Abbreviation
A shortened form of a word or phrase; usually, but not always, consisting of a letter or group of letters taken from the word or phrase. For example, the word approximately can be replaced by the abbreviation ‘approx’.

Acronym
An abbreviation made from the initial letters of a group of words and often pronounced as a single word, for example, RAM (random access memory).

Adjective
A word used to describe somebody or something, for example, the blue table, the happy child. An adjective phrase is a group of words built round an adjective, for example, he’s a very old man. A clause which functions as an adjective is sometimes called an adjectival clause, or more often, a relative clause. Relative clauses add information to the noun or pronoun they modify.

Adverb
Adverbs are used to modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb:

- A verb - she walked briskly
- An adjective - he is happily married
- Another adverb - incredibly slowly, remarkably competently
- A whole sentence - luckily, all the children were happy with the arrangements.

Adverbs are often (but not always) formed by adding the letters ‘ly’ to the end of an adjective, for example, nicely, fortunately.

Adverbs of manner are used to describe the way in which something is done (remarkably, slowly, loudly); adverbs of place describe where (here, home, everywhere) and adverbs of time show when an action happened (now, yesterday, later), the duration (all day, since last year) and the frequency (sometimes, never, often).

Adverbial clause
An adverbial clause is a clause that functions in the same way as a single adverb, for example, the students lined up outside the door when they saw the tutor.

Adverbial phrase
A group of words built up around an adverb by adding words before and/or after it, for example, as economically as possible.

Agree/agreement
Correspondence in gender, number, case or person between words, for example:

John plays guitar. The verb agrees with the single subject.
The students play instruments. The verb agrees with the plural subject.
Analogy

Drawing a comparison to show a similarity, for example, if you were describing the flow of electricity, you might choose to use the flow of water as an analogy.

Apostrophe

A punctuation mark used for two purposes:

- to show that something belongs to someone (the possessive form); for example, the student's work, or
- To show that letters have been missed out (a contraction); for example, you've is the shortened form of you have.

Attachment ambiguity

Ambiguity indicates that a grammatical structure, such as a sentence, can be interpreted in more than one way. For example, the shopkeeper greeted the woman with a beaming smile - it is unclear (ambiguous) who was smiling - the shopkeeper or the woman.

Audio

Of, or relating to sound.

C

Clause

A clause is a group of words that expresses an event (she drank some water) or a situation (she was thirsty/she wanted a drink). It usually contains a subject (she in the examples) and a verb (drank/was/wanted).

Note how a clause differs from a phrase:

- a big dog (phrase - this refers to 'a big dog' but doesn’t say what the dog did or what happened to it)

- a big dog chased me (a clause - the big dog did something)

A sentence is made up of one or more clauses:

- It was raining. (one clause)
- It was raining and we were cold. (two main clauses joined by and)
- It was raining when we went out. (main clause containing a subordinate clause - the subordinate clause is underlined)

A main clause is complete on its own and can form a complete sentence (it was raining). A subordinate clause (when we went out) is part of the main clause and cannot exist on its own. In the following examples, the subordinate clauses are underlined:

- You'll hurt yourself if you're not careful.
- Although it was cold, the weather was pleasant enough.
- Where are the biscuits (that) I bought this morning?
- John, who was very angry, began shouting.
- What you said was not true.

Although most clauses require a subject and verb, some subordinate clauses do not. In many such cases, the verb can be understood. For example:

- The weather, although rather cold, was pleasant enough.
- (although it was rather cold)

- When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
- (when you are in Rome)

- Glad to be home, George sat down in his favourite armchair.
- (he was glad to be home)
Coherence/cohesion

An effective text needs to be coherent and cohesive.

The term 'coherence' refers to the underlying logic and consistency of a text. The ideas expressed should be relevant to one another so the reader can follow the meaning.

The term 'cohesion' refers to the grammatical features in a text which enable the parts to fit together. One way of creating cohesion is the use of connectives, for example:

\[ \text{I sat down and turned on the television. Just then, I heard a strange noise.} \]

The phrase 'just then' relates these events in time.

Cohesion is achieved by the use of words (such as pronouns) that refer back to other parts of the text. In these examples, such words are underlined:

\[ \text{There was a man waiting at the door. I had never seen him before.} \]

\[ \text{We haven't got a car. We used to have one, but we sold it.} \]

\[ \text{I wonder whether Sarah will pass her driving test. I hope she does. (= I hope Sarah passes her driving test).} \]

Colloquial

A colloquialism is a term used in everyday language rather than in formal speech or writing, for example, the use of the word kids rather than children in the following sentence:

\[ \text{The kids in years 4 and 5 are having a swimming gala next week.} \]

Colon: see punctuation.

Comma: see punctuation.

Compound word

A word made when two words are joined to form a new word, for example, foot/ball, foot/fall. Sometimes a hyphen is used between the two parts of the word, as in over-anxious.

Conjunctions (see also connectives)

These are words used to join words, phrases or clauses such as and, but and or. There are two kinds of conjunction:

- Co-ordinating conjunctions (and, but, or and so). These link items that have equal status grammatically, for example:

  \[ \text{We could fly to Paris or we could take the train.} \]

  \[ \text{He plans to fly to Dublin but he will arrive there very early.} \]

- Subordinating conjunctions (when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that). If the two items do not have equal status, a subordinating conjunction is used. Most commonly, this happens when a main clause is joined to a subordinate clause, for example:

  \[ \text{I was late for the meeting because the train was delayed.} \]
Connectives
A connective is a word that connects words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Connectives are often conjunctions, but adverbs and adverbial phrases and clauses can also work as connectives. For example, however, finally, in other words, that is to say.

Consistency
Maintaining a style or pattern, for example, always spelling organise with an ‘s’, or always spelling it with a ‘z’, but not mixing the two. Other examples include not mixing a formal style and an informal one or not mixing tenses (see agreement).

Consonant
Consonants are letters and speech sounds that are not vowels. See vowel.

Contraction
A shortened form of a word or phrase that is created when two words are combined, with some letters missing, for example, you’ve for you have, or doesn’t for does not. These are usually only used in direct or reported speech or informal text. See also apostrophe.

Contradict, contradicted, contradiction
To contradict is to state that something is the opposite of what has been said; a contradiction is a statement that contradicts.

Convention
The accepted way of doing things, for example, there are conventions in grammar, punctuation and spelling, which are generally accepted as the right way to do things.

D
Definite article
The; see determiner.

Determiner
These are words used with nouns to help define them, for example, this computer, a pencil, the book and limit, ie. determine the reference of the noun in some way. Determiners include:

- articles (a/an, the)
- demonstratives (this/that, these/those)
- possessives (my/your/his/her/its/our/their)
- quantifiers (some, any, no, many, few, all, either, each, etc.)
- numbers (one, two, three, etc.), and
- some question words (which, what, whose).

Words that are used as determiners are followed by a noun (though not necessarily immediately). For example, this book is yours; this black book is yours; which book is yours?

Many determiners can also be used as pronouns. These include demonstrative pronouns, question words, numbers and most quantifiers. When used as pronouns, determiners are not followed by a noun – their reference includes the noun: this is for you (this book, this school, etc).

Dialect
A version of a language spoken in a particular region or by a particular group of people, for example, the Yorkshire dialect, which contains words and phrases not used in standard English (which is in itself a dialect).

Dialogue
A conversation between two or more people.
Digraph
Two letters representing a single sound; for example, ‘ph’ in photograph or ‘th’ in this and thin.

Discourse marker
A word or phrase (such as however, nevertheless, well, OK, or right!) that is used to signal a pause or change of direction in conversation.

E
Ellipsis
The omission of one or more words from a sentence especially when what is omitted can be understood from the context. Ellipsis is sometimes used to avoid repetition or to give emphasis and it is a common feature of everyday conversation. For example:

Have the students finished in the hall?
Yes, break time this morning!
(Yes, they finished using the hall by break time this morning.)

Ellipsis can also occur in writing. For example, the dog, although large, was very gentle. In ‘although large’, the words ‘it was’ (although it was large) are left out but the sentence is still understood.

Evaluate
To assess; when asked to evaluate whether a statement is supported or implied by a text, you are being asked to judge how clearly the text does or does not spell out the information given in the statement.

G
Grammar
A term used to refer to various aspects and levels of language as a system, for example, the conventions which govern word formation and word order within sentences. More broadly, it covers the construction of larger units such as paragraphs and complete texts. Grammatical relationships within and between sentences are signalled by cohesive devices (see cohesion). Grammar includes syntax (the study of sentence structure) and morphology (the study of word structure).

I
Imply, implied, implicit
Something implied is hinted at without being stated explicitly. It is implicit.

Indefinite article
A or an; see determiner.

Infinitive
The base form of a verb, usually used with ‘to’, for example, to read, to teach.

M
Morpheme
The smallest unit of language that can convey meaning; a morpheme cannot be broken down into anything smaller that has a meaning. A word may consist of one morpheme (need), two morphemes (need/less, need/ing) or three or more morphemes (un/happi/ness). Suffixes and prefixes are morphemes.

Morphology: see grammar.
N

Noun
Words used to identify people, places, things and ideas. The suffix ‘s’ is often added to nouns to indicate a plural (more than one). Some nouns do not normally take a plural form, for example, money.

Collective nouns; these are nouns that refer to a group of things or people, for example collection, family.
Collective nouns may either have either singular or plural agreement with a verb, depending on the intended meaning, for example, his family is a large one, but his family are all elderly.

Proper nouns; these nouns refer to the name of people, places or things that are unique and are normally written with an initial capital letter. Brand names of products and companies are proper nouns.

Noun phrases; these are groups of words doing the work of a single noun, for example: the chairman of the board of governors.

P

Paragraph
A distinct division of text that begins on a new line (sometimes indented, sometimes with a one-line gap above it) and consists of one or more sentences, usually dealing with a single thought or topic or quoting one speaker's continuous words.

Parenthesis
When a word or phrase is placed ‘in parenthesis’, it is separated from the main part of the sentence by a pair of brackets, commas or dashes. The plural form ‘parentheses’ is sometimes used as a synonym for brackets.

The set of poetry books (which belonged to the tutor) were put in the library.
The set of poetry books – which belonged to the tutor – were put in the library.
The set of poetry books, which belonged to the tutor, were put in the library.
The writer has to choose the form of punctuation to use to indicate a parenthesis, as each has a slightly different feel.

Participle
A verb form derived from its infinitive or base form and which can be used as an adjective. There are two participles in English, the present participle and the past participle:

The present participle is formed by adding ‘-ing’ to the base form of a verb (working, reading, going, etc.). It is used in continuous and progressive verb forms (whether or not they refer to the present) she is going, she was going, she will be going, etc. The ‘-ing’ ending is also used for a verb functioning as a noun, for example, painting is my chosen career (this form is sometimes called a verbal noun or a gerund).

The past participle often ends in ‘-ed’ (worked, jumped) but many common verbs are irregular and have other endings, for example, thrown, taught. Past participles are used:

- after ‘have’ to make ‘perfect’ forms, for example, I have taught; and
- to make passive forms (whether or not in the past), for example, I am/was taught.

Participles (present and past) are sometimes used as adjectives: the falling leaves, stolen goods. They can also be used to introduce participle verb phrases, for example, being a youth worker, I work with young people.

Phoneme
A speech sound; in writing words are made up of letters and in speech they are made up of phonemes. There are 44 phonemes in standard English, evenly divided between vowels and consonants. Phonemes can be represented by a single letter ('a', 'm') and sometimes by a combination of letters.

Phonetic/phonetically
Phonetic/phonetically refers to the description of sounds used in speech.

Phrase
A group of words not containing a verb that acts as one unit. Some phrases act as nouns, for example a confident teacher, some as adjectives, for example, she is exceptionally competent and some as adverbs, for example, he retired very recently. Many phrases are prepositional phrases (see preposition).

The word is also used more loosely to describe part of a sentence of any kind, as in: you will be presented with a list of phrases or statements.
Plural
The form taken by a word to indicate that it is referring to more than one item, for example:

- The plural form of many **nouns** is indicated by the ending ‘s’: *books, students, centuries* (note: the ‘ies’ ending to a plural in which the **singular** ends with a **consonant** followed by ‘y’). Some plural forms are irregular, eg. *children, teeth, mice*.
- **Verbs, pronouns, and determiners** sometimes have different singular and plural forms, for example, *he was in that room, they were in those rooms*.

Possessive
A word which shows the possessor (owner) of a noun; for example *my book* shows that I am the owner of the book, and *the teacher’s book* shows that the teacher is the owner. When possessives combine with a following common noun they are determiners, but this noun may be omitted, in which case the possessive is usually called a possessive pronoun (eg. *mine, yours*).

Predicate
The part of a sentence which is not the subject but which gives information about the subject, for example, *the students attended a meeting, ‘attended a meeting’ is the predicate*.

Prefix
A **prefix** is a **morpheme** which can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning (eg. *un/done, over/done*).

Preposition
Prepositions are usually attached to a noun or noun phrase, showing the position or relationship of one thing to another and include words such as *at, over, by or with*, for example, *he arrived on a bike/ by car/ over an hour ago*. When a prepositional phrase is formed, it usually does the work of an adverb or adjective. Prepositions can also be found in phrasal verbs, eg. *get up! come on! English also has one **postposition** - ago*.

Pronoun
A word used in place of a noun, a noun phrase or several nouns. Pronouns are often used to save repetition of a noun. For example:

- **Personal pronouns**: *I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, it* (in place of the name of a person or thing)
- **Possessive pronouns**: *mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its*
- **Reflexive pronouns**: *myself, herself, themselves*
- **Indefinite pronouns**: *someone, anything, nobody, everything*
- **Interrogative pronouns** (used in questions): *who/whom, whose, which, what*
- **Relative pronouns**: *who/whom, whose, which, that*.

Punctuation
The standard set of marks used in written and printed texts to clarify meaning and to separate sentences, words and parts of words. The most commonly used punctuation marks in English are:

- **apostrophe** (’)
- **colon** (：)
- **comma** (,)
- **exclamation mark** (!)
- **full stop** (.)
- **hyphen** (-)
- **inverted commas** (see **speech marks**)
- **parentheses** (singular: **parenthesis**, also known as brackets or ellipses (singular, ellipsis) (( ))
- **semi-colon** (;)
- **speech marks**, also known as quotation marks or inverted commas (" " or ‘ ’), and
- **question mark** (?).

Also included are special signals such as:

- the use of a space before and after a block or words to indicate the start of a new **paragraph**, and
- the convention of using an upper case (or capital) letter to begin a proper name or a new sentence.
Redundancy
Redundancy is the use of duplicative, unnecessary or useless wording, also known as tautology.

Relative clause; see adjective.

Residual
Left-over, ‘residual’ spelling mistakes are those that people who can spell quite adequately habitually make, i.e. the errors are ‘left over’ from earlier in their lives.

Sentence
The items in a sentence are linked by grammatical rules concerning the order of words and the type of words included. It is generally accepted that a sentence must have a verb in it to qualify as a ‘sentence’.

- A sentence can be simple, i.e. just one clause, for example: the woman smiled.
- It can be compound, i.e. two or more main clauses joined by and, or, but or so, for example: the woman smiled and she sat down.
- It can be complex, i.e. a main clause plus one or more subordinate clauses, for example: although the woman smiled, she did not seem to be happy.

Sentences can be declarative: The concert finished on time.; interrogative: Is that your ticket?; imperative: Give me that ticket! or exclamative: What a pity!.

Sentence stem
In the test items, this is the first part of a sentence that requires completion by choosing from several possible endings, for example:

There were four kinds of meetings that day:… followed by a list.

Singular
A word form used to refer to one thing, person etc. For example, student, teacher. When more than one is referred to, a plural form is used. Verbs can also be singular or plural (see agreement).

Standard English
The variety of English used in public communication, particularly in writing.

Statement
A sentence that contains a fact or proposition, for example, this is a glossary.

Subject
This refers to the person or thing that the sentence is about, for example, his father attended the meeting; ‘his father’ is the subject (see also predicate).

Suffix
A morpheme added to the end of a word, e.g. hope + less becomes hopeless.

Syntax; see grammar.
T

Tautology
The unnecessarily repetition of the same idea in different words in the same sentence, for example, the annual poetry festival is staged every year.

U

Unit of meaning
An identifiably discrete idea.

V

Verb
A ‘doing’ or ‘being’ word that expresses an action or a state, for example, the teacher was in the staff room when the bell rang - ‘was’ and ‘rang’ are verbs.

- **Voice**: this word refers to the way in which a verb is used in a sentence - to describe whether something was done by someone (the active voice) or done to him/her (the passive voice). For example, she praised the child - the verb is in the active voice, whereas in, the child was praised by her - the verb is in the passive voice.
- **Tense**: verbs often change their form according to when the action they describe happens. They may be in the past tense (the library was closed on Monday, the library closed early), the future tense (the library will open) or the present tense (the library is open).
- **Agreement**: verbs often change to show whether a singular or plural subject is carrying out the action, for example, she learns French, they learn French.
- **Modal verbs**: a set of verbs such as can, may, might, will, which are used to express different degrees of certainty (see also participle, infinitive and agreement).

Vowel

The letters a, e, i, o, u; see also consonant.

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