Grammar Glossary

Active Voice
A sentence is written in active voice when the subject of the sentence is performing the action.
*E.g.**The police caught** the thief*

Adjective
An adjective is a word used to describe and give more information about a noun, which could be a person, place or object.
*E.g. The cat is very **happy***

Adverb
A word that describes a verb, an adjective or another adverb. It tells you how, when, where or why something is being done.
E.g. The cat is **extremely** small / the cat moved **stealthily**

Adverbial
A word, or group of words that behaves like an adverb. It gives more information about a verb or clause.

*E.g. **Later that day** the cat curled up in front of the fire.*

Antonym
A word opposite in meaning to another.
*E.g. **Hot/cold; fast/slow***

Apostrophe
Apostrophes are punctuation marks used to show possession and to show contraction (also known as omission).
*E.g. **Peter's shoes** were filthy after the walk through the forest (possession).*
*I think **you're** the best player we have (contraction/omission).*

Article

Articles are words which tell us whether a noun is general (any noun) or specific. There are three articles: 'the' is a definite article and 'a' and 'an' are indefinite articles.

*E.g. **The** dog found **a** bone in **an** old box.*

Bracket

Brackets are used to enclose an aside or to add information or ideas which are not essential. You should be able to remove the brackets and their contents and be left with a sentence which makes sense *E.g. The shoes **(made of patent leather)** were all scuffed and dirty.*

Clause

Clauses are the building blocks of sentences, groups of words that contain a subject and a verb. A clause can be a sentence in its own right (main clause), but can also be just a part of the sentence (subordinate).

*E.g. **It was raining** (main clause).*

***If you are coming to the party,** please let us know (subordinate clause).*

Colon

The colon has two main uses.

1) To introduce an idea that is an explanation or continuation of the one that comes before the colon.
E.g. Africa is facing a terrifying problem: perpetual drought.

2) The second main use of the colon is to introduce a list. Again it is important to remember that the clause that precedes the colon must make complete sense on its own.
E.g. The potion contained some exotic ingredients: snails' eyes, bats' tongues and garlic.

Conditional tense

The conditional tense shows that an action is reliant on something else (there's a condition). It's an action that could or would happen depending on the condition.

*E.g. If the dog hadn't chewed my school bag, **I would have handed in** my homework.*

Conjunction

A word used to link clauses within a sentence. 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.

*E.g. James bought a bat **and** ball (co-ordinating conjunction).*

*Everyone watches **when** Kyle does back flips (subordinating conjunction).*

Connective

A connective is a word or phrase that links clauses or sentences. Connectives can be conjunctions or connecting adverbs.

*E.g. It was raining **but** it wasn't cold (conjunction).*

*I didn't think much of the film. Helen, **on the other hand**, enjoyed it (connecting adverbial phrase).*

Dash

The single dash is normally a feature of informal English and is used, especially in narrative, to create suspense or to indicate that what follows is an afterthought or something to be emphasised.

*E.g. There it was again, that creak on the staircase. Pamela sat upright in bed, eyes wide open in the darkness. Just Marmalade her cat, she thought **–** or was it?*

Determiner
A determiner specifies a noun as known or unknown, and it goes before any modifiers (e.g. adjectives or other nouns). There are different types of determiners:
- articles (***a, an, the***)
- demonstratives (***this, that, these and those***)
- possessives (***my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their, mine, his, hers, yours, ours***)
- quantifiers (***some, any, few, little, more, much, many, each, every, both, all, enough, half, little, whole, less****).*

Direct Speech
Direct speech is where the exact words spoken are put into speech marks.
*E.g. **"Shall we go to the scooter park after school?"** Max asked Oscar.*

Ellipsis
An ellipsis (plural: ellipses) is a punctuation mark consisting of three dots. Ellipses can express hesitation, changes of mood, suspense, or thoughts trailing off. Writers also use ellipses to indicate a pause.
*E.g. "I was wondering **…**" Jason said, bemused.*

Embedded clause
An embedded clause is a clause used in the middle of another clause. It is usually marked by commas.
*E.g. My gran**, who is 82,** still goes swimming.*

Fronted Adverbial
Fronted adverbials are words or phrases at the beginning of the sentence, used like adverbs to describe the action that follows.
*E.g **As soon as he could,** Tom jumped off the train.*

Future tense
The verb tense that describes what will happen in the future.
*E.g. He **will leave** tomorrow.*
*He **may leave** tomorrow.*
*He **leaves** tomorrow.*
*He **is going to leave** tomorrow.*

Hyphen
Hyphens are used to make new words out of two existing words or parts of words.
*E.g. **topsy-turvy***

Imperative verb
A bossy verb, used in instructions/directions
*E.g. **Take** that road.*

Infinitive
The basic form of the verb, as it is found in the dictionary (nothing has been added or taken away).
*E.g. **to drink** / **to sleep***

Irregular verb
Verbs that don't follow a set pattern of rules.
*E.g. take becomes **took** rather than 'taked'*

Main clause
A clause that makes sense on its own.
*E.g. **I stayed inside** because it was raining. ('I stayed inside' is the main clause because it makes sense on its own).*

Modal verb
A modal verb are used to change the meaning of other verbs. Modal verbs are used to show the level of possibility, indicate ability, show obligation or give permission. The main modal verbs are *will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must and ought.*
*E.g. This ride **may** be too scary for you!*

Noun

A noun is a naming word. They can be used after a determiner. It is a thing, a person, an animal or a place. Nouns can be common, proper, abstract or collective.

*E.g. My big **brother** did an amazing **jump** on his **skateboard**.*

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.

*E.g. The cat chased **the mouse**.*

Passive Voice

A sentence is written in passive voice when the subject of the sentence has something done to it by someone or something.

E.g. The mouse was being chased by the cat.

Past tense

Verbs in the past tense are commonly used to talk about the past.

*E.g. Antonio **went** on holiday to Brazil.*

Perfect tense

The present perfect is used to say that an action happened at an unspecified time before now. The perfect tense is formed by: the present form of the verb 'have' and the past participle of the verb.

*E.g. People **have travelled** to the Moon.*

Phrase

A group of words that are grammatically connected so that they stay together and that expand a single word. These could be:
Noun phrase
Preposition phrase

*E.g. The **big, brown dog** had a very loud bark (noun phrase).*

Plural
More than one thing.
E.g. dogs, boxes, mice

Prefix
A prefix is a string of letters that are added to the beginning of a root word to change it meaning.
E.g. untie, disappear

Preposition
A preposition link 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.
*E.g. She'll be back **from** Australia **in** two weeks.*

Present tense
Verbs in the present tense are commonly used to:
Talk about the present
Talk about the future
*E.g. Tim **goes** to the pool every day.*
*The bus **arrives** at three.*

Progressive
The progressive form of the 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).
*E.g. Michael **is singing** in the store room (present progressive).*
*Amanda **was making** a patchwork quilt (past progressive).*
*Sofia **had been practising** for an hour when I called (past perfect progressive).*

Pronoun
A pronoun is a word used to replace a noun. Pronouns can be personal and possessive.
E.g. I, you, she, it

Possessive pronoun
A pronoun which shows who owns something.
*E.g. **His** pencil case lay on the table.*

Relative clause
A type of subordinate clause that tells you more about a noun. Relative clauses are generally introduced by a relative pronoun, such as *who* or *which*.
*E.g. The man, **who lives beside us**, is ill*
*The video, **which you recommended**, was terrific*

Relative pronoun
Relative pronouns, such as ***that, who, which, whose** and **whom*** can be used to introduce clauses in sentences:
*E.g. The woman **who** interviewed me was very friendly.*

Semi-colon
The **semicolon** (**;**) can link two complete sentences or main clauses and join them to make one sentence. The semi-colon can be used instead of a connective (they often replace 'and' and 'but') to join the sentences, however the second sentence must link back to the first sentence. Semi colons can also be used in lists when the items are described in detail.
E.g. The door swung open; a masked figure strode in.
At the circus we saw a clown juggling with swords; a fire eater with flashing eyes; a man who stood on a ball.

Subject
The subject of a sentence is the thing or person who is carrying out the action described by the verb.
*E.g. **The cat** chased the mouse.*

Subjunctive

The subjunctive is used when expressing a command, a suggestion or a wish. The third person singular (he, she, it) of any verb in the present doesn't have its usual –s ending. The verb 'be' in the present tense is always 'be' (not 'am', 'are' or 'is'). The verb 'be' in the past tense is always 'were' (not 'was').
*E.g The school requires that all pupils **be** honest.*

Subordinate clause

A part of the sentence that is dependent upon another part. It doesn't make sense on its own.
*E.g. I'll feed the dog [main clause] **when he barks** [subordinate clause]!*

Suffix

A suffix is a string of letters that go at the end of a word, changing or adding to its meaning. Suffixes can show if a word is a noun, an adjective, an adverb or a verb.
*E.g. help**ful***

Synonym

Synonyms are words with the same or similar meanings.
 *E.g. **pupil** and **student**.*

Verb

A verb expresses a physical action, a mental action or a state of being.

E.g. run, skip, are, has