Glossary for the programmes of study for English (non-statutory)

The following glossary includes all the technical grammatical terms used in the programmes of study for English, as well as others that might be useful. It is intended as an aid for teachers, not as the body of knowledge that should be learnt by pupils. Apart from a few which are used only in schools (for example, *root word*), the terms below are used with the meanings defined here in most modern books on English grammar. It is recognised that there are different schools of thought on grammar, but the terms defined here clarify those being used in the programmes of study. For further details, teachers should consult the many books that are available.

Terms in definitions

As in any tightly structured area of knowledge, grammar, vocabulary and spelling involve a network of technical concepts that help to define each other. Consequently, the definition of one concept builds on other concepts that are equally technical. Concepts that are defined elsewhere in the glossary are hyperlinked. For some concepts, the technical definition may be slightly different from the meaning that some teachers may have learnt at school or may have been using with their own pupils; in these cases, the more familiar meaning is also discussed.

Term	Guidance	Example
active voice	An active verb has its usual pattern of subject and object (in contrast with the passive).	Active: *The school arranged a visit*. Passive: *A visit was arranged* by the school.
adjective	The surest way to identify adjectives is by the ways they can be used: ▪ before a noun, to make the noun's meaning more specific (i.e. to modify the noun), or ▪ after the verb *be*, as its complement. Adjectives cannot be modified by other adjectives. This distinguishes them from nouns, which can be. Adjectives are sometimes called 'describing words' because they pick out single characteristics such as size or colour. This is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish adjectives from other word classes,	*The pupils did some really good work.* [adjective used before a noun, to modify it] *Their work was good.* [adjective used after the verb *be*, as its complement] Not adjectives: *The lamp glowed.* [verb] *It was such a bright red!* [noun] *He spoke loudly.* [adverb] *It was a French grammar book.* [noun]

Term	Guidance	Example
	because verbs, nouns and adverbs can do the same thing.	
adverb	The surest way to identify adverbs is by the ways they can be used: they can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a whole clause. Adverbs are sometimes said to describe manner or time. This is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish adverbs from other word classes that can be used as adverbials, such as preposition phrases, noun phrases and subordinate clauses.	*Usha soon started snoring loudly*. [adverbs modifying the verbs *started* and *snoring*] *That match was really exciting!* [adverb modifying the adjective *exciting*] *We don't get to play games very often*. [adverb modifying the other adverb, *often*] *Fortunately, it didn't rain*. [adverb modifying the whole clause 'it didn't rain' by commenting on it] Not adverbs: ▪ *Usha went up the stairs.* [preposition phrase used as adverbial] ▪ *She finished her work this evening*. [noun phrase used as adverbial] ▪ *She finished when the teacher got cross*. [subordinate clause used as adverbial]
adverbial	An adverbial is a word or phrase that is used, like an adverb, to modify a verb or clause. Of course, adverbs can be used as adverbials, but many other types of words and phrases can be used this way, including preposition phrases and subordinate clauses.	The *bus leaves in five minutes.* [preposition phrase as adverbial: modifies *leaves*] *She promised to see him last night.* [noun phrase modifying either *promised* or *see,* according to the intended meaning] *She worked until she had finished*. [subordinate clause as adverbial]
antonym	Two words are antonyms if their meanings are opposites.	*hot – cold* *light – dark* *light – heavy*
apostrophe	Apostrophes have two completely different uses: ▪ showing the place of missing letters (e.g. *I'm* for *I am*)	*I'm going out and I won't be long*. [showing missing letters] *Hannah's mother went to town in Justin's car*. [marking possessives]

Term	Guidance	Example
	▪ marking possessives (e.g. *Hannah's mother*).	
article	The articles *the* (definite) and *a* or *an* (indefinite) are the most common type of determiner.	*The dog found a bone in an old box.*
auxiliary verb	The auxiliary verbs are: *be, have, do* and the modal verbs. They can be used to make questions and negative statements. In addition: ▪ *be* is used in the progressive and passive ▪ *have* is used in the perfect ▪ *do* is used to form questions and negative statements if no other auxiliary verb is present	*They are winning the match*. [*be* used in the progressive] *Have you finished your picture?* [*have* used to make a question, and the perfect] *No, I don't know him.* [*do* used to make a negative; no other auxiliary is present] *Will you come with me or not?* [modal verb *will* used to make a question about the other person's willingness]
clause	A clause is a special type of phrase whose head is a verb. Clauses can sometimes be complete sentences. Clauses may be main or subordinate. Traditionally, a clause had to have a finite verb, but most modern grammarians also recognise non-finite clauses.	*It was raining.* [single-clause sentence] *It was raining but we were indoors.* [two finite clauses] *If you are coming to the party, please let us know.* [finite subordinate clause inside a finite main clause] *Usha went upstairs to play on her computer*. [non-finite clause]
cohesion	A text has cohesion if it is clear how the meanings of its parts fit together. Cohesive devices can help to do this. In the example, there are repeated references to the same thing (shown by the different style pairings), and the logical relations, such as time and cause, between different parts are clear.	**A visit** has been arranged for ***Year 6***, to the Mountain Peaks Field Study Centre, leaving school at 9.30am. **This** is **an overnight visit**. The centre has beautiful grounds and *a nature trail*. During the afternoon, ***the children*** will follow *the trail*.
cohesive device	Cohesive devices are words used to show how the different parts of a text fit together. In other words, they create cohesion.	*Julia's dad bought her a football. The football was expensive!* [determiner; refers us back to a particular football]

Term	Guidance	Example
	Some examples of cohesive devices are: ▪ determiners and pronouns, which can refer back to earlier words ▪ conjunctions and adverbs, which can make relations between words clear ▪ ellipsis of expected words.	*Joe was given a bike for Christmas. He liked it very much.* [the pronouns refer back to Joe and the bike] *We'll be going shopping before we go to the park.* [conjunction; makes a relationship of time clear] *I'm afraid we're going to have to wait for the next train. Meanwhile, we could have a cup of tea.* [adverb; refers back to the time of waiting] *Where are you going? [__] To school!* [ellipsis of the expected words *I'm going*; links the answer back to the question]
complement	A verb's subject complement adds more information about its subject, and its object complement does the same for its object. Unlike the verb's object, its complement may be an adjective. The verb *be* normally has a complement.	*She is our teacher.* [adds more information about the subject, *she*] *They seem very competent.* [adds more information about the subject, *they*] *Learning makes me happy.* [adds more information about the object, *me*]
compound, compounding	A compound word contains at least two root words in its morphology; e.g. *whiteboard, superman*. Compounding is very important in English.	*blackbird, blow-dry, bookshop, ice-cream, English teacher, inkjet, one-eyed, bone-dry, baby-sit, daydream, outgrow*
conjunction	A conjunction links two words or phrases together. There are two main types of conjunctions: ▪ co-ordinating conjunctions (e.g. *and*) link two words or phrases together as an equal pair ▪ subordinating conjunctions (e.g. *when*) introduce a subordinate clause.	*James bought a bat and ball.* [links the words *bat* and *ball* as an equal pair] *Kylie is young but she can kick the ball hard.* [links two clauses as an equal pair] *Everyone watches when Kyle does back-flips.* [introduces a subordinate clause] *Joe can't practise kicking because he's injured.* [introduces a subordinate clause]

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consonant	A sound which is produced when the speaker closes off or obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract, usually using lips, tongue or teeth. Most of the letters of the alphabet represent consonants. Only the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* and *y* can represent vowel sounds.	/p/ [flow of air stopped by the lips, then released] /t/ [flow of air stopped by the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, then released] /f/ [flow of air obstructed by the bottom lip touching the top teeth] /s/ [flow of air obstructed by the tip of the tongue touching the gum line]
continuous	See progressive	
co-ordinate, co-ordination	Words or phrases are co-ordinated if they are linked as an equal pair by a co-ordinating conjunction (i.e. *and, but, or*). In the examples on the right, the co-ordinated elements are shown in bold, and the conjunction is underlined. The difference between co-ordination and subordination is that, in subordination, the two linked elements are not equal.	***Susan*** *and* ***Amra*** *met in a café*. [links the words *Susan* and *Amra* as an equal pair] ***They talked*** *and* ***drank tea*** *for an hour.* [links two clauses as an equal pair] ***Susan got a bus*** *but* ***Amra walked***. [links two clauses as an equal pair] Not co-ordination: *They ate before they met*. [*before* introduces a subordinate clause]
determiner	A determiner specifies a noun as known or unknown, and it goes before any modifiers (e.g. adjectives or other nouns). Some examples of determiners are: ▪ articles (*the*, *a* or *an*) ▪ demonstratives (e.g. *this*, *those*) ▪ possessives (e.g. *my*, *your*) ▪ quantifiers (e.g. *some*, *every*).	*the home team* [article, specifies the team as known] *a good team* [article, specifies the team as unknown] *that pupil* [demonstrative, known] *Julia's parents* [possessive, known] *some big boys* [quantifier, unknown] Contrast: *home the team, big some boys* [both incorrect, because the determiner should come before other modifiers]
digraph	A type of grapheme where two letters represent one phoneme. Sometimes, these two letters are not next to one another; this is called a	The digraph *ea* in *each* is pronounced /i:/. The digraph *sh* in *shed* is pronounced /ʃ/.

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	split digraph.	The split digraph *i–e* in *line* is pronounced /aɪ/.
ellipsis	Ellipsis is the omission of a word or phrase which is expected and predictable.	*Frankie waved to Ivana and ~~she~~ watched her drive away.* *She did it because she wanted to ~~do it~~.*
etymology	A word's etymology is its history: its origins in earlier forms of English or other languages, and how its form and meaning have changed. Many words in English have come from Greek, Latin or French.	The word *school* was borrowed from a Greek word *ó÷ïëÞ* (*skholé*) meaning 'leisure'. The word *verb* comes from Latin *verbum*, meaning 'word'. The word *mutton* comes from French *mouton*, meaning 'sheep'.
finite verb	Every sentence typically has at least one verb which is either past or present tense. Such verbs are called 'finite'. The imperative verb in a command is also finite. Verbs that are not finite, such as participles or infinitives, cannot stand on their own: they are linked to another verb in the sentence.	*Lizzie does the dishes every day.* [present tense] *Even Hana did the dishes yesterday.* [past tense] *Do the dishes, Naser!* [imperative] Not finite verbs: ▪ *I have done them.* [combined with the finite verb *have*] ▪ *I will do them.* [combined with the finite verb *will*] ▪ *I want to do them!* [combined with the finite verb *want*]
fronting, fronted	A word or phrase that normally comes after the verb may be moved before the verb: when this happens, we say it has been 'fronted'. For example, a fronted adverbial is an adverbial which has been moved before the verb. When writing fronted phrases, we often follow them with a comma.	*Before we begin, make sure you've got a pencil.* [Without fronting: *Make sure you've got a pencil before we begin.*] *The day after tomorrow, I'm visiting my granddad.* [Without fronting: *I'm visiting my granddad the day after tomorrow.*]
future	Reference to future time can be marked in a number of different ways in English. All these ways involve the use of a present-tense verb. See also tense. Unlike many other languages (such	*He will leave tomorrow.* [present-tense *will* followed by infinitive *leave*] *He may leave tomorrow.* [present-tense *may* followed by infinitive *leave*]

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	as French, Spanish or Italian), English has no distinct 'future tense' form of the verb comparable with its present and past tenses.	*He leaves tomorrow*. [present-tense *leaves*] *He is going to leave tomorrow.* [present tense *is* followed by *going to* plus the infinitive *leave*]
GPC	See grapheme-phoneme correspondences.	
grapheme	A letter, or combination of letters, that corresponds to a single phoneme within a word.	The grapheme *t* in the words *ten*, *bet* and *ate* corresponds to the phoneme /t/. The grapheme *ph* in the word *dolphin* corresponds to the phoneme /f/.
grapheme-phoneme correspondences	The links between letters, or combinations of letters (graphemes) and the speech sounds (phonemes) that they represent. In the English writing system, graphemes may correspond to different phonemes in different words.	The grapheme *s* corresponds to the phoneme /s/ in the word *see*, but… …it corresponds to the phoneme /z/ in the word *easy*.
head	See phrase.	
homonym	Two different words are homonyms if they both look exactly the same when written, and sound exactly the same when pronounced.	*Has he left yet? Yes – he went through the door on the left.* *The noise a dog makes is called a bark. Trees have bark.*
homophone	Two different words are homophones if they sound exactly the same when pronounced.	*hear*, *here* *some*, *sum*
infinitive	A verb's infinitive is the basic form used as the head-word in a dictionary (e.g. *walk, be*). Infinitives are often used: ▪ after *to* ▪ after modal verbs.	*I want to walk.* *I will be quiet.*
inflection	When we add *-ed* to *walk*, or change *mouse* to *mice*, this change of morphology produces an inflection ('bending') of the basic word which has special grammar (e.g. past tense	*dogs* is an inflection of *dog.* *went* is an inflection of *go.* *better* is an inflection of *good*.

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	or plural). In contrast, adding *-er* to *walk* produces a completely different word, *walker*, which is part of the same word family. Inflection is sometimes thought of as merely a change of ending, but, in fact, some words change completely when inflected.	
intransitive verb	A verb which does not need an object in a sentence to complete its meaning is described as intransitive. See 'transitive verb'.	*We all laughed.* *We would like to stay longer, but we must leave.*
main clause	A sentence contains at least one clause which is not a subordinate clause; such a clause is a main clause. A main clause may contain any number of subordinate clauses.	*It was raining but the sun was shining.* [two main clauses] *The man **who wrote it** told me **that it was true***. [one main clause containing two subordinate clauses.] *She said, "It rained all day."* [one main clause containing another.]
modal verb	Modal verbs are used to change the meaning of other verbs. They can express meanings such as certainty, ability, or obligation. The main modal verbs are *will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must* and *ought*. A modal verb only has finite forms and has no suffixes (e.g. *I sing – he sings*, but not *I must – he musts*).	*I can do this maths work by myself.* *This ride may be too scary for you!* *You should help your little brother.* *Is it going to rain? Yes, it might.* *Canning swim is important*. [not possible because *can* must be finite; contrast: *Being able to swim is important*, where *being* is not a modal verb]
modify, modifier	One word or phrase modifies another by making its meaning more specific. Because the two words make a phrase, the 'modifier' is normally close to the modified word.	In the phrase *primary-school teacher*: ▪ *teacher* is modified by *primary-school* (to mean a specific kind of teacher) ▪ *school* is modified by *primary* (to mean a specific kind of school).
morphology	A word's morphology is its internal make-up in terms of root words and suffixes or prefixes, as well as other kinds of change such as the change	*dogs* has the morphological make-up: *dog* + *s.* *unhelpfulness* has the

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	of *mouse* to *mice*. Morphology may be used to produce different inflections of the same word (e.g. *boy – boys*), or entirely new words (e.g. *boy – boyish*) belonging to the same word family. A word that contains two or more root words is a compound (e.g. *news+paper, ice+cream*).	morphological make-up: *unhelpful + ness* ▪ where *unhelpful = un + helpful* ▪ and *helpful = help + ful*
noun	The surest way to identify nouns is by the ways they can be used after determiners such as *the*: for example, most nouns will fit into the frame "The __ matters/matter." Nouns are sometimes called 'naming words' because they name people, places and 'things'; this is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish nouns from other word classes. For example, prepositions can name places and verbs can name 'things' such as actions. Nouns may be classified as **common** (e.g. *boy, day*) or **proper** (e.g. *Ivan*, *Wednesday*), and also as **countable** (e.g. *thing, boy*) or **non-countable** (e.g. *stuff, money*). These classes can be recognised by the determiners they combine with.	*Our dog bit the burglar on his behind!* *My big brother did an amazing jump on his skateboard.* *Actions speak louder than words.* Not nouns: ▪ *He's behind you!* [this names a place, but is a preposition, not a noun] ▪ *She can jump so high!* [this names an action, but is a verb, not a noun] common, countable: *a book, books, two chocolates, one day, fewer ideas* common, non-countable: *money, some chocolate, less imagination* proper, countable: *Marilyn, London, Wednesday*
noun phrase	A noun phrase is a phrase with a noun as its head, e.g. *some foxes*, *foxes with bushy tails*. Some grammarians recognise one-word phrases, so that *foxes are multiplying* would contain the noun *foxes* acting as the head of the noun phrase *foxes*.	*Adult foxes can jump.* [*adult* modifies *foxes*, so *adult* belongs to the noun phrase] *Almost all healthy adult foxes in this area can jump.* [all the other words help to modify *foxes*, so they all belong to the noun phrase]
object	An object is normally a noun, pronoun or noun phrase that comes straight after the verb, and shows what the verb is acting upon. Objects can be turned into the	*Year 2 designed puppets.* [noun acting as object] *I like that.* [pronoun acting as object]

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	subject of a passive verb, and cannot be adjectives (contrast with complements).	Some people suggested a pretty display. [noun phrase acting as object] Contrast: ▪ *A display was suggested*. [object of active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb] ▪ *Year 2 designed pretty*. [incorrect, because adjectives cannot be objects]
participle	Verbs in English have two participles, called 'present participle' (e.g. *walking, taking*) and 'past participle' (e.g. *walked, taken*). Unfortunately, these terms can be confusing to learners, because: ▪ they don't necessarily have anything to do with present or past time ▪ although past participles are used as perfects (e.g. *has eaten*) they are also used as passives (e.g. *was eaten*).	*He is walking to school*. [present participle in a progressive] *He has taken the bus to school*. [past participle in a perfect] *The photo was taken in the rain.* [past participle in a passive]
passive	The sentence *It was eaten by our dog* is the passive of *Our dog ate it*. A passive is recognisable from: ▪ the past participle form *eaten* ▪ the normal object (*it*) turned into the subject ▪ the normal subject (*our dog*) turned into an optional preposition phrase with *by* as its head ▪ the verb *be*(*was*), or some other verb such as *get*. Contrast active. A verb is not 'passive' just because it has a passive meaning: it must be the passive version of an active verb.	*A visit was arranged by the school.* *Our cat got run over by a bus.* Active versions: ▪ *The school arranged a visit.* ▪ *A bus ran over our cat.* Not passive: ▪ *He received a warning*. [past tense, active *received*] ▪ *We had an accident.* [past tense, active *had*]
past tense	Verbs in the past tense are commonly used to:	*Tom and Chris showed me their new TV*. [names an event in the

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	▪ talk about the past ▪ talk about imagined situations ▪ make a request sound more polite. Most verbs take a suffix *–ed*, to form their past tense, but many commonly-used verbs are irregular. See also tense.	past] *Antonio went on holiday to Brazil*. [names an event in the past; irregular past of *go*] *I wish I had a puppy.* [names an imagined situation, not a situation in the past] *I was hoping you'd help tomorrow.* [makes an implied request sound more polite]
perfect	The perfect form of a verb generally calls attention to the consequences of a prior event; for example, *he has gone to lunch* implies that he is still away, in contrast with *he went to lunch*. 'Had gone to lunch' takes a past time point (i.e. when we arrived) as its reference point and is another way of establishing time relations in a text. The perfect tense is formed by: ▪ turning the verb into its past participle inflection ▪ adding a form of the verb *have* before it. It can also be combined with the progressive (e.g. *he has been going*).	*She has downloaded some songs.* [present perfect; now she has some songs] *I had eaten lunch when you came.* [past perfect; I wasn't hungry when you came]
phoneme	A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that signals a distinct, contrasting meaning. For example: ▪ /t/ contrasts with /k/ to signal the difference between *tap* and *cap* ▪ /t/ contrasts with /l/ to signal the difference between *bought* and *ball*. It is this contrast in meaning that tells us there are two distinct phonemes at work. There are around 44 phonemes in English; the exact number depends on regional accents. A single	The word *cat* has three letters and three phonemes: /kæt/ The word *catch* has five letters and three phonemes: /katʃ/ The word *caught* has six letters and three phonemes: /kɔːt/

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	phoneme may be represented in writing by one, two, three or four letters constituting a single grapheme.	
phrase	A phrase is a group of words that are grammatically connected so that they stay together, and that expand a single word, called the 'head'. The phrase is a noun phrase if its head is a noun, a preposition phrase if its head is a preposition, and so on; but if the head is a verb, the phrase is called a clause. Phrases can be made up of other phrases.	*She waved to her mother.* [a noun phrase, with the noun *mother* as its head] *She waved to her mother*. [a preposition phrase, with the preposition *to* as its head] *She waved to her mother*. [a clause, with the verb *waved* as its head]
plural	A plural noun normally has a suffix –*s* or –es and means 'more than one'. There are a few nouns with different morphology in the plural (e.g. *mice, formulae*).	*dogs* [more than one dog]; *boxes* [more than one box] *mice* [more than one mouse]
possessive	A possessive can be: ▪ a noun followed by an apostrophe, with or without *s* ▪ a possessive pronoun. The relation expressed by a possessive goes well beyond ordinary ideas of 'possession'. A possessive may act as a determiner.	*Tariq's book* [Tariq has the book] *The boys' arrival* [the boys arrive] *His obituary* [the obituary is about him] *That essay is mine*. [I wrote the essay]
prefix	A prefix is added at the beginning of a word in order to turn it into another word. Contrast suffix.	*overtake, disappear*
preposition	A preposition links a following noun, pronoun or noun phrase to some other word in the sentence. Prepositions often describe locations or directions, but can describe other things, such as relations of time. Words like *before* or *since* can act either as prepositions or as conjunctions.	*Tom waved goodbye to Christy. She'll be back from Australia in two weeks.* *I haven't seen my dog since this morning.* Contrast: *I'm going, since no-one wants me here!* [conjunction: links two clauses]

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preposition phrase	A preposition phrase has a preposition as its head followed by a noun, pronoun or noun phrase.	*He was in bed.* *I met them after the party.*
present tense	Verbs in the present tense are commonly used to: ▪ talk about the present ▪ talk about the future. They may take a suffix *–s* (depending on the subject). See also tense.	*Jamal goes to the pool every day.* [describes a habit that exists now] *He can swim.* [describes a state that is true now] *The bus arrives at three.* [scheduled now] *My friends are coming to play.* [describes a plan in progress now]
progressive	The progressive (also known as the 'continuous') form of a verb generally describes events in progress. It is formed by combining the verb's present participle (e.g. *singing*) with a form of the verb *be* (e.g. *he was singing*). The progressive can also be combined with the perfect (e.g. *he has been singing*).	*Michael is singing in the store room.* [present progressive] *Amanda was making a patchwork quilt.* [past progressive] *Usha had been practising for an hour when I called.* [past perfect progressive]
pronoun	Pronouns are normally used like nouns, except that: ▪ they are grammatically more specialised ▪ it is harder to modify them In the examples, each sentence is written twice: once with nouns, and once with pronouns (underlined). Where the same thing is being talked about, the words are shown in bold.	***Amanda** waved to **Michael**.* ***She** waved to **him**.* ***John's** mother is over there. **His** mother is over there.* *The **visit** will be an overnight **visit**. **This** will be an overnight **visit**.* ***Simon** is the person: **Simon** broke it. **He** is the one **who** broke it.*
punctuation	Punctuation includes any conventional features of writing other than spelling and general layout: the standard punctuation marks . , ; : ? ! - – ( ) " " ' ' , and also word-spaces, capital letters, apostrophes, paragraph breaks and bullet points. One important role of punctuation is to indicate sentence boundaries.	*"I'm going out, Usha, and I won't be long," Mum said.*
Received Pronunciation	Received Pronunciation (often abbreviated to RP) is an accent which is used only by a small	

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	minority of English speakers in England. It is not associated with any one region. Because of its regional neutrality, it is the accent which is generally shown in dictionaries in the UK (but not, of course, in the USA). RP has no special status in the national curriculum.	
register	Classroom lessons, football commentaries and novels use different registers of the same language, recognised by differences of vocabulary and grammar. Registers are 'varieties' of a language which are each tied to a range of uses, in contrast with dialects, which are tied to groups of users.	*I regret to inform you that Mr Joseph Smith has passed away.* [formal letter] *Have you heard that Joe has died?* [casual speech] *Joe falls down and dies, centre stage.* [stage direction]
relative clause	A relative clause is a special type of subordinate clause that modifies a noun. It often does this by using a relative pronoun such as *who* or *that* to refer back to that noun, though the relative pronoun *that* is often omitted. A relative clause may also be attached to a clause. In that case, the pronoun refers back to the whole clause, rather than referring back to a noun. In the examples, the relative clauses are underlined, and both the pronouns and the words they refer back to are in bold.	*That's the* ***boy who*** *lives near school.* [*who* refers back to *boy*] *The* ***prize that*** *I won was a book.* [*that* refers back to *prize*] *The* ***prize*** *I won was a book.* [the pronoun *that* is omitted] ***Tom broke the game, which*** *annoyed Ali.* [*which* refers back to the whole clause]
root word	Morphology breaks words down into root words, which can stand alone, and suffixes or prefixes which can't. For example, *help* is the root word for other words in its word family such as *helpful* and *helpless*, and also for its inflections such as *helping*. Compound words (e.g. *help-desk*) contain two or more root words. When looking in a dictionary, we sometimes have to look for the	*played* [the root word is *play*] *unfair* [the root word is *fair*] *football* [the root words are *foot* and *ball*]

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	root word (or words) of the word we are interested in.	
schwa	The name of a vowel sound that is found only in unstressed positions in English. It is the most common vowel sound in English. It is written as /ə/ in the International Phonetic Alphabet. In the English writing system, it can be written in many different ways.	/əlɒŋ/ [*along*] /bʌtə/ [*butter*] /dɒktə/ [*doctor*]
sentence	A sentence is a group of words which are grammatically connected to each other but not to any words outside the sentence. The form of a sentence's main clause shows whether it is being used as a statement, a question, a command or an exclamation. A sentence may consist of a single clause or it may contain several clauses held together by subordination or co-ordination. Classifying sentences as 'simple', 'complex' or 'compound' can be confusing, because a 'simple' sentence may be complicated, and a 'complex' one may be straightforward. The terms **'single-clause sentence**' and **'multi-clause sentence**' may be more helpful.	*John went to his friend's house*. *He stayed there till tea-time*. *John went to his friend's house, he stayed there till tea-time.* [This is a 'comma splice', a common error in which a comma is used where either a full stop or a semi-colon is needed to indicate the lack of any grammatical connection between the two clauses.] *You are my friend.* [statement] *Are you my friend?* [question] *Be my friend!* [command] *What a good friend you are!* [exclamation] *Ali went home on his bike to his goldfish and his current library book about pets.* [single-clause sentence] *She went shopping but took back everything she had bought because she didn't like any of it.* [multi-clause sentence]
split digraph	See digraph.	
Standard English	Standard English can be recognised by the use of a very small range of forms such as *those books, I did it* and *I wasn't doing anything* (rather than their non-Standard equivalents); it is not limited to any particular accent. It is the variety of English which is used, with only minor	*I did it because they were not willing to undertake any more work on those houses.* [formal Standard English] *I did it cos they wouldn't do any more work on those houses.* [casual Standard English]

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	variation, as a major world language. Some people use Standard English all the time, in all situations from the most casual to the most formal, so it covers most registers. The aim of the national curriculum is that everyone should be able to use Standard English as needed in writing and in relatively formal speaking.	*I done it cos they wouldn't do no more work on them houses.* [casual non-Standard English]
stress	A syllable is stressed if it is pronounced more forcefully than the syllables next to it. The other syllables are unstressed.	*about* *visit*
subject	The subject of a verb is normally the noun, noun phrase or pronoun that names the 'do-er' or 'be-er'. The subject's normal position is: ▪ just before the verb in a statement ▪ just after the auxiliary verb, in a question. Unlike the verb's object and complement, the subject can determine the form of the verb (e.g. *I am*, *you are*).	*Rula's mother went out.* *That is uncertain.* *The children will study the animals.* *Will the children study the animals?*
subjunctive	In some languages, the inflections of a verb include a large range of special forms which are used typically in subordinate clauses, and are called 'subjunctives'. English has very few such forms and those it has tend to be used in rather formal styles.	*The school requires that all pupils be honest.* *The school rules demand that pupils not enter the gym at lunchtime.* *If Zoë were the class president, things would be much better.*
subordinate, subordination	A subordinate word or phrase tells us more about the meaning of the word it is subordinate to. Subordination can be thought of as an unequal relationship between a subordinate word and a main word. For example: ▪ an adjective is subordinate to the noun it modifies ▪ subjects and objects are	*big dogs* [*big* is subordinate to *dogs*] *Big dogs need long walks.* [*big dogs* and *long walks* are subordinate to *need*] *We can watch TV when we've finished.* [*when we've finished* is subordinate to *watch*]

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	subordinate to their verbs. Subordination is much more common than the equal relationship of co-ordination. See also subordinate clause.	
subordinate clause	A clause which is subordinate to some other part of the same sentence is a subordinate clause; for example, in *The apple that I ate was sour*, the clause *that I ate* is subordinate to *apple* (which it modifies). Subordinate clauses contrast with co-ordinate clauses as in *It was sour but looked very tasty*. (Contrast: main clause) However, clauses that are directly quoted as direct speech are not subordinate clauses.	*That's the street where Ben lives*. [relative clause; modifies *street*] *He watched her as she disappeared*. [adverbial; modifies *watched*] *What you said was very nice.* [acts as subject of *was*] *She noticed an hour had passed*. [acts as object of *noticed*] Not subordinate: *He shouted, "Look out!"*
suffix	A suffix is an 'ending', used at the end of one word to turn it into another word. Unlike root words, suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word. Contrast prefix.	*call – called* *teach – teacher* [turns a verb into a noun] *terror – terrorise* [turns a noun into a verb] *green – greenish* [leaves word class unchanged]
syllable	A syllable sounds like a beat in a word. Syllables consist of at least one vowel, and possibly one or more consonants.	*Cat* has one syllable. *Fairy* has two syllables. *Hippopotamus* has five syllables.
synonym	Two words are synonyms if they have the same meaning, or similar meanings. Contrast antonym.	*talk – speak* *old – elderly*
tense	In English, tense is the choice between present and past verbs, which is special because it is signalled by inflections and normally indicates differences of time. In contrast, languages like French, Spanish and Italian, have three or more distinct tense forms, including	*He studies*. [present tense – present time] *He studied yesterday*. [past tense – past time] *He studies tomorrow, or else!* [present tense – future time] *He may study tomorrow*. [present

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	a future tense. (See also: future.) The simple tenses (present and past) may be combined in English with the perfect and progressive.	tense + infinitive – future time] *He plans to study tomorrow.* [present tense + infinitive – future time] *If he studied tomorrow, he'd see the difference!* [past tense – imagined future] Contrast three distinct tense forms in Spanish: ▪ *Estudia.* [present tense] ▪ *Estudió.* [past tense] ▪ *Estudiará.* [future tense]
transitive verb	A transitive verb takes at least one object in a sentence to complete its meaning, in contrast to an intransitive verb, which does not.	*He loves Juliet.* *She understands English grammar.*
trigraph	A type of grapheme where three letters represent one phoneme.	*High, pure, patch, hedge*
unstressed	See stressed.	
verb	The surest way to identify verbs is by the ways they can be used: they can usually have a tense, either present or past (see also future). Verbs are sometimes called 'doing words' because many verbs name an action that someone does; while this can be a way of recognising verbs, it doesn't distinguish verbs from nouns (which can also name actions). Moreover many verbs name states or feelings rather than actions. Verbs can be classified in various ways: for example, as auxiliary, or modal; as transitive or intransitive; and as states or events.	*He lives in Birmingham.* [present tense] *The teacher wrote a song for the class.* [past tense] *He likes chocolate.* [present tense; not an action] *He knew my father.* [past tense; not an action] Not verbs: ▪ *The walk to Halina's house will take an hour.* [noun] ▪ *All that surfing makes Morwenna so sleepy!* [noun]
vowel	A vowel is a speech sound which is produced without any closure or obstruction of the vocal tract. Vowels can form syllables by themselves, or they may combine with consonants. In the English writing system, the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* and *y* can represent vowels.	

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word	A word is a unit of grammar: it can be selected and moved around relatively independently, but cannot easily be split. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word spaces. Sometimes, a sequence that appears grammatically to be two words is collapsed into a single written word, indicated with a hyphen or apostrophe (e.g. *well-built, he's*).	*headteacher* or *head teacher* [can be written with or without a space] *I'm* going out. *9.30 am*
word class	Every word belongs to a word class which summarises the ways in which it can be used in grammar. The major word classes for English are: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, determiner, pronoun, conjunction. Word classes are sometimes called 'parts of speech'.	
word family	The words in a word family are normally related to each other by a combination of morphology, grammar and meaning.	*teach – teacher* *extend – extent – extensive* *grammar – grammatical – grammarian*

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