

## Overview of grammar and punctuation skills K–6

The following grammar and punctuation framework indicates those understandings and terms which students might be expected to have control of by the end of each stage. It is arranged according to levels of text organisation: from the broad text level to specifics of word level grammar. It indicates the stage at which key concepts should be **introduced**. Concepts addressed in earlier stages should be reviewed and consolidated according to student needs and syllabus requirements.

TEXT LEVEL – COHESION			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>pronoun reference</b> determining the noun to which a pronoun refers, eg <i>Koalas</i> eat leaves. <i>Koalas</i> are not bears. <i>They</i> are ...</p>	<p><b>synonyms</b> words that have the same or similar meaning, eg <i>leave/depart</i>, <i>tired/weary</i></p> <p><b>antonyms</b> words that have opposite meanings, eg <i>hot/cold</i>, <i>arrive/leave</i></p> <p><b>time connectives</b> words that sequence information in texts, eg <i>first</i>, <i>next</i>, <i>finally</i></p> <p><b>word families</b> words linked because they deal with the same topic</p> <p><b>noun–pronoun agreement</b> selection of the correct pronoun (considering number and gender) for the noun or noun group to which it refers, eg <i>The girl</i> ate <i>her</i> lunch; <i>The dogs</i> enjoyed <i>their</i> walk</p> <p><b>Subject–verb agreement</b> selection of a verb form which matches the number of its subject (noun or noun group), eg <i>They were</i> at home; <i>The cat is</i> sitting still; <i>The people are</i> on the boat</p>	<p><b>homonyms and homophones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>homonyms: words with the same sound and the same spelling, but a different meaning, eg <i>bark</i> (tree), <i>bark</i> (sound made by dog)</li> <li>homophones: words with the same sound but different spelling and meaning, eg <i>fair</i>, <i>fare</i></li> </ul> <p><b>cohesive links</b> eg, pronouns, conjunctions, connectives</p> <p><b>connectives</b> words which link paragraphs and sentences, eg <i>on the other hand</i>, <i>however</i>, <i>furthermore</i>, <i>therefore</i>, <i>because</i>, <i>although</i></p>	<p><b>nominalisation</b> forming nouns from verbs (eg <i>reaction</i> from <i>react</i> or <i>departure</i> from <i>depart</i>) or adjectives (eg <i>length</i> from <i>long</i>, <i>eagerness</i> from <i>eager</i>)</p> <p><b>reference links</b> links that keep track of the people, animals or objects throughout a text; usually nouns or pronouns, eg <i>Mabel</i> played netball on Saturday. She fell over and hurt <i>her</i> arm</p>
SENTENCE LEVEL – STRUCTURE OF THE SENTENCE			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>sentence</b> one or more clauses; a key unit for expressing ideas. A written sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark, eg <i>Kim</i> broke the vase. <i>Kim</i> tripped on the step and she broke the vase</p>	<p><b>compound sentence</b> two or more clauses usually linked by a coordinating conjunction, eg <i>The bell rang and Kim</i> went home</p> <p><b>quoted (direct) speech</b> eg, <i>Kim</i> said, 'I want to go home'</p>	<p><b>complex sentence</b> an independent (<i>main</i>) clause and a dependent (<i>subordinate</i>) clause linked by a subordinating conjunction (indicating time, place, manner, reason, condition), eg <i>We all went outside when</i> the sun came out. <i>When</i> the sun came out, we all went outside</p>	<p><b>topic sentence</b> a sentence that introduces the main idea or theme of a paragraph</p>

<p><b>conjunction</b> joining word, eg and, so, but</p>	<p><b>reported (indirect) speech</b> eg, Kim said that she wanted to go home</p> <p><b>coordinating conjunction</b> a word or words that link phrases and clauses, eg as, and, or, either/ neither, but, so, and, then</p> <p><b>paragraph</b> two or more sentences centred on the same theme or idea; begins with a 'topic sentence' (introducing the theme or idea) in factual texts</p>	<p><b>quoted (direct) speech</b> eg, 'I am going to leave,' she said</p> <p><b>reported (indirect) speech</b> eg, She said that she was going to leave</p>	
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**CLAUSE LEVEL – STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE**

Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>statement</b> provides information, eg I am leaving now</p> <p><b>question</b> asks for an answer, eg Are you busy?</p> <p><b>command</b> tells us to do something, eg Close the door</p> <p><b>exclamation</b> for emphasis, eg I won!</p>	<p><b>clause</b> a complete message or thought expressed in words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a clause includes at least one noun and one verb</li> <li>• a clause may be a sentence on its own (main clause) or may be combined with a main clause to form a sentence</li> <li>• a clause may tell us about an action and those involved in the action, eg Mark (<i>noun – doer</i>) opened (<i>verb – action verb</i>) the door (<i>noun – done to</i>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>clause</b> a complete message or thought expressed in words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a clause includes a verb</li> <li>• a clause includes a subject (noun or noun group that agrees with the verb in person and number), eg <i>The children</i> ran to the bus</li> <li>• a clause may include an object (additional noun or noun group, affected by the action), eg <i>The children</i> ran to <i>the bus</i></li> <li>• a clause may be a sentence on its own (main clause) or may be combined with a main clause to form a sentence</li> </ul>	<p><b>main clause (independent clause)</b> a clause that can stand alone as a complete sentence, though it may be joined with other clauses, eg <i>The child came first</i></p> <p><b>subordinate clause (dependent clause)</b> a clause that cannot stand alone as a sentence</p> <p><b>voice</b> indicates who or what is performing an action; modified by changing the beginning focus of a clause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• active voice – the 'doer' comes before the verb, eg <i>Mark (doer) finished (verb) the work (done to)</i></li> <li>• passive voice – the 'receiver' of the action is placed before the verb, eg <i>The work (receiver) was finished (action) by Mark (doer)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>author voice</b> use of first-person and third-person narration</p>

GROUP AND PHRASE LEVEL			
Structure of the noun group			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>noun group</b> a group of words built around a noun that describes or specifies the noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may include articles or adjectives, eg the sunny day, a long and bumpy road</li> <li>• may include two or more nouns, eg boys and girls, cats and dogs</li> </ul>	<p><b>noun group</b> a group of words built around a noun that describes or specifies the noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may include different types of articles, adjectives and nouns linked together, eg the <i>(article)</i> three <i>(number)</i> beautiful <i>(opinion adjective)</i> native <i>(classifying adjective)</i> flowers <i>(noun)</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>noun group</b> a group of words built around a noun that describes or specifies the noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may include adjectival phrases, eg the chair <i>next to my desk</i></li> <li>• may include adjectival/relative clauses, eg the chair <i>that is next to my desk</i></li> </ul>
Structure of the verb group			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
		<p><b>verb group</b> a group of words built up around a verb:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may include auxiliary (helping) verbs, eg She <i>is</i> sitting here</li> <li>• may include two or more verbs, eg He <i>huffed</i> and <i>puffed</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>verb group</b> a group of words built up around a verb:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may include a preposition or adverb, eg The plane <i>took off</i></li> <li>• may include modal verbs, eg It <i>might</i> be finished tomorrow</li> <li>• may be complex verbs, eg The plane <i>started to move</i></li> </ul>
Structure of the adverbial phrase			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>where/when/how adverbial phrase</b> contributes extra information about the main clause, eg where, when or how, eg Kim broke the vase <i>in the morning</i> (when); My mother was standing <i>beside my bed</i> (where)</p>	<p><b>adverbial phrase</b> contributes extra information about the main clause, eg how, when, where, why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes a preposition plus a noun group</li> <li>• tells us more about the action, eg Kim broke the vase <i>in the morning</i> (when); My mother was standing <i>beside my bed</i> (where); I went home <i>with a friend</i> (with whom)</li> </ul>		

WORD LEVEL			
Nouns			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>noun</b> a naming word for a person, place or thing</p>	<p><b>noun</b> a naming word for a person, place or thing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>common noun</b>, eg girl, city</li> <li>• <b>proper noun</b>, eg Mary, Sydney</li> <li>• <b>concrete noun</b> (tangible, may be a common noun or proper noun)</li> <li>• <b>abstract nouns</b>, eg happiness, surprise</li> </ul>	<p><b>noun</b> a naming word for a person, place or thing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• singular, eg girl</li> <li>• plural, eg girls</li> <li>• collective, eg crowd</li> <li>• term of address, eg Mr Jones</li> </ul>	<p><b>noun</b> a naming word for a person, place or thing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• technical, eg nucleus</li> </ul>
Articles			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>article</b> a, an, the placed before a noun to form part of a noun group; may refer to a specific person or thing (<i>the</i>), or a non-specific person or thing (<i>a, an</i>)</p>		
Adjectives			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>adjective</b> a word that describes a noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing, eg size, colour, shape (big, red, round, beautiful, sunny)</li> <li>• numbering, eg two</li> </ul>	<p><b>adjective</b> a word that describes a noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possessive, eg our</li> <li>• comparative, eg bigger</li> </ul>	<p><b>adjective</b> a word that describes a noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classifying, eg <i>native</i> flower</li> <li>• modal, eg <i>possible</i> answer</li> </ul>
Pronouns			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>pronoun</b> a word that stands instead of a noun, eg I, me, he, she</p>	<p><b>pronoun</b> a word that stands instead of a noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal pronoun, eg I, me, him, it</li> <li>• possessive pronoun, eg This book is <i>mine</i>; it is not <i>yours</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>pronoun</b> a word that stands instead of a noun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relative pronoun, eg <i>who, that</i> (for people) and <i>which, that</i> (for things)</li> </ul>

Verbs			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>verb</b> a word that tells what is happening or what is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>action verb</b> (describes doing or saying), eg run, shout</li> <li>• <b>thinking verb</b>, eg wonder</li> </ul>	<p><b>verb</b> a word that tells what is happening or what is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>relating verb</b>, eg She <i>is</i> my teacher</li> <li>• <b>feeling verb</b>, eg I <i>liked</i> the movie</li> <li>• <b>possessing verb</b>, eg He <i>has</i> a new car</li> </ul> <p><b>tense</b> eg, She went home (<i>past</i>); Koalas eat leaves (<i>present</i>); She will arrive tomorrow (<i>future</i>)</p>	<p><b>elaborated tenses</b> multiple word tenses, eg We <i>have been working</i> for three hours</p>
Adverbs			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
who/what/when/where words	<p><b>adverb</b> a word that describes a verb or adjective to tell when, where or how, eg She sings <i>occasionally</i>; He is <i>really</i> interesting</p>	<p><b>adverb</b> a word that tells something about a verb, adjective or another verb, eg manner, place or time. Adverbs may show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modality, eg possibly</li> <li>• degree, eg very</li> <li>• comments or opinions, eg luckily</li> </ul>	
Prepositions			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>preposition</b> placed in front of a noun group to show where or when, eg <i>on</i> the box (<i>where</i>), <i>before</i> my birthday (<i>when</i>)</p>	<p><b>preposition</b> placed in front of a noun group to show time (<i>when</i>), place (<i>where</i>), manner (<i>how</i>) or causality (<i>why</i>), eg in front of, throughout, underneath</p> <p><b>prepositional phrases</b> units of meaning within a clause that begin with a preposition; indicate how, when, where or why, eg She ran <i>into the garden</i>, He is available <i>from nine o'clock</i></p>	

WORD BUILDING AND ORIGINS			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>compound word</b> two words combined, eg playground</p> <p><b>base words</b> eg happy</p> <p><b>prefixes</b> attached to the beginning of a base word to change the meaning, eg <i>unhappy</i></p> <p><b>suffixes</b> attached to the end of a base word to change the meaning, eg <i>happily</i></p>	<p><b>word origins</b> the source and history of words (etymology), eg telephone (Greek), pedestrian (Latin), bungalow (Indian)</p>	
CREATIVE AND EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	<p><b>creative language features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>alliteration, eg <i>slippery, slithering snakes</i></li> <li>onomatopoeia, eg the wind <i>whooshed</i></li> <li>repetition</li> </ul>	<p><b>evaluative language</b> includes words used to express feelings and opinions, judgements and assessments, eg it was an <i>excellent</i> piece of writing</p> <p><b>creative language features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simile, eg She sings <i>like an angel</i></li> <li>metaphor, eg She is an angel</li> <li>idiom, eg Pull yourself together</li> <li>personification, eg The water licked at my feet</li> <li>nonsense words, spoonerisms, neologisms, puns</li> </ul>	<p><b>evaluative language</b> words used to give a text a particular perspective (eg judgemental, critical, emotional), to evoke a particular audience response, and to express shades of feeling, meaning or opinion, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotive language</li> <li>modality (possibility, probability, obligation, conditionality)</li> </ul> <p><b>creative language features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasis</li> <li>irony</li> <li>humour</li> </ul>
PUNCTUATION			
Early Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><b>capital letter</b> used for names and to signal the beginning of a sentence</p> <p><b>full stop</b> used to signal the end of a sentence</p> <p><b>question mark</b> used to signal a question</p> <p><b>exclamation mark</b> used to provide emphasis</p>	<p><b>capital letter</b> used for proper nouns</p> <p><b>question mark</b> used to signal the end of a question</p> <p><b>exclamation mark</b> used to signal the end of an exclamation</p> <p><b>comma</b> separates items in a list</p>	<p><b>quotation marks</b> used to signal dialogue, titles and quoted (direct) speech</p> <p><b>apostrophe</b> used to signify a contraction</p>	<p><b>apostrophe</b> used to signify possession</p> <p><b>comma</b> used to separate clauses</p>