

GRAMMAR Tips

A guide to Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling taught in KS1 and KS2: ways to support your child at home.



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Adjective	Comparative Adjective Makes comparison	Superlative Adjective The ultimate comparison
An adjective is a word that describes a noun.		
<i>small, happy</i>	<i>smaller, happier</i> One or two syllables = add "er"	<i>smallest, happiest</i> One or two syllables = add "est"
<i>beautiful, difficult</i>	<i>more beautiful, more difficult</i> More than two syllables = add "more"	<i>most Beautiful, most difficult</i> More than two syllables = add "most"
<i>good</i> <i>bad</i> Irregular form	<i>better</i> <i>worse</i> Irregular form	<i>best</i> <i>worst</i> Irregular form
<p>Top tip! Some adjectives can't take on a comparative / superlative. E.g. <i>perfect / unique / dead</i> (we call these absolute adjectives).</p>		
<p>Helping your child at home: Play guessing games – asking children to describe something using adjectives and then you guess the noun (person, place, thing) that they are describing. Search for adjectives in your child's reading book – they are often found before a noun or after the verbs be, is, am, are.</p>		

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Verbs

Finite verbs (Every day actions or processes)

He **walks** to work every day.
She **thought** about her father.
The girl **jumped** up and down when she **saw** the fairground ride.

Children often think that a “doing” word is the only type of verb....

Auxiliary verbs (can be main or helping verbs)

...However, verbs are also being and having words.

To be: am, is, are, was, were, being, been

To have: has, had, have

They can do the job of a verb on their own.

*E.g. I **am** happy. I **was** lucky.*

*E.g. I **have** tried. It **has been** sunny.*

Or they can help other verbs do their job.

*E.g. We **are** going to school.*

Supporting: Do: doing, done.

*E.g. I **have done** my homework. I **am doing** my homework.*

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Adverbs

Manner (how something is done)	Tom slowly opened the door. He slept well .
Time (when)	I walked to school yesterday .
Frequency (how often)	I never eat chocolate. I rarely eat sweets.
Place (where)	I walked upstairs to find my school bag.
Top Tip! Children often think an adverb is a word ending in “ly” but really they need to be asking themselves the questions: How, when, how often and where something is or has happened to help identify an adverb.	
Helping your child at home: Give your child jobs or actions to do and keep changing the adverb. E.g. walk slowly, walk happily, walk angrily etc.	

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Noun phrases

A noun phrase is a noun that is adapted by other words.

Butterfly – the beautiful, little butterfly.

Shoes – two shiny, red shoes.

Table – a table with flowers on it.

They will need to make use of adjectives, other nouns and prepositions to create these.

Top Tip! All children are encouraged to use noun phrases to add description to their writing. When identifying noun phrases in a sentence, children must remember to include the determiner,

E.g. I looked at the beautiful, little butterfly. (Must include the determiner **'the'**).

I was wearing two shiny, red shoes. (Must include the determiner **'two'**).

I put it on a table with flowers on it. (Must include the determiner **'a'**).

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There are four different sentence types (functions)

<i>Declarative Mood</i> Makes a statement	This is a sentence.
<i>Imperative Mood</i> Command	Stop worrying about grammar.
<i>Exclamative Mood</i> Exclamation	I love grammar!
<i>Interrogative Mood</i> Question	What is a sentence?

Helping your child at home: Help or prompt your child to find examples of the different sentence types in their reading books or texts you enjoy together.

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Tense

We know tense as: past, present and future.

Children often find it tricky to speak and write in the right tense.

They may need to be prompted to think about: Is that happening now? Has it already happened? Will it happen in the future?

They may need reminding to use the past tense verb, especially with irregular verbs, e.g. run = ran (not runned).

Simple past	I jumped. She jumped. <i>The past simple takes the “ed” ending (for regular verbs).</i>
Simple present	I jump. She jumps <i>The first person using the base form of the verb whilst for the third person you need to add an “s”.</i>
Simple future	I shall jump. She shall jump. <i>The only way to create the future tense in the English language is to add the auxiliary “shall” or “will”</i>

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Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions are used in complex sentences when the subordinate clause comes at the beginning or the end of the sentence and sometimes when the clause is embedded.

Subordinating conjunctions join two clauses together, one is the main clause and the clause with conjunction attached is the subordinate clause (it doesn't make sense on its own).

Although she was struggling, the student tried hard to work out how to create sentences.

You need to use a comma before you start the main clause; it comes before the subject of the sentence.

The student tried hard to work out how to create sentences even though she was struggling.

You don't need a comma as the conjunction is used to link the main and subordinate clause.

Conjunctions: **when** **if** **as** **while** **whilst** **even though** **because**

These words can be used as conjunctions but aren't always; it depends on the job they do in the sentence.

Top Tip! Children often need reminding to use a comma after the subordinate clause. Also, they need to remember that a comma **never** goes next to a conjunction.

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Progressive Tense

The progressive (also known as the 'continuous') form of a 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*).

Past progressive	I was jumping. She was jumping. <i>The auxiliary + ing ending is needed.</i>
Present progressive	I am jumping. She is jumping. <i>The auxiliary + ing ending is needed.</i>
Future progressive	I shall be jumping. She shall be jumping. <i>Again, the auxiliary "shall" is needed + the second auxiliary + "ing" ending.</i>

Helping your child at home: Help or prompt your child to find examples of progressive verbs in their reading books or texts you enjoy together.

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Different types of nouns

A noun refers to something, somewhere or someone.

Collective	A group of animals, people or things. E.g. class, herd, flock, assembly, team <i>Children often need to be reminded that a collective noun is not a plural. They must say/write "The team is" and not "The team are".</i>
Common	These are the nouns you can physically see and touch. E.g. table, book, pen, chair. <i>Also known as concrete nouns.</i>
Abstract	Qualities, feelings, ideas and concepts. E.g. happy, sad, honour, anger <i>Children often remember these as nouns they cannot see or touch.</i>
Proper	The name of a particular place person or thing. LEO Academy Trust, Mr Hedger, Cheam, Surrey, Disneyland <i>Students need to remember to use capital letters for proper nouns.</i>

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Clauses

Main Clause

Must contain a **subject** and a **verb**.

Children often remember that a main clause makes sense on its own.

*The **girl** **laughed**.*

*The **boy** **carried** **his bag**.*

Subordinate clause

It gives extra information about the main clause. It can be found at the beginning, within or at the end of the sentence. A subordinate clause must be attached to a main clause with a **conjunction** to make sense.

*The **girl** **laughed** **when** **her friend** **told** **jokes**.*

Top Tip!

Sometimes we can end a sentence with the verb but at other times this won't work and it needs to be followed by an **object**.

Helping your child at home: Help or prompt your child to find examples of the different sentence types in their reading books or texts you enjoy together.

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Prepositions

Describe relationships that exist between elements in sentences. They often tell us the position of something in relation to something else.

Place	<i>At, on, by, opposite</i>	Comparison	<i>As, like</i>
Direction	<i>Towards, past, out of, to, through</i>	Source	From, out of
Time	<i>At, before, in, on</i>	Purpose	for

Helping your child at home: Ask your child to put things on, under, behind, beside the
Ask your child to walk past, through, towards, out of, into the

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Direct Speech

Direct speech indicates when someone is speaking.

All speech must go inside **inverted commas** (used to be called speech marks).

“Please can you help me?”

Students need to know that all **punctuation** needs to go inside inverted commas.

“Please can you help me?”

Always state who is speaking. Children must use **lower case** as the sentence doesn't end with the speech.

“Please can you help me?” **the little girl asked.**

Students need to remember to start a **new line for a new speaker.**

“Please can you help me?” the little girl asked.

“Of course,” replied the teacher.

If the speech doesn't end in ? or ! then children must use a **comma** to end speech (inside the inverted commas).

Helping your child at home: Looking for direct speech in reading books, magazines, newspapers and other texts can be really interesting as not all published writers follow the rules for speech! Challenge your child to explain the mistakes the writer has made.

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FANBOYS

For And Nor But Or Yet So	<p>Compound sentences need co-ordinating conjunctions “FANBOYS”. Two simple sentences are linked together.</p>
	<p>E.g. The dog barked but he looked a little scared. <i>Both ‘The dog barked.’ and ‘He looked a little scared.’ are main clauses and can be sentences on their own.</i></p>
	<p>E.g. I don’t like cheese so I never eat it. <i>Children sometimes need reminding to use the pronoun “it” in the second clause rather than the word “cheese” for a second time in the same sentence.</i></p>
	<p>E.g. The girl laughed and cried. <i>We can miss the subject out in the second clause as this has already been established.</i></p>

Helping your child at home: Encourage your child to extend simple sentences with co-ordinating conjunctions in their homework and when writing at home.
Look out for co-ordinating conjunctions used (incorrectly) to start sentences in books and other texts.

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Expanded Noun Phrases

Remember: a noun phrase is a noun that is adapted by other words.

An expanded noun phrase must contain information before and after the noun.

The bird

The **beautiful** bird on the branch...

The man

The **strange** man at the end of the street...

The sentences contain an **adjective** and a **prepositional phrase**.

Top Tip! Children are encouraged to use expanded noun phrases in their descriptive writing but sometimes need reminding that it is just a phrase and needs a verb to make it a complete sentence. (Therefore, they can't just stick a full stop on the end).

Helping your child at home: Challenge your child to use expanded noun phrases to describe photos or pictures that you have up around the house.

Write or speak an expanded noun phrase by each taking it in turns to say a word – see how silly it can get.

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Perfect Tense

The perfect form of a verb generally calls attention to the consequences of a prior event; for example, *he has gone to lunch* implies that he is still away.

The perfect tense is formed by:

- turning the verb into its past participle inflection
- adding a form of the verb *have* before it.

Children may want to use this tense in their writing and will need to identify it in the end of KS2 GPS Test.

Past perfect	I had cycled. She had cycled. <i>The auxiliary + ed ending is needed (when the verb is regular).</i>
Present perfect	I have downloaded some songs. She has downloaded some songs. <i>The auxiliary + ed ending is needed (when the verb is regular).</i>
Future perfect	I shall have left. She shall have left. <i>Again, the auxiliary "shall" is needed + the second auxiliary + "ed" ending.</i>

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Fronted Adverbials

An adverbial is a word or phrase that describes the verb (how, when and where something is happening/happened).

I rode my bike to school **yesterday morning**.

A fronted adverbial is when the adverbial is used before the sentence and separated by a comma.

Yesterday morning, I rode my bike to school.

Time (when)

In the summer, I like to play outside in the garden.

Frequency (how often)

Every evening, I help with the washing up.

Place (where)

At school, I always try my absolute best.

Manner (how)

Shaking with fear, the little dog did not want to go to the vet.

Top Tip! Children often forget to separate the fronted adverbial from the main clause and sometimes need reminding.

Children should remember to cover the fronted adverbial with their finger to ensure that the rest of the sentence still makes sense without it.

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Pronouns

Pronouns replace nouns.

Personal Subject position	<i>I, we, you, he, she, it, they</i>	Personal Object position	<i>Me, us, you, him, her, it, them</i>
Possessive	<i>Mine, ours, yours, his, hers, theirs</i>	Interrogative	<i>What, which, who, whom, whose</i>
Reflexive	<i>Myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself</i>	Relative	<i>That, which, who, whom, whose</i>
Demonstrative	<i>This, these, that, those.</i>	Indefinite	<i>All of, both of, some of, everything, somebody, anybody</i>

Top Tip! There are many different names for pronouns and children don't need to remember them all. They need to be able to identify pronouns and possessive pronouns for the end of KS2 GPS test.

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Determiners

Determiners precede nouns (students don't need to know the different types)

Articles = the/a/an (a if the next word begins with a consonant) (an if the next word begins with a vowel)	<i>the</i> book <i>a</i> book <i>an</i> apple
Possessive determiners	<i>my</i> book <i>her</i> book <i>their</i> book
Demonstrative determiners	<i>this</i> week <i>these</i> things
Indefinite determiners (quantifiers)	<i>some</i> apples <i>every</i> person <i>more</i> chocolate
Numbers	<i>the first</i> visitor <i>six</i> sheep.

Top tip! "An" is usually used before a vowel but there are some exceptions. Silent "h" = "an hour" and "eu" takes only "A": A European passport.

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Imperative verbs

Imperative sentences start with the verb and so omit the subject of the sentence.

Imperative mood

Stop talking.
Stand up straight.
Listen carefully.

Full form

You need to stop talking.
You must stand up straight.
You need to listen carefully.

As an imperative is a command – children often think of it as a bossy verb (it tells them what to do).

It is usually in the second person (either singular or plural) unless you are talking to yourself. *I need to stop talking.*

Helping your child at home: Instruction texts (recipes, instruction manuals) often use lots of imperative verbs.

Challenge your child to spot the **imperative verb** when giving your child instructions or asking them to do something at home.

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I and me

I is used when the pronoun is the **subject** of the sentence (doing the action).

Me is used when the pronoun is the **object** of the sentence (receiving the action).

Incorrect usage

Me and Emma went for a walk.
Emma and me are doing our homework.
The waiter asked Emma and I to pay.

Correct usage

Emma and **I** went for a walk.
Emma and **I** are doing our homework.
The waiter asked Emma and **me** to pay.

Top tip! Take out the '*Emma and*' part and decide whether you would use I or me and then put it back in.

Helping your child at home: Try and use 'I and me' correctly when speaking to your child. Discuss with them trying to work out if you have used it correctly.

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Parenthesis

Adding extra detail or an afterthought to a piece of writing.

Brackets

Tend to be used to include extra information that isn't necessary but can offer clarity or an aside.

Henry VIII (a well-known English monarch) had six wives.

Double dash

Tend to be used when you want the information to really stand out.

Henry VIII – who executed two of his wives– reigned in England for 38 years.

Commas

Used to embed additional information and helps cohesion of writing.

Henry VIII, former King of England, is still learnt about today in Primary schools all over Britain.

Top Tip! Children are encouraged to use parenthesis in their writing in different ways and for different genres.

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Modal Verbs

Convey a range of attitudes and moods about the likelihood of an event taking place.

Can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will and would.

(Students don't need to know the different types.)

Ability	I <i>can</i> swim.
Intention	You <i>will</i> do as you are told.
Necessity / Obligation	You <i>must</i> go at once. You <i>should</i> do as you are told.
Permission	<i>Can</i> I leave the classroom. <i>May</i> I leave the classroom.
Prediction	He <i>will</i> come today. I'm sure, I <i>shall</i> finish tonight.
Possibility	I <i>can</i> go. I <i>may</i> go.

Helping your child at home: Experiment with changing the modal verb in a sentence and discuss how it changes the meaning.

E.g. You *can* go and tidy your bedroom now.

You *should* go and tidy your bedroom now.

You *must* go and tidy your bedroom now.

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Relative Clauses

A relative clause is a special type of subordinate clause that adds extra information to a noun. It does this by using a relative pronoun to refer back to that noun in the sentence.

who *which* *where* *when* *that*

That man, *who has green hair*, lives close to me.

If you take out the relative clause, the sentence will still make sense.

I went to the library to return the book, *that you got out for me*.

Correct choice of pronoun is important to ensure that students are using Standard English.

The computer - *which* had stopped working - was no use to the school anymore.

Relative clauses can also be added using dashes or brackets – as a special type of parenthesis.

Top tip! Children often get ‘which’ and ‘who’ confused. ‘who’ = humans and pets. ‘which’ = non-human subjects.

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Commas to clarify meaning / avoid ambiguity.

Let's eat Grandad.

OR

Let's eat, Grandad.

Are we eating Grandad or suggesting to Grandad that we eat?

The boy ran away from the opposite team holding the ball.

OR

The boy ran away from the opposite team, holding the ball.

Is the boy holding the ball or is the opposite team holding the ball?

Top Tip!

Children need to be reminded to proof read their work and only add in these commas to ensure that meaning is made clear.

Sometimes children can go a little comma crazy and start putting them everywhere for non real purpose. It really helps them to read their writing aloud.

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SVOCA

These are the 5 clause elements. SVO are the most important ones for students to know.

Subject	The thing doing the action. “ The dog barked.”
Verb	What is happening in the sentence. “The dog barked. ”
Object	The receiver of the action. “The dog barked at the girl. ”
Complement (adjectives)	Gives extra information about the subject and / or object. “The large dog barked at the little girl.”
Adverbial (adverbs)	Gives extra information about the verb. “The large dog barked loudly at the little girl.”

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Hyphens to avoid ambiguity.

A hyphen is used to join words or parts of words together and is used to avoid ambiguity or confusion.

Watch out! There is a man eating shark!

Implies that a man is eating a shark.

Watch out! There is a **man-eating** shark!

The hyphen clarifies the type of shark.

The gold digging man made lots of money.

Implies that the man might be physically digging.

The **gold-digging** man made lots of money.

The hyphen clarifies the type of man.

Helping your child at home: Look out for hyphenated words in your child's reading book or any texts you are reading and discuss with your child why the hyphen is needed.

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Synonyms and Antonyms

Synonyms: words that have similar meanings.

Diligent – hard-working, meticulous, thorough, attentive

Apprehensive – anxious, frightened, fearful, nervous

Antonyms: words that have the opposite meaning.

Diligent – lazy, casual, relaxed, informal, laid-back

Apprehensive – confident, optimistic, secure, positive

Top Tip! In lessons, children are often asked to look for synonyms in a thesaurus to broaden their vocabulary and choose the best word for the sentence.

When reading, children are often asked to find a synonym or antonym for a particular word in a certain paragraph or sentence. *E.g. Find a synonym for angry in the first paragraph.*

This gets them thinking about words that have similar meanings.

Helping your child at home: Challenge your child to look for or give **synonyms** or **antonyms** of given words.

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Colon

A colon is used before a list of items or in front of explanations.
It can also be used after an introductory heading or to separate two parts of a title.

Before a short list

I bought a lot of fruit: apples, oranges and pears.

In front of an explanation

This was all very strange: what was the man doing there?

Second part of a book title

David Beckham: Both Feet on the Ground.

Top Tip! Look out for colons used in non-fiction texts for heading, subheadings and captions.
Children are encouraged to use colons after sub-headings in their own non-fiction writing

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Semi-colon

- 1). *Semi-colons are used to separate out items in a list where a short phrase is used for each item.*
- 2). *Semi-colons are used to join two main clauses that have a similar topic.*

List

On Monday morning, I packed my suitcase: my beach towel; a pair of sunglasses; my swimsuit and some sun cream.

Joining main clauses

The school play was a huge success; the parents clapped for a long time.

Top Tip! When joining main clauses, children are reminded to make sure each side of the semi-colon makes sense on their own.

Helping your child at home: Lists of ingredients in recipe books are often written as bullet points and can be rewritten as a list separated by semi-colons for practice.

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Active and Passive Voice

A sentence using the active voice places the subject and the beginning of the sentence.

A sentence in the passive voice places the subject at the end of the sentence.

Active Voice

The young child threw the ball and broke the window.

Passive Voice

The ball was thrown and the window was broken [by the young child].

In both of the sentences above the child is still performing the action.

Although active voice is more commonly used, we can use the passive voice to create suspense or to get rid of the subject.

E.g. *The door was opened*. Creates suspense because we don't know who opened the door.

Top Tip! Children are encouraged to use the passive voice in their writing in Year 6 and often need to be reminded to read it back to check it makes sense. Not all sentences sound right in the passive voice. Children must be choosing why to use the passive voice not just for the sake of it.

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Subjunctive Voice

The subjunctive mood is used for expressing a wish, hypothesis, demand or an imaginary situation. It is no longer really used asides formal situations and speeches.

If I **were** head girl, I would...
I **wish** I **were** free to...

Usually we use “was” when writing in first person but “were” is needed to create the subjunctive mood.

If you **had been** any earlier, I **could have** squeezed you in.
I wish you **had told** me this before.

The auxiliary had / have is combined with other auxiliary or finite (main) verbs.

Verbs like: propose, recommend, suggest and require are often used.
*It is **required** that the mother attend the appointment with her daughter.*
*It is **suggested** that the dancer practises her routine before the show.*

Top Tip! Children are taught the subjunctive voice when writing formal speeches, letters and presentations. They will also be expected to identify it during the end of KS2 GPS test. Children are often told to imagine that the Queen is speaking to help them identify the subjunctive voice.

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Common Mistakes



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One word or two?

Some phrases might sound like one word when we say them out loud but they are actually two words. For example:

- **as well**
- **a lot**
- **even though**

Similarly, some words sound like two words when we say them out loud.

- **although**
- **altogether**

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Apostrophes

Even when children are feeling confident using apostrophes for contraction/omission or possession, there are still a few words that catch them out.

Let's

Short for "let us". *E.g. Let's look at page 42.* To use the full form is uncommon as it is extremely formal. *E.g. Let us pray.*

Won't

Will not doesn't contract to *willn't* but instead to *won't*. As it doesn't follow the same rule as other contractions, students sometimes forget that it needs an apostrophe in it.

Whose v who's

Who's is the contraction of who is. *E.g. The person who's sitting on the back row...*
Whose is the possessive form of who. *E.g. Whose book is this? Who does it belong to?*

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Apostrophes

Sometimes children automatically put an apostrophe on any word ending in s.

It is important to remind them to ask if anything belongs to anyone.

Possession

The **girl's** book...

The **dog's** bed...

The **boys'** rugby team... (Belongs to all the boys so note the apostrophes after the s.)

Plural

The girls played. (Nothing belongs to the girls in this sentence).

The dogs chased each other. (Nothing belongs to the dogs in this sentence).

The boys played rugby. (Nothing belongs to the boys in this sentence).

GRAMMAR Tips

Common Mistakes



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Apostrophes

it's v its

It's (only used for "it is" or "it has")

It's been raining all afternoon.

It's time for some sunshine.

Its – possessive determiner that refers back to the subject.

The dog chased its tail. (its is used instead of his or her).

The baby monkey clung to its mother. (its is used instead of his or her).

Top Tip! Children sometimes get confused because they think they're are showing possession – the dog's tail and the monkey's mother. **It helps to think of 'its' as a substitute for his or her.**

GRAMMAR Tips

Common Mistakes



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Of v Have

Pronunciation is the problem here.
When we say it as a contraction out loud we hear “of” rather than “have

Incorrect

I could of been famous.

I would of preferred chocolate ice cream.

I might of tried some of that.

Correct

I **could have** [could've] been famous.

I **would have** [would've] preferred chocolate ice cream.

I **might have** [might've] tried some of that.