

English glossary of terminology - Information for parents

Thomas Russell Infants' School



Our Children Blossom Through Nurture and Challenge

Adjective - An **adjective** is a word used to describe and give more information about a noun, which could be a person, place or object.

Adverb - An **adverb** is a word which modifies a verb, which means that it tells you how, when, where or why something is being done.

Apostrophe - **Apostrophes** are punctuation marks used to show possession and to show contraction (also known as omission).

Biography and autobiography - A **biography** is a non-fiction text written about someone else's life (usually someone famous). An **autobiography** is a text written about one's own life.

Blending sounds - **Blending sounds** means looking at a word and, rather than saying the separate sounds that make it up, linking the sounds together and saying the whole word in one go. Blending is an essential phonics skill which children are taught as part of learning to read.

Connective - A **connective** is a word that joins one part of a text to another. Connectives can be conjunctions or adverbs.

Consonant and consonant cluster - The alphabet is made up of 26 letters, 5 of which are vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and the rest of which are **consonants**. A consonant is a sound that is made by blocking air from flowing out of the mouth with the teeth, tongue, lips or palate. Two consonants which appear next to each other are known as a **consonant cluster**.

Contracted words or contractions - **Contracted words** are short words made by putting two words together. Letters are missed out in the contraction and replaced by an apostrophe, for example I'm (I am) or it's (it is).

CVC / CCVC / CVCC words - A **CVC word** is a word that is made up of a consonant, vowel and consonant. **CCVC words** are made up of a consonant, a consonant, a vowel and a consonant. In **CVCC words** the sequence is: consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant.

Decoding - Decoding is the process of seeing written words on a page and being able to say them out loud.

Digraph - A digraph is two letters that make one sound. Digraphs can be made up of vowels or consonants.

Direct and indirect speech - Direct speech is a sentence in which the exact words spoken are reproduced in speech marks (quotation marks or inverted commas). Indirect speech or reported speech is when the general points of what someone has said are reported, without actually writing the speech out in full.

Exception words - Exception words are words in which the English spelling code works in an unusual or uncommon way. Children learn to read and spell common exception words throughout their time in primary school, particularly in Reception, Y1 and Y2.

Expanded noun phrases - add information to nouns (naming words). They make writing more interesting and can help the reader to build a picture in their minds. E.g. The spooky house high up on the hill.

Grapheme - A grapheme is a written symbol that represents a sound (a phoneme). This can be a single letter, or could be a sequence of letters (ai, sh, igh, tch, for example).

Guided reading - Guided reading is a regular, time-tabled session in which teachers work with a small number of children in the classroom to analyse a text in detail, making sure each child can read each word and discussing meaning of the text with them.

High-frequency words - High-frequency words are some of the most common words in the English language. A number of them don't follow phonetic rules, so they must be learned individually by heart. Children start to learn to read and write high-frequency words in Reception, and are given more words to memorise in KS1 and KS2.

Homophone - Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings. Some homophones are pronounced the same way and spelled the same way but have different meanings; others are pronounced the same way but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

Information text - An information text is a non-fiction text which gives information about a particular thing. Information texts are sometimes called non-chronological reports, because they are reporting information about something without mentioning the order of events.

Instruction text - An instruction text is a non-fiction text such as a recipe or manual. Instruction texts include lists of items and numbered points detailing how to carry out a certain activity.

Letter sound - A letter sound is literally the sound we make when we are reading a written letter of the alphabet.

Letter string - A letter string is a group of letters that appear in a word. For example, the letter string str is contained in each of these words: string, straight, strike, strain.

Look, Cover, Write, Check - Look, Cover, Write, Check is a strategy used to help children learn to spell. When learning a new word, children are asked to: look at it, cover it over with a piece of paper or their hand, write the spelling again next to the word and finally uncover the spelling to check if they have got it right.

Modelled writing - Modelled writing is when a teacher writes a passage of text in front of the class. It differs from shared writing in that the teacher does not ask for the input of the class.

Non-chronological report - A non-chronological report is a non-fiction report which is not written in time order. Explanation texts, recounts and instruction texts are non-chronological reports.

Non-fiction - Any text that is not a story is non-fiction. Non-fiction texts studied at primary school include instruction texts, recounts, information texts, explanation texts, persuasive texts, biography, journalistic writing and argument texts.

Noun - A noun is a naming word. It is a thing, a person, an animal or a place. Nouns can be common, proper, abstract or collective.

Object - The object of a sentence is the thing or person that is involved in an action, but does not carry it out ("The cat chased **the mouse**").

Paragraph - A paragraph is a section of writing consisting of one or more sentences grouped together and discussing one main subject.

Persuasive text - Persuasive text is non-fiction text which aims to make the reader do something. Adverts, posters and travel brochure are all kinds of persuasive text.

Phoneme - A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound.

Phonics - Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes, or letters). Phonics is the method used in primary schools in the UK today to teach children to read.

Play script - A play script is a piece of writing written for the stage. It is likely to include a list of characters, may be divided into acts (which are then divided into scenes) and contain dialogue and stage directions.

Prefix - A **prefix** is a string of letters that are added to the beginning of a root word, changing its meaning e.g. **unhappy**.

Pronoun - A **pronoun** is a word used to replace a noun. Examples of pronouns are: he, she, it, they. Pronouns can be personal and possessive.

Reading comprehension - **Reading comprehension** means understanding what is being read and being able to engage with a text on many levels, understanding its layers of meaning.

Recount - A **recount** is a non-fiction piece of writing that gives details of an event that has happened. Diary entries, newspaper articles and letters are all forms of recounts,

Rhyme - **Rhyme** is the repetition of similar sounds in words, usually at the end of lines in poems and songs.

Root word - A **root word** is a basic word with no prefix or suffix added to it. By adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word we can change its meaning. E.g. happy can become **unhappy** or **happily**.

Sentence - A **sentence** is one word or a group of words that makes sense by itself (a grammatical unit). Sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation point. Sentences usually contain a subject (doing something) and a verb (what is being done).

Simile - A **simile** is a comparison phrase which finds similar characteristics in two objects and compares them, always by using the words 'like' or 'as'.

Simple, compound and complex sentences - A **simple sentence** has a subject and one verb. A **compound sentence** is formed when you join two main clauses with a connective. A **complex sentence** is formed when you join a main clause and a subordinate clause with a connective.

Split digraph - A digraph is two vowels which together make one sound (as in the words tail, boat, found or read). When a digraph is split by a consonant it becomes a **split digraph**, sometimes known as 'magic e'.

Story setting - A **story setting** is the location in which a story takes place. The setting could be anywhere, from a park to a home to an alien planet.

Subject - The **subject** of a sentence is the thing or person who is carrying out the action described by the verb ("The **cat** chased the mouse.").

Suffix - A **suffix** is a string of letters that go at the end of a word, changing or adding to its meaning. E.g. **happily**.

Syllable - A syllable is a single, unbroken sound of a spoken (or written) word. Syllables are sometimes called the 'beats' of a word.

Text-marking - Text-marking is highlighting, circling, underlining or labelling the features of a text. The purpose of text-marking is to make children aware of how different texts are set out and which features are used.

Time connectives - Time connectives are words or phrases which tell the reader when something is happening. They can also be called temporal connectives.

Traditional tale - A traditional tale is a fairy story or fairy tale, a story that has been told and re-told for many years and almost everyone knows. Examples of traditional tales are Cinderella, Goldilocks and the Three Bears and Little Red Riding Hood.

Trigraph - A trigraph is a single sound that is represented by three letters, for example tch, igh in fight or ear in bear.

Verbs - A verb expresses a physical action, a mental action or a state of being.

Vowel - The alphabet is made up of 26 letters, 5 of which are vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and the rest of which are consonants. A vowel is a sound that is made by allowing breath to flow out of the mouth, without closing any part of the mouth or throat.