

English Key Vocabulary

Glossary of terms used in phonics, handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar

Nursery vocabulary is highlighted in pink.

EYFS	
Alien words	Made up words that children are asked to read to ensure they are applying their phonic knowledge in the first instance to decode words.
Blend / blending	Also referred to as sounding out or sound talking. Saying aloud the letter sounds before putting them together to read the whole word.
Capital letter	An upper-case letter used at the beginning of a sentence and for proper nouns.
Common exception word (CEW)	A word which does not follow the common phonetic spelling rules of the language, or where the usual rules act in an unusual way. Pupils have a list of these words which they are expected to learn by the end of each year in primary school.
Digraph	A sound represented by two letters. For example, 'ee' or 'th'.
Exclamation mark (!)	A punctuation mark used at the end of an exclamation. For example, 'What a fantastic day we have had!' It can also be used at the end of a statement or command to show something has been said with feeling or emotion, for example, 'That was a really scary film!' or 'Stop hitting your brother!'
Finger space	A space left between each word in a sentence.
Full stop (.)	A punctuation mark used to demarcate the end of a statement or command.
High Frequency Word (HFW)	A word which occurs most frequently in texts. For example, and, the, as, and, it.
Letter	A character representing one or more of the sounds used in speech; any of the symbols of an alphabet.
Phoneme	A sound which makes up all or part of a word. For example, the word 'light' is made up of the phonemes: 'l', 'igh' and 't'.

Phonics	A way of teaching reading and writing which focuses on hearing and learning the sounds in words, and how these are written down. Pupils are taught to blend sounds together to read words and to segment sounds to spell.
Punctuation mark	A symbol used to create and support meaning within a sentence or within a word, for example full stop, comma, question mark.
Question mark (?)	A punctuation mark which indicates a question and comes at the end of the sentence in place of the full stop.
Segment / segmenting	Breaking a spoken word into letter sounds to help with writing. For example, dog, d-o-g.
Sentence	One word or a group of words that makes sense by itself. Begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
Syllable	A sequence of speech sounds in a word. The number of syllables in a word sounds like the 'beats' in the word and breaking a word into syllables can help with spelling. One-syllable words include words such as, 'dog', 'cat', 'walk' and 'bath'; two-syllable words include, 'teacher' and 'Christmas'; three-syllable words include, 'beautiful', 'manager'.
Trigraph	A string of three letters which make a single sound, for example 'igh'.
Word	A single, meaningful element of speech or writing. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word (finger) spaces.

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Terminology for pupils as provided in the National Curriculum is highlighted in yellow.

Year 1	
Adjective	A word which describes a noun. For example, shiny, fragrant.
Alien words	Made up words that children are asked to read to ensure they are applying their phonic knowledge in the first instance to decode words.
Ascender	A part of a letter that extends above the level of the top of an x. Letters with ascenders are b, d, f, h, k, l, t.
Blend / blending	Also referred to as sounding out or sound talking. Saying aloud the letter sounds before putting them together to read the whole word.
Capital letter	An upper-case letter used at the beginning of a sentence and for proper nouns. In Year 1, pupils are taught to use a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I'.
Common exception word (CEW)	A word which does not follow the common phonetic spelling rules of the language, or where the usual rules act in an unusual way. Pupils have a list of these words which they are expected to learn by the end of each year in primary school.
Descender	A part of a letter that extends below the level of the base of an x. Letters with descenders are g, j, p, q, y.
Digraph	A sound represented by two letters. For example, 'ee' or 'th'.
Exclamation mark (!)	A punctuation mark used at the end of an exclamation. For example, 'What a fantastic day we have had!' It can also be used at the end of a statement or command to show something has been said with feeling or emotion, for example, 'That was a really scary film!' or 'Stop hitting your brother!'
Finger space	A space left between each word in a sentence.
Full stop (.)	A punctuation mark used to demarcate the end of a statement or command.

GPC	Stands for grapheme-phoneme correspondence and refers to the way that sounds heard in words are written down.
Grapheme	A letter or string of letters that represents a spoken sound.
Handwriting families	Letters that are formed in similar ways. Following the Penpals Handwriting scheme, we group letters as follows: Long ladder letters: l, l, t, j, y, u One armed robot letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p Curly caterpillar letters: c, a, d, g, q, e, s, f, o Zig zag monster letters: v, w, x, z
High Frequency Word (HFW)	A word which occurs most frequently in texts. For example, and, the, as, and, it.
Letter	A character representing one or more of the sounds used in speech; any of the symbols of an alphabet.
Noun	A naming word for things, animals, people, places and feelings.
Phoneme	A sound which makes up all or part of a word. For example, the word 'light' is made up of the phonemes: 'l', 'igh' and 't'.
Phonics	A way of teaching reading and writing which focuses on hearing and learning the sounds in words, and how these are written down. Pupils are taught to blend sounds together to read words and to segment sounds to spell.
Plural	More than one. In Year 1, pupils learn how to add the suffixes -s and -es.
Prefix	Letters that go in front of a root word and change its meaning. In Year 1, pupils are taught the prefix un- (happy / unhappy).
Pronoun	A word used in place of a noun to make a sentence less repetitive. Common personal pronouns are I, she, he, you and their.
Punctuation mark	A symbol used to create and support meaning within a sentence or within a word, for example full stop, comma, question mark.
Root word	A root word is a basic word with no prefix or suffix added to it. Adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word can change its meaning. For example, dress (root word), undress (with un- prefix), dressed (with -

	ed suffix).
Question mark (?)	A punctuation mark which indicates a question and comes at the end of the sentence in place of the full stop.
Segment / segmenting	Breaking a spoken word into letter sounds to help with writing. For example, dog, d-o-g.
Sentence	One word or a group of words that makes sense by itself. Begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
Singular	Referring to only one.
Split digraph	A digraph that is split by a consonant. Usually represent long vowel sounds 'a-e' ('cake'), 'i-e' (five), 'o-e' (code) and 'u-e' (rule).
Suffix	<p>A string of letters that go at the end of a root word, changing or adding to its meaning. For example, -ing (jump / jumping), -ed (buzz / buzzed), -er (quick / quicker) and -est (fresh / freshest).</p> <p>In Year 1, pupils are taught how to add the suffixes -ing, -ed, -er and -est where there is no change to the spelling of the root word.</p>
Syllable	A sequence of speech sounds in a word. The number of syllables in a word sounds like the 'beats' in the word and breaking a word into syllables can help with spelling. One-syllable words include words such as, 'dog', 'cat', 'walk' and 'bath'; two-syllable words include, 'teacher' and 'Christmas'; three-syllable words include, 'beautiful', 'manager'.
Trigraph	A string of three letters which make a single sound, for example 'igh'.
Verb	A word used to describe an action, occurrence or state.
Word	A single, meaningful element of speech or writing. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word (finger) spaces.

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Terminology for pupils as provided in the National Curriculum is highlighted in blue.

Year 2	
Adjective	A word which describes a noun. For example, shiny, fragrant.
Adverb	A word which describes how a verb action is being carried out. For example, noisily, clumsily.
Alien words	Made up words that children are asked to read to ensure they are applying their phonic knowledge in the first instance to decode words.
Apostrophe (')	A punctuation mark used to show possession or to represent missing letters in a contracted form. See also possessive apostrophe.
Ascender	A part of a letter that extends above the level of the top of an x. Letters with ascenders are b, d, f, h, k, l, t.
Blend / blending	Also referred to as sounding out or sound talking. Saying aloud the letter sounds before putting them together to read the whole word.
Capital letter	An upper-case letter used at the beginning of a sentence and for proper nouns. In Year 2, pupils revise how to use a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I'.
Comma (,)	A punctuation mark used in a sentence to mark a slight break between different parts of a sentence, or to separate clauses. Year 2 pupils are taught to use commas to separate items in a list.
Command	A type of sentence which instructs or orders an action to take place. For example, ' <u>Eat</u> your dinner.' ' <u>Add</u> the eggs to the mixture'.
Common exception word (CEW)	A word which does not follow the common phonetic spelling rules of the language, or where the usual rules act in an unusual way. Pupils have a list of these words which they are expected to learn by the end of each year in primary school.

Compound sentence	Formed by joining two main clauses with a co-ordinating conjunction. The two clauses can stand on their own as sentences. For example, 'I like dogs and my friend likes cats'.
Compound word	A combination of two or more individual words that have a single meaning. For example, 'football', 'carwash', 'sunflower'.
Conjunction	A type of connective that joins clauses. Co-ordinating conjunctions include 'and', 'but' and 'so'. Subordinating conjunctions include 'because', 'if' and 'until'. See also subordinating clause.
Contracted word	Short words made by putting two words together and omitting some letters, which are replaced by an apostrophe. For example, 'did not' is contracted to 'didn't'.
Coordinating conjunction	A conjunction which joins two main clauses to create a compound sentence. In Year 2, pupils are taught to use the coordinating conjunctions or, and, but.
Descender	A part of a letter that extends below the level of the base of an x. Letters with descenders are g, j, p, q, y.
Digraph	A sound represented by two letters. For example, 'ee' or 'th'.
Exclamation	A sentence which expresses surprise or wonder and ends with an exclamation mark in place of a full stop.
Exclamation mark (!)	A punctuation mark used at the end of an exclamation. For example, 'What a fantastic day we have had!' It can also be used at the end of a statement or command to show something has been said with feeling or emotion, for example, 'That was a really scary film!' or 'Stop hitting your brother!'
Finger space	A space left between each word in a sentence.
First person	A sentence is written in the first person if it is written from the point of view of the subject, in other words, using the pronouns 'I' or 'we'.
Full stop (.)	A punctuation mark used to demarcate the end of a statement or command.
GPC	Stands for grapheme-phoneme correspondence and refers to the way that sounds heard in words are written down.
Grammar	The rules that cover spoken and written language.
Grapheme	A letter or string of letters that represents a spoken sound.

Handwriting families	Letters that are formed in similar ways. Following the Penpals Handwriting scheme, we group letters as follows: Long ladder letters: l, l, t, j, y, u One armed robot letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p Curly caterpillar letters: c, a, d, g, q, e, s, f, o Zig zag monster letters: v, w, x, z
High Frequency Word (HFW)	A word which occurs most frequently in texts. For example, and, the, as, and, it.
Homophone	Words that sound the same but have different meanings. For example, see / sea, one / won, here / hear.
Letter	A character representing one or more of the sounds used in speech; any of the symbols of an alphabet.
Noun	A naming word for things, animals, people, places and feelings.
Noun phrase	A small group of words that does not contain a verb. A noun phrase contains a noun plus words to describe it. For example, 'the spotty, black dog'.
Past tense	Any one of a set of verb tenses which describe action that took place in the past.
Past progressive tense	Also known as past continuous tense, a form of the past tense where something goes on for a period of time in the past. For example, 'I was walking in the park'. Usually formed by adding the suffix '-ing' to a verb.
Phoneme	A sound which makes up all or part of a word. For example, the word 'light' is made up of the phonemes: 'l', 'igh' and 't'.
Phonics	A way of teaching reading and writing which focuses on hearing and learning the sounds in words, and how these are written down. Pupils are taught to blend sounds together to read words and to segment sounds to spell.
Plural	More than one.
Possessive apostrophe	An apostrophe used before the letter 's' to show ownership. For example, 'This is Sally's coat'. In Year 2, only the singular possessive apostrophe is taught.
Prefix	Letters that go in front of a root word and change its meaning.

Present tense	Any one of a set of tenses that describe actions which are happening now.
Present progressive tense	A tense which describes an action which began in the past and is still going on now. For example, 'I am <u>learning</u> to speak French'.
Pronoun	A word used in place of a noun to make a sentence less repetitive. Common personal pronouns are I, she, he, you and their.
Punctuation mark	A symbol used to create and support meaning within a sentence or within a word, for example full stop, comma, question mark.
Question	A type of sentence which asks a question. It begins with a question word (for instance, who, what, where, when, how, why).
Question mark (?)	A punctuation mark which indicates a question and comes at the end of the sentence in place of the full stop.
Root word	A root word is a basic word with no prefix or suffix added to it. Adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word can change its meaning. For example, dress (root word), undress (with un- prefix), dressed (with -ed suffix).
Segment / segmenting	Breaking a spoken word into letter sounds to help with writing. For example, dog, d-o-g.
Sentence	One word or a group of words that makes sense by itself. Begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
Singular	Referring to only one.
Split digraph	A digraph that is split by a consonant. Usually represent long vowel sounds 'a-e' ('cake'), 'i-e' (five), 'o-e' (code) and 'u-e' (rule).
Statement	A sentence that conveys a simple piece of information. For example, 'It is a sunny day today'.
Subordinating conjunction	A conjunction that connects a main clause to a subordinating clause. In Year 2, pupils are taught to use the subordinating conjunctions when, if, that, because.
Suffix	A string of letters that go at the end of a root word, changing or adding to its meaning. In Year 2, pupils learn spelling rules to add the Year 1 suffixes (-ing, -ed, -er and -est) where a change is needed to the root word. They also learn

	the suffixes -ment, -ness, -ful, -less and -ly and how these affect the meaning of the root word.
Syllable	A sequence of speech sounds in a word. The number of syllables in a word sounds like the 'beats' in the word and breaking a word into syllables can help with spelling. One-syllable words include words such as, 'dog', 'cat', 'walk' and 'bath'; two-syllable words include, 'teacher' and 'Christmas'; three-syllable words include, 'beautiful', 'manager'.
Time conjunction	Words or phrases which tell the reader when something is happening. For example, ' <u>After</u> dinner you must do your homework. <u>Then</u> you can read your book'.
Trigraph	A string of three letters which make a single sound, for example 'igh'.
Verb	A word used to describe an action, occurrence or state.
Word	A single, meaningful element of speech or writing. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word (finger) spaces.