a plural form and which can be marked for possession.

noun clause A dependent clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction that, which can fulfil the subject site (e.g. *What I want is time to rest*.), the object site (e.g. *I believe that the tide is coming in*.) or the complement site (e.g. *My one hope in life is that I do something useful*.) of a clause.

noun phrase A phrase which usually has a noun as its head, that can function as a subject, object, complement or adverbial in a clause.

normal non-fluency Commonly occurring features of spoken language such as hesitations and false starts which break up the flow of speech.

obsolete words Words that are no longer in use e.g. *jargogle*: to confuse or jumble; *scuppet*: a spade used for making ditches.

onomatopoeia The term used to denote words that imitate sounds e.g. *splash, murmur, clank, buzz*.

open class A large group of words (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) to which new words can be added—they carry the main meaning in a sentence (also called lexical words).

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

ordinal number Numbers that indicate the order of a sequence e.g. *first, second, third*.

orthography The study of spelling and the ways letters are used in a language e.g. spelling rules, hyphenation, capitalisation, word breaks, punctuation.

overlap Participants speak at the same time, but the dominant speaker’s turn is not ended—this can mark positive feedback where one speaker provides backchannel affirmation or support; the misjudgement of the end of a turn; or an additional point or comment on what is being said.

oxymoron The use of apparently contradictory words in a phrase e.g. *eloquent silence, darkness visible*.

paralinguistics The study of non-verbal communication e.g. vocal effects (laughing, sighing), gesture, posture and facial expressions.

parallelism Patterning of pairs of sounds, words, or other structures to create a sense of balance e.g. *quickly and decisively*, *neither a poet nor a philosopher*.

parenthesis The use of brackets, dashes or commas in written language, or pauses in spoken language, to mark out an optional element of a sentence or utterance.

passive voice A grammatical structure in which the subject and object change places to alter the focus of a sentence and the verb phrase is made up of to *be + -ed* participle e.g. *The book was written (by a local woman)*.

pauses Breaks in spoken language which can be minimal (micro pause), often marking the end of utterances, or timed (in seconds) e.g. *we’ll stop there (.) let’s try to (2) meet up later*.

perfective An aspect made up of *to have + -ed* participle e.g. *the cat has caught a mouse* (past action with present relevance); *the cat had caught a mouse* (action completed before a specific time).

periphrastic A grammatical structure formed by a combination of words rather than by inflection e.g. *the man did go/the man went* (past tense); *the vote of the people/the people’s vote* (possessive).

personification A device in which something non-human is given human attributes e.g. *the blushing birds*.

phatic speech Words, phrases and clauses that have a social function e.g. *good morning; lovely day; thanks*.

phonemes The smallest unit of sound.

phonetics The study of spoken sounds and the way in which they are produced.

phonology The study of sounds in a particular language and the ways in which they are combined to create meaning.

phrase A group of words that has no finite verb (except for a verb phrase) e.g*. a sleeping dog* (noun); *very clear blue* (adjective); *really soon* (adverb); *is going* (verb).

polysyllabic Having more than one syllable.

post-modification Lexical items that follow the head in a phrase e.g. *the horse that bites; very happy to see you*.

pragmatics The study of how contextual factors influence a speaker’s or writer’s language choices.

predicative The term used to describe modifiers that follow a copula verb e.g. *the grass was long.*

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

predicator The verb phrase filling the verb site of a clause e.g. *the dog was running up the mountain.*

prefix A bound morpheme that can be added to the beginning of a free morpheme e.g. *redo*.

pre-modification Lexical items that precede the head in a phrase e.g. *quite sad; apple tree*.

preposition A closed class word which comes in front of a noun phrase to express a relationship e.g. *on the mountain; under the table*.

prepositional phrase A phrase made up of a preposition and a noun phrase which can function as a postmodifier (e.g. *the dog with a fluffy tail*) or as an adverbial (e.g. *the man walked along the river*).

prescriptive An approach to language that dictates rules of usage, and which focuses on concepts of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’.

proclitic An unstressed morpheme which joins phonetically to the following word e.g. *’twas, ’tis.*

progressive An aspect made up of *to be + -ing* participle e.g. *the dog is chasing a rabbit* (ongoing action in the present); *the dog was chasing a rabbit* (ongoing action in the past).

pronoun A closed class word that can replace a noun phrase e.g. *the boy → he*.

proper noun A noun that refers to the names of specific people, place and occasions, and which has an initial capital letter in written language e.g. *December, Eid, River Bann*.

prosodic features The use of pitch, volume, pace and rhythm to draw attention to key features of spoken language.

quoted clause A clause containing the actual words spoken in direct speech and usually marked with speech marks in written language e.g. *‘He’s behind you,’ chanted the audience*.

quoting clause A clause accompanying direct speech that tells us who has said something e.g. *‘He’s behind you,’ chanted the audience*.

rallentando A term used to describe speech that is getting slower (marked *rall* on transcripts).

Received pronunciation An accent which has high social status and is not connected to a specific region (also known as RP).

relative clause A dependent clause introduced by a relative pronoun such as that, which, whoever, whom, of which, which post-modifies a noun phrase e.g. *the artist whose work was on display entered the room*.

register A style of language used in a particular context defined in terms of mode, tenor and field.

repertoire An individual’s range of spoken and written forms.

rhetorical question A question that does not require an answer.

self-correction A speaker’s repair to an utterance e.g. *bret-ta. (.) breathtaking; Steve (.) Sir Stephen*.

semantic change Changes in word meaning over time.

semantic field A theme or topic created by the use of words with associated meanings e.g. *doctor, medicine, vaccinating, surgery, prescription*.

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

sentence A grammatical structure made up of one or more clauses, marked by a capital letter and a full stop in written language (called an utterance in spoken language).

simile A device which makes a direct comparison between two things using the prepositions *like* or *as* e.g. *her heart was beating like the wings of bird against its cage*.

slang Distinctive, and often short-lived, words and phrases used by clearly defined social or age groups associated with informal speech e.g. *cork it* (stop talking).

simple sentence A sentence made up of one main clause e.g. *The astronaut fastened his belt*.

spontaneity markers Distinctive features of spoken language that mark speech as spontaneous and unscripted, including comment clauses, fillers, hesitations etc.

standard The form of a language considered to be the norm and used as the medium of education, government, and the legal system.

stative verbs Verbs that express states of being or processes, which rarely take a progressive form e.g. understand, wish, doubt.

subject A noun phrase or a clause which is the actor of a sentence e.g. *Winning medals is the goal of all athletes. The builder plastered the wall quickly*.

subjunctive A grammatical mood used to express something hypothetical or tentative—most common now in formulaic expressions (e.g. *God save the Queen*.) and in *If* structures (e.g. *If I were Prime Minister …*.)

subordinate clause A clause that cannot stand alone, but needs another clause to complete its meaning e.g. *Because I was tired, I went to bed early*.

subordinating conjunction A conjunction used to introduce a subordinate clause e.g. *while, as soon as, althou*gh e.g. *I couldn’t finish cutting the grass until the rain stopped*.

suffix A bound morpheme that can be added at the end of a free morpheme e.g. *goodness*.

symbol A device in which a word or phrase represents something more than itself e.g. *fog* can be symbolic of confusion

syndetic A term used to describe a list of words, phrases or clauses that are connected by a conjunction e.g. *A dove, a red rose, a rainbow and a kitten are all positive symbols*.

synonyms Different words that have the same or similar meanings e.g. *repulsive, nauseating, disgusting*.

syntax The study of the grammatical relationships between words in sentences.

tag question An interrogative structure that is attached at the end of a statement to encourage a reply e.g. *It’s good, isn’t it? I don’t like it, do you?*

tenor The relationship between participants in a language interaction.

tense A change in the form of a verb to indicate timescale e.g. *he walks* (present); *he walked* (past).

transitive A verb which requires an object to complete its meaning e.g. *The baby ate a banana*.— some verbs can be ditransitive (e.g. *Uncle Andrew told the children a story*.)

turn-taking The organisation of participants in a spoken interaction, where the turns may be equal or where one speaker may be dominant.

**TERM DESCRIPTION**

tripling Patterning of words, phrases, clauses or sentences in recognisable groups of three e.g. *No birdsong. No wind in the trees. No sign of life*.

utterance A grammatical structure made up of one or more clauses, often preceded by a micro pause and followed by another pause or a change of speaker in spoken language (called a sentence in written language).

unintentional repetition The accidental repetition of a monosyllabic word in spoken language e.g. *they they’ve; we we we*.

verbal noun A noun derived from a verb e.g. *Sewing is a useful skill*.

verbless clause A clause that contains no verb although the structure implies there should be one e.g. *When in doubt, ask*.

verb An open class word expressing states, process and actions, which can be marked for tense, aspect, voice and modality.

verb phrase A phrase made up of a single lexical verb, or up to four auxiliaries and a lexical verb e.g. *follows, was following, should have been following, may have been being followed*.

vocative The term of address used to refer directly to a person in speech e.g. *Come over here, John*. *Prime Minister, I’m very pleased to meet you*.

wh- question Questions introduced by *wh*- question words, which expect new information in the answer e.g. *Why are you late?* → requires reason.

word formation The process of creating words from free and bound morphemes e.g. *un + gracious + ly*

word order The arrangement of words, phrases and clauses in a sentence.

yes/no question Questions marked by the inversion of subject and, which require an affirmative or negative response e.g. *Is this dress alright?* → requires yes/no.