

English grammar, punctuation and spelling test



Standards
& Testing
Agency

This document provides information for schools on:

- the specific areas of the National Curriculum programmes of study and level descriptors that will be assessed in the new test of English grammar, punctuation and spelling; and
- the format of each section along with some illustrative examples of the types of questions children will encounter when the tests go live next year.

The new English grammar, punctuation and spelling test will assess vocabulary, sentence-grammar, spelling and punctuation. The decision on whether handwriting should form part of the assessment will be determined following the trialling that is taking place this summer.

Level 3-5 test

The test at level 3-5 will form part of the statutory assessment arrangements for the end of Key Stage 2. Schools will have a legal duty to administer the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test in May 2013, when it will have become statutory for all children working at level 3 or above and enrolled at maintained schools or at academies (including Free Schools), who have completed the Key Stage 2 programme of study in the 2012/13 school year.

Test format

Punctuation, sentence-grammar and vocabulary will all be assessed by a series of short-answer questions in a variety of formats. Some question formats will be familiar to children from the current English reading tests and some new ones will be introduced. More detailed sample materials will be available to schools in December 2012, however, some illustrative examples of the types of questions children will encounter are included later in this document for your information.

The spelling test will assess around 20 words and will contribute towards the whole-test score. While different methods of administration are being trialled, the method selected will be broadly in line with spelling assessment in previous National Curriculum tests.

A number of methods of testing handwriting are being trialled. If a decision is made to assess handwriting in the final tests the most appropriate method will be selected.

Level 6 test

A separate level 6 test will be available for schools that wish to enter children expected to be working above level 5 at the time of the test. This test samples additional content from the Key Stage 3 programme of study for English (2007). During the test, it is therefore possible that children will encounter a small number of elements of the Key Stage 3 programme of study which they have not yet covered. Questions drawn solely from the Key Stage 3 programme of study will often be provided with 'scaffolding', so that they are accessible to Year 6 children working within level 6.

The elements of the Key Stage 3 programme of study that will be covered are not specified, as teachers should determine which are most appropriate for each child. However, teachers will need to have covered sufficient elements of the Key Stage 3 programme of study to be assured that the child is working within level 6.

Test format

Punctuation, sentence-grammar and vocabulary will be assessed in a similar way to the level 3-5 test, with similar question formats. However, a key feature of the level descriptor at level 6 is the focus on children's ability to demonstrate range, choice and accuracy in the way they organise their writing. An extended response to a writing task, similar to the current shorter-writing task will

therefore be included. The mark scheme will focus on sentence-grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and text organisation rather than composition and effect.

A spelling test will also form part of the level 6 test and will be similar in format to the level 3-5 test but with more challenging vocabulary.

What is being assessed

The table below shows the areas of the current statutory curriculum that will be the focus of the new test.

Key Stage 2 programme of study references (L3-5)	References sampled from Key Stage 3 programme of study (L6 test only)*
Test assessment strand: vocabulary	
<p>En3.1.b Pupils should be taught to broaden their vocabulary and use it in inventive ways.</p>	<p>2.3f Pupils should be able to use imaginative vocabulary.</p> <p>2.3i Pupils should be able to use formal and impersonal language and concise expression.</p>
Test assessment strand: sentence-grammar	
<p>En3.6a-b Standard English</p> <p>Pupils should be taught:</p> <p>a: how written standard English varies in degrees of formality [for example, differences between a letter to a friend about a school trip and a report for display].</p> <p>b: some of the differences between standard and non-standard English usage, including subject-verb agreements and use of prepositions.</p> <p>En3.7a-d Language structure</p> <p>Pupils should be taught:</p> <p>a: word classes and the grammatical functions of words, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, articles.</p> <p>b: the features of different types of sentence, including statements, questions and commands, and how to use them [for example, imperatives in commands].</p> <p>c: the grammar of complex sentences, including clauses, phrases and connectives.</p> <p>d: the purposes and organisational features of paragraphs, and how ideas can be linked.</p>	<p>1.1a Being clear, coherent and accurate in spoken and written communication.</p> <p>1.1c Demonstrating a secure understanding of the conventions of written language, including grammar, spelling and punctuation.</p> <p>2.3i Pupils should be able to use complex sentences to extend, link and develop ideas.</p> <p>2.3j Pupils should be able to vary sentence structure for interest, effect and subtleties of meaning.</p> <p>2.3t Pupils should be able to use the conventions of standard English effectively.</p> <p>2.3u Pupils should be able to use grammar accurately in a variety of sentence types, including subject-verb agreement and correct and consistent use of tense.</p> <p>3.4a The study of English should include the principles of sentence-grammar.</p>

* Further detail about the content and expectation of aspects of the Key Stage 3 programme of study are provided in the 'Explanatory notes' of the programme of study which are available on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/secondary.

Key Stage 2 programme of study references (L3-5)	References sampled from Key Stage 3 programme of study (L6 test only)*
Test assessment strand: spelling	
<p>En3.2.d Pupils should be taught to proofread – check the draft for spelling and punctuation errors, omissions and repetitions.</p> <p>En3.4a-j Pupils should be taught:</p> <p>Spelling strategies</p> <p>a: to sound out phonemes.</p> <p>b: to analyse words into syllables and other known words.</p> <p>c: to apply knowledge of spelling conventions.</p> <p>d: to use knowledge of common letter strings, visual patterns and analogies.</p> <p>e: to check their spelling.</p> <p>f: to revise and build on their knowledge of words and spelling patterns.</p> <p>Morphology</p> <p>g: the meaning, use and spelling of common prefixes and suffixes.</p> <p>h: the spelling of words with inflectional endings.</p> <p>i: the relevance of word families, roots and origins of words.</p> <p>j: the use of appropriate terminology, including vowel, consonant, homophone and syllable.</p>	<p>2.3w Pupils should be able to spell correctly, increasing their knowledge of regular patterns of spelling, word families, roots of words and derivations, including prefixes, suffixes and inflections.</p>
Test assessment strand: punctuation	
<p>En3.2.d Pupils should be taught to proofread – check the draft for spelling and punctuation errors, omissions and repetitions.</p> <p>En3.3 Pupils should be taught to use punctuation marks correctly...including full stops, question marks, commas, inverted commas and apostrophes to mark possession and omission.</p>	<p>2.3v Pupils should be able to signal sentence structure by the effective use of the full range of punctuation marks to clarify meaning.</p>
Test assessment strand: handwriting	
<p>En3.5a-b Handwriting and presentation</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <p>a: write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed.</p> <p>b: use different forms of handwriting for different purposes [for example, print for labelling maps or diagrams, a clear, neat hand for finished presented work, a faster script for notes].</p>	<p>2.3s Pupils should be able to write legibly, with fluency and, when required, speed.</p>

Key features of level descriptors relevant to the test

The following table highlights the key features from the National Curriculum (NC) level descriptors that are relevant to the tests.

NC level	Level descriptor
3	<p>Vocabulary: sequences of sentences extend ideas logically and words are chosen for variety and interest.</p> <p>Sentence-grammar: the basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct.</p> <p>Spelling: spelling is usually accurate, including that of common, polysyllabic words.</p> <p>Punctuation: punctuation to mark sentences - full stops, capital letters and question marks - is used accurately.</p> <p>Handwriting: handwriting is joined and legible.</p>
4	<p>Vocabulary: vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect.</p> <p>Sentence-grammar: pupils are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning.</p> <p>Spelling: spelling, including that of polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns, is generally accurate.</p> <p>Punctuation: full stops, capital letters and question marks are used correctly, and pupils are beginning to use punctuation within sentences.</p> <p>Handwriting: handwriting style is fluent, joined and legible.</p>
5	<p>Vocabulary: vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are used precisely.</p> <p>Sentence-grammar: sentences, including complex ones, and paragraphs are coherent, clear and well developed.</p> <p>Spelling: words with complex regular patterns are usually spelt correctly.</p> <p>Punctuation: a range of punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and inverted commas, is usually used accurately.</p> <p>Handwriting: handwriting is joined, clear and fluent and, where appropriate, is adapted to a range of tasks.</p>
6	<p>Vocabulary and sentence-grammar: pupils experiment with a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create effects.</p> <p>Spelling: spelling, including that of irregular words, is generally accurate.</p> <p>Punctuation and structure: a range of punctuation is usually used correctly to clarify meaning, and ideas are organised into well-developed, linked paragraphs.</p> <p>Handwriting: handwriting is neat and legible.</p>

Illustrative examples of formats for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test short-answer section

Below are some illustrative examples of the types of formats we will use to assess grammar, vocabulary and punctuation in the short-answer section of the test. These examples are not exhaustive – other formats are also being trialled and the questions could assess anything identified in the sections of the programme of study listed above. More detailed sample materials, showing a greater range of formats, will be available in December 2012 on the Department for Education’s website.

These illustrative materials are not intended to show the number of questions children will eventually need to answer. The total number of questions that will be included in the final test will be determined following analysis of results from the technical pre-test.

Level 3-5

1. Circle all the **adverbs** in the sentence below.

Open the drawers carefully and quietly when using the filing cabinet.

1 mark

2. Tick one word to complete the sentence below.

Michael and Kate read their books _____ they ate their sandwiches.

Tick **one**.

while

which

between

during

1 mark

3. Draw lines to match each sentence with the most likely final punctuation.

Sentence

Look out

How are you doing

January is the first month of the year

Punctuation

?

!

.

1 mark

4. Circle the word that describes **how** William played on the field.

William played badly on the field.

1 mark

5. Look at this sentence:

The shopping list said he should buy bread, butter, jam and tea.

a) What is the name of the punctuation mark that is used after the words 'bread' and 'butter'?

1 mark

b) Why is this punctuation mark needed in the sentence above?

Tick **one**.

to mark the start of a new clause

to show that a word is missing

to separate the items in a list

to take the place of brackets

1 mark

6. The sentences below each have an error. The errors are underlined.
Write the correction in the box, making sure the verb matches the tense.
One has been done for you.

had

↑
Yesterday, I have the chance to play for my local team.

↑
Our local café makes great cakes. We like to sit and ate them on a Saturday.

↑
The children are going to a shopping centre tomorrow and they had bought some new toys.

↑
I am putting on my shoes and I will have been for a walk in the park right now! 1 mark

-
7. Write a short question beginning with the words below.

How many _____ 1 mark

-
8. Underline the **subordinate** clause in each sentence below.

One has been done for you.

Although his Mum thought they were very smart, Peter disliked his new trousers.

Before he could go swimming, Ali packed his towel.

The twins asked Dad to turn up the heating as it was cold.

After drinking his water, Mark washed up his glass.

2 marks

9. Put the baker's words into direct speech.

The baker said that he hoped to sell all of the loaves by lunchtime.

2 marks

10. Complete the sentences below using either **I** or **me**.

____ pulled out the keys from my pocket.

She asked ____ to help her put up the pictures.

My team and ____ are playing next week.

Why isn't anyone able to understand what ____ am trying to do?

I had to help with the washing up before Dad would turn on the television for ____.

1 mark

11. Which sentence uses **inverted commas** correctly?

Tick **one**.

"Fortunately, Peter, you're going after all, said Mrs. Smith." It's a good job, too!"

Fortunately, Peter, you're going after all, "said Mrs Smith". It's a good job, too!

"Fortunately, Peter, you're going after all," said Mrs Smith. It's a good job, too!

"Fortunately, Peter, you're going after all," said Mrs Smith. "It's a good job, too!"

1 mark

12. Put a tick in each row to show whether the sentence is a statement, a command or a question.

Sentence	Statement	Command	Question
Wait at the door			
What time are we going			
Think about it a bit more			

1 mark

13. Complete the sentence below with a **contraction** that makes sense.

If you give me the recipe _____ buy the ingredients on the way home.

1 mark

14. Add a **suffix** to this word to make an **adjective**.

dread _____

1 mark

Level 6

The short-answer section in the level 6 test will use many of the same formats as at level 3-5, although the curriculum content being assessed will be at a higher level.

While all questions remain short-answer, there will be more items that require a sentence or two in response. Some formats that are unique to the content sampled from the Key Stage 3 programme of study will also be included. Some examples are shown below.

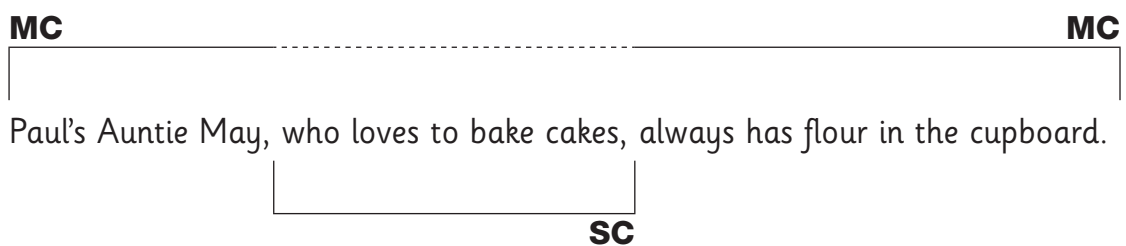
1. Rewrite the sentences, changing them from the active to the passive voice.

One has been done for you.

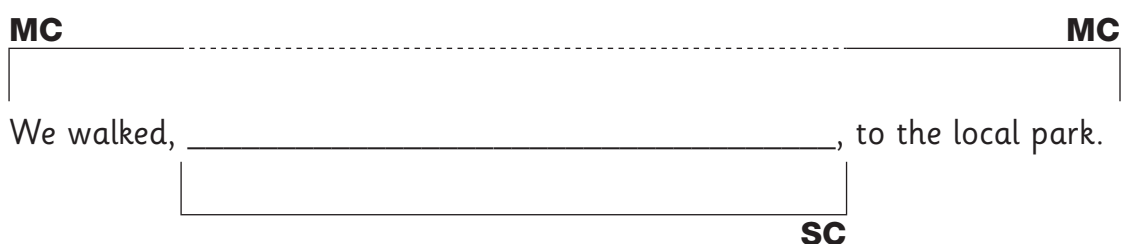
Active voice	Passive voice
<i>Sam ate a biscuit.</i>	<i>A biscuit was eaten by Sam.</i>
Victoria drank her tea.	
The team won the trophy.	
Rishi poured the milk.	

1 mark

-
2. This sentence is made up of two clauses, a main clause (MC) and a subordinate clause (SC).



Add a **subordinate clause** to the sentence below.



1 mark

3. Rewrite the sentence below, changing it from a personal form to an impersonal form.

It takes me a lot of time to decide what shoes to wear.

1 mark

4. Insert a **comma** and a **semi-colon** in the sentence below to clarify the meaning of the sentence:

David eats cake whenever he has the chance I prefer apples oranges and bananas.

2 marks

5. Label each of the **nouns** below as either abstract **AB**, collective **CL**, common **CM** or proper **PR** noun.



Last Sunday, the team was filled with excitement



that they might win the trophy!!

1 mark

For more information about the new test of English grammar, punctuation and spelling, please contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.