

Supporting your child at home

Speed writing

Choose a short passage or poem from a book.

Use a 1 minute timer. Your child copies the passage in their *neatest joined* (ideally) handwriting for the minute. Once time is up, count how many words he has written.

The next day or every other day, repeat the task, starting from the beginning. They will soon see that they are writing more words per minute with practise, without losing letter formation.

Writing exercises

Dictation:

Read short passages to your child, a sentence at a time. Prime them for any punctuation they need to be aware of outside the usual capital letters and full stop. For longer sentences, you will need to repeat the sentence a few times. Give them a chance to check their sentence back as you read it out to them again. Check the punctuation each sentence – can they get every piece of punctuation and capital letter?

Sentence formation pyramid:

Ask your child to choose a noun.

Then ask them to rewrite the noun and to write the determiner before the noun

Now ask to write the determiner, noun and a verb – they can choose which tense

Now ask them to write the sentence again and to add an adjective to the sentence

Ask them write the sentence again and to add a prepositional phrase

Ask them to write the sentence again to add a fronted adverbial – ask him what punctuation it will need (comma).

To mix it up, you could ask them to add a subordinating conjunction or an adverb or a subordinate clause or an expanded noun phrase or even some punctuated dialogue. Please see the terminology glossary.

As they write, they should produce a pyramid shape with each sentence part:

Noun

Determiner + noun

Determiner + noun + verb

Determiner + adjective + noun + verb

Determiner + adjective + noun + verb + prepositional phrase

Fronted adverbial + determiner + adjective + noun + verb + prepositional phrase

Online games:

[Bitesize Karate Cats](#) – Good for revision of spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.

[Bitesize Crystal Explorers](#) – More challenging, uses a lot of the KS2 grammar and punctuation vocabulary that they will need to know by the end of year 4

Grammar terminology

Adjective – A word describing a noun (size, appearance, texture, taste, smell)

Adverb – Modifies an adjective or verb, often ends in –ly (too, very, hungrily, quickly, suddenly)

Adverbial phrase – a group of words that tell us more about the **verb**, e.g.
“The farmer **drove** *in the morning*”

Clause – a group of words containing a verb. A main clause is usually able to stand as a sentence on its own.

Complex sentence – A sentence that contains a main clause and a subordinate clause

Compound sentence – A sentence made of two simple sentences joined by a co-ordinating conjunction e.g. “The cat hates the rain but it stayed outside.”

Conjunction – a word that links two ideas together

Co-ordinating conjunction – links two sentences of equal importance or rank.
FANBOYS* We cannot start a sentence with one.

Subordinating conjunction – Used to join a subordinate clause to a main clause.
I SAW A WABUB* We can start a sentence with one.

Determiner – a word that tells us which noun (the, that, this, a, any, some, two)

Expanded noun phrase – two or more adjectives before the noun (**adj**, **adj**, **noun**: **black**, **fluffy cat**)

Fronted adverbial – an adverbial phrase that goes at the start of the sentence, telling us where, when or the manner in which the main clause's verb is done.
e.g. *In the morning*, the farmer **drove**. (When)
Across the fields, the farmer **drove**. (Where)
Angrily, the farmer **drove**. (The manner or how)

Phrase – A group of words that does not contain a subject and a verb
e.g. “the blue cat” is a noun phrase and “the blue cat sat” is a clause, because there is a verb.

Preposition – Tells us where something is, its position (under, above, in, next to, beside, through, on top, outside)

Prepositional phrase – A group of words that tell us where the main clause has taken place
e.g. the blue cat sat **in the muddy puddle**.

Relative clause – a subordinate clause that includes further information about the subject
e.g. The cat, **which was black and fluffy**, sat outside. Usually linked with ‘which’ or ‘that’

Simple sentence – A subject and a verb is present. There may or may not be prepositional or noun phrases as well.

E.g. “The cat hates the rain.” Or “The cat stayed outside.”

Subordinate clause – a clause that cannot stand alone as a main sentence; it contains a verb, which is what makes it a clause and not a phrase. It is joined to a main clause using a subordinating conjunction.
E.g. **even though it was raining**

A subordinate clause can go at the start, in the middle or at the end of a sentence and must be separated by a comma when it is in the middle or at the start.

E.g. The cat stayed outside **even though it was raining**.

The cat, **even though it is raining**, stayed outside.

Even though it is raining, the cat stayed outside.

*FANBOYS – An acronym to remember co-ordinating conjunctions

For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So

*I SAW A WABUB – an acronym to remember lots of subordinating conjunctions

If, Since, Although, When, As, While, After, Before, Until, Because

Punctuating direct speech:

Initially, year 3 just need to work on understanding when and where to use “ ”. An activity that is useful is to draw a speech bubble and rewrite it in a sentence, or to rewrite dialogue from a comic strip in sentences. Remind them that the narrative part (who’s speaking, how they’re saying it) is just as important!

Year 4s need to remember these rules:

1. The words being spoken by a person are inside “ ”

2. The first word of dialogue always begins with a capital letter, even if the dialogue is part-way through a sentence
3. Any ? or ! attached to the dialogue needs to be inside the speech marks / inverted commas
4. A comma needs to separate the dialogue from the narrative or vice versa.

“Oh look, it’s raining again,” sighed Mona.

Mona sighed, “Oh look, it’s raining again.”

“Oh look,” Mona sighed, “it’s raining again.”



Does not need to be a capital because it’s not the first word that person says in the sentence.

Would be a capital if I used a full stop after ‘sighed’ instead.