



Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and Punctuation in the Curriculum

Grammar is concerned with the way in which sentences are used in spoken language, in reading and in writing. Sentences are the construct which help give words their sense. The purpose of grammar teaching is to enable pupils to become conscious of patterns of language which they can apply in their own work.

The purpose of punctuation is to clarify the meaning of texts.

Entitlement

The National Curriculum outlines a clear developmental programme for the introduction and acquisition of knowledge about grammar and punctuation.

Teaching and Learning

The emphasis is on the close consideration of examples of language in use, including children's own writing and on the exploration of language as a system. The aim is to develop children's curiosity about language and their capacity to observe and reflect, which will in turn enable them to develop more control and choice in their use of language.

Grammar is not about learning terminology. The use of terms to discuss language is helpful but is not an end in itself. Many pupils become adept at repeating terms they have heard, but remain unable to transfer grammatical knowledge into independent reading and writing.

Shared reading and writing offers a helpful context for the discussion and demonstration of grammatical features at word level (morphology), sentence level (syntax) and text level (conventions of style and organisation). Within the NLS, the objectives relating to grammar are located within sentence level. Guided writing offers opportunities for the children to focus on specific aspects of grammar and punctuation while the group/independent session provides a helpful context for investigations and application of grammatical knowledge in children's own writing. Exercises will only provide limited opportunities for consolidating understanding; they should *not* be the medium through which grammar and punctuation are taught.

Continuity and Progression

Early Years

Children should expect written text to make sense and they recognise sentences in shared reading of texts and in their own play and experimental writing. They write simple sentences based on speech and begin to use significant punctuation, e.g. capital letters for own name and at the beginning of a sentence.

Key Stage 1

At Key Stage 1 the emphasis is on developing children's general awareness of language, both written and spoken. Pupils are encouraged to attempt more complex spoken language and to observe the use of punctuation in written texts as a pointer for pausing, intonation and as an aid to meaning. They recognise sentences, expect them to make sense and use basic sentence structures in their own writing. Some punctuation marks are used in context. More complex sentences are developed through use of an increasing range of connectives.

Key Stage 2

In Years 3 and 4 pupils are introduced to the grammatical functions of different types of word and they begin to explore how sentences are constructed. The emphasis here is not about grammatical labelling (the naming of parts of speech) but on discovering their function, i.e. what words can be made to do.

In Years 5 and 6 this basic knowledge is extended through the close reading and discussion of carefully chosen examples from a range of text-types. In their writing pupils are encouraged to draw on this understanding to develop a sense of style, to experiment with the construction of complex sentences and to restructure sentences for clarity and effect.

The learning environment

Wall charts, grammatical word hoards and examples of children's investigations provide stimulation and information. Children have ready access to a range of appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses.

The role of parents and carers

As with spelling, it is important that parents do not become over-concerned about inaccurate use of punctuation in their child's writing.

Assessment

Assessment is used to inform planning. See writing document.