

English Glossary of Terms

Term	Guidance	Example
adjective	The surest way to identify adjectives is by the ways they can be used: - before a noun, to make the noun's meaning more specific (i.e. to <u>modify</u> the noun), or - after the verb <i>be</i>, as its <u>complement</u>. Adjectives cannot be modified by other adjectives. This distinguishes them from <u>nouns</u>, which can be. Adjectives are sometimes called 'describing words' because they pick out single characteristics such as size or colour. This is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish adjectives from other word classes, because <u>verbs</u>, <u>nouns</u> and <u>adverbs</u> can do the same thing.	<i>The pupils did some really <u>good</u> work.</i> [adjective used before a noun, to modify it] <i>Their work was <u>good</u>.</i> [adjective used after the verb <i>be</i>, as its complement] Not adjectives: <i>The lamp <u>glowed</u>.</i> [verb] <i>It was such a <u>bright red</u>!</i> [noun] <i>He spoke <u>loudly</u>.</i> [adverb] <i>It was a French <u>grammar</u> book.</i> [noun]
adverb	The surest way to identify adverbs is by the ways they can be used: they can <u>modify</u> a <u>verb</u>, an <u>adjective</u>, another adverb or even a whole clause. Adverbs are sometimes said to describe manner or time. This is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish adverbs from other word classes that can be used as <u>adverbials</u>, such as <u>preposition phrases</u>, <u>noun phrases</u> and <u>subordinate clauses</u>.	<i>Usha <u>soon</u> started snoring <u>loudly</u>.</i> [adverbs modifying the verbs <i>started</i> and <i>snoring</i>] <i>That match was <u>really</u> exciting!</i> [adverb modifying the adjective <i>exciting</i>] <i>We don't get to play games <u>very</u> often.</i> [adverb modifying the other adverb, <i>often</i>] <i><u>Fortunately</u>, it didn't rain.</i> [adverb modifying the whole clause 'it didn't rain' by commenting on it] Not adverbs: <i>Usha went <u>up the stairs</u>.</i> [preposition phrase used as adverbial] <i>She finished her work <u>this evening</u>.</i> [noun phrase used as adverbial] <i>She finished <u>when the teacher got cross</u>.</i> [subordinate clause used as adverbial]
adverbial	An adverbial is a word or phrase that is used, like an adverb, to modify a verb or clause. Of course, <u>adverbs</u> can be used as adverbials, but many other types of words and phrases can be used this way, including <u>preposition phrases</u> and <u>subordinate clauses</u>.	<i>The bus leaves <u>in five minutes</u>.</i> [preposition phrase as adverbial: modifies <i>leaves</i>] <i>She promised to see him <u>last night</u>.</i> [noun phrase modifying either <i>promised</i> or <i>see</i>, according to the intended meaning] <i>She worked <u>until she had finished</u>.</i> [subordinate clause as adverbial]
antonym	Two words are antonyms if their meanings are opposites.	<i>hot - cold</i> <i>light - dark</i> <i>light - heavy</i>
apostrophe	Apostrophes have two completely different uses: - showing the place of missing letters (e.g. <i>I'm</i> for <i>I am</i>) - marking <u>possessives</u> (e.g. <i>Hannah's mother</i>).	<i><u>I'm</u> going out and I <u>won't</u> be long.</i> [showing missing letters] <i><u>Hannah's</u> mother went to town in <u>Justin's</u> car.</i> [marking possessives]
compound, compounding	A compound word contains at least two <u>root words</u> in its <u>morphology</u>; e.g. <i>whiteboard</i>, <i>superman</i>. Compounding is very important in English.	<i>blackbird, blow-dry, bookshop, ice-cream, English teacher, inkjet, one-eyed, bone-dry, baby-sit, daydream, outgrow</i>
conjunction	A conjunction links two words or phrases together. There are two main types of conjunctions: <u>co-ordinating</u> conjunctions (e.g. <i>and</i>) link two	<i>James bought a bat <u>and</u> ball.</i> [links the words <i>bat</i> and <i>ball</i> as an equal pair] <i>Kylie is young <u>but</u> she can kick the ball hard.</i> [links

English Glossary of Terms

Term	Guidance	Example
	words or phrases together as an equal pair subordinating conjunctions (e.g. <i>when</i>) introduce a <u>subordinate clause</u>.	two clauses as an equal pair] <i>Everyone watches <u>when</u> Kyle does back-flips.</i> [introduces a subordinate clause] <i>Joe can't practise kicking <u>because</u> he's injured.</i> [introduces a subordinate clause]
consonant	A sound which is produced when the speaker closes off or obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract, usually using lips, tongue or teeth. Most of the letters of the alphabet represent consonants. Only the letters <i>a, e, i, o, u</i> and <i>y</i> can represent <u>vowel</u> sounds.	/p/ [flow of air stopped by the lips, then released] /t/ [flow of air stopped by the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, then released] /f/ [flow of air obstructed by the bottom lip touching the top teeth] /s/ [flow of air obstructed by the tip of the tongue touching the gum line]
digraph	A type of <u>grapheme</u> where two letters represent one <u>phoneme</u>. Sometimes, these two letters are not next to one another; this is called a split digraph.	The digraph <u>ea</u> in <u>each</u> is pronounced /i:/. The digraph <u>sh</u> in <u>shed</u> is pronounced /ʃ/. The split digraph <u>i-e</u> in <u>line</u> is pronounced /aɪ/.
future	Reference to future time can be marked in a number of different ways in English. All these ways involve the use of a <u>present-tense verb</u>. See also <u>tense</u>. Unlike many other languages (such as French, Spanish or Italian), English has no distinct 'future tense' form of the verb comparable with its <u>present</u> and <u>past</u> tenses.	<i>He <u>will leave</u> tomorrow.</i> [present-tense <i>will</i> followed by infinitive <i>leave</i>] <i>He <u>may leave</u> tomorrow.</i> [present-tense <i>may</i> followed by infinitive <i>leave</i>] <i>He <u>leaves</u> tomorrow.</i> [present-tense <i>leaves</i>] <i>He <u>is going to leave</u> tomorrow.</i> [present tense <i>is</i> followed by <i>going to</i> plus the infinitive <i>leave</i>]
grapheme	A letter, or combination of letters, that corresponds to a single <u>phoneme</u> within a word.	The grapheme <u>t</u> in the words <u>ten</u>, <u>bet</u> and <u>ate</u> corresponds to the phoneme /t/. The grapheme <u>ph</u> in the word <u>dolphin</u> corresponds to the phoneme /f/.
grapheme-phoneme correspondences	The links between letters, or combinations of letters (<u>graphemes</u>) and the speech sounds (<u>phonemes</u>) that they represent. In the English writing system, graphemes may correspond to different phonemes in different words.	The grapheme <i>s</i> corresponds to the phoneme /s/ in the word <u>see</u>, but... ...it corresponds to the phoneme /z/ in the word <u>easy</u>.
homonym	Two different words are homonyms if they both look exactly the same when written, and sound exactly the same when pronounced.	<i>Has he <u>left</u> yet? Yes - he went through the door on the <u>left</u>.</i> <i>The noise a dog makes is called a <u>bark</u>. Trees have <u>bark</u>.</i>
homophone	Two different words are homophones if they sound exactly the same when pronounced.	<u>hear</u>, <u>here</u> <u>some</u>, <u>sum</u>
noun	The surest way to identify nouns is by the ways they can be used after <u>determiners</u> such as <i>the</i>: for example, most nouns will fit into the frame "The ___ matters/matter." Nouns are sometimes called 'naming words' because they name people, places and 'things'; this is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish nouns from other <u>word classes</u>. For example, <u>prepositions</u> can name places and <u>verbs</u> can name 'things' such as	<i>Our <u>dog</u> bit the <u>burglar</u> on his <u>behind</u>!</i> <i>My big <u>brother</u> did an amazing <u>jump</u> on his <u>skateboard</u>.</i> <i><u>Actions</u> speak louder than <u>words</u>.</i> Not nouns: <i>He's <u>behind</u> you!</i> [this names a place, but is a preposition, not a noun] <i>She can <u>jump</u> so high!</i> [this names an action,

English Glossary of Terms

Term	Guidance	Example
	actions. Nouns may be classified as common (e.g. <i>boy</i>, <i>day</i>) or proper (e.g. <i>Ivan</i>, <i>Wednesday</i>), and also as countable (e.g. <i>thing</i>, <i>boy</i>) or non-countable (e.g. <i>stuff</i>, <i>money</i>). These classes can be recognised by the determiners they combine with.	but is a verb, not a noun] common, countable: <i>a book</i>, <i>books</i>, <i>two chocolates</i>, <i>one day</i>, <i>fewer ideas</i> common, non-countable: <i>money</i>, <i>some chocolate</i>, <i>less imagination</i> proper, countable: <i>Marilyn</i>, <i>London</i>, <i>Wednesday</i>
past tense	<u>Verbs</u> in the past tense are commonly used to: - talk about the past - talk about imagined situations - make a request sound more polite. Most verbs take a <u>suffix</u> -ed, to form their past tense, but many commonly-used verbs are irregular. See also <u>tense</u>.	<i>Tom and Chris <u>showed</u> me their new TV.</i> [names an event in the past] <i>Antonio <u>went</u> on holiday to Brazil.</i> [names an event in the past; irregular past of <i>go</i>] <i>I wish I <u>had</u> a puppy.</i> [names an imagined situation, not a situation in the past] <i>I <u>was</u> hoping you'd help tomorrow.</i> [makes an implied request sound more polite]
phoneme	A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that signals a distinct, contrasting meaning. For example: /t/ contrasts with /k/ to signal the difference between <i>tap</i> and <i>cap</i> /t/ contrasts with /l/ to signal the difference between <i>bought</i> and <i>ball</i>. It is this contrast in meaning that tells us there are two distinct phonemes at work. There are around 44 phonemes in English; the exact number depends on regional accents. A single phoneme may be represented in writing by one, two, three or four letters constituting a single <u>grapheme</u>.	The word <i>cat</i> has three letters and three phonemes: /kæt/ The word <i>catch</i> has five letters and three phonemes: /kætʃ/ The word <i>caught</i> has six letters and three phonemes: /kɔ:t/
phrase	A phrase is a group of words that are grammatically connected so that they stay together, and that expand a single word, called the 'head'. The phrase is a <u>noun phrase</u> if its head is a noun, a <u>preposition phrase</u> if its head is a preposition, and so on; but if the head is a <u>verb</u>, the phrase is called a <u>clause</u>. Phrases can be made up of other phrases.	<i>She waved to <u>her mother</u>.</i> [a noun phrase, with the noun <i>mother</i> as its head] <i>She waved <u>to her mother</u>.</i> [a preposition phrase, with the preposition <i>to</i> as its head] <i>She <u>waved to her mother</u>.</i> [a clause, with the verb <i>waved</i> as its head]
plural	A plural <u>noun</u> normally has a <u>suffix</u> -s or -es and means 'more than one'. There are a few nouns with different <u>morphology</u> in the plural (e.g. <i>mice</i>, <i>formulae</i>).	<i><u>dogs</u></i> [more than one dog]; <i><u>boxes</u></i> [more than one box] <i><u>mice</u></i> [more than one mouse]
prefix	A prefix is added at the beginning of a <u>word</u> in order to turn it into another word. Contrast <u>suffix</u>.	<i><u>overtake</u></i>, <i><u>disappear</u></i>
present tense	<u>Verbs</u> in the present tense are commonly used to: - talk about the present - talk about the <u>future</u>. They may take a suffix -s (depending on the <u>subject</u>). See also <u>tense</u>.	<i>Jamal <u>goes</u> to the pool every day.</i> [describes a habit that exists now] <i>He <u>can</u> swim.</i> [describes a state that is true now] <i>The bus <u>arrives</u> at three.</i> [scheduled now] <i>My friends <u>are</u> coming to play.</i> [describes a plan in progress now]
pronoun	Pronouns are normally used like <u>nouns</u>, except that: they are grammatically more specialised	<i>Amanda waved to Michael.</i>

English Glossary of Terms

Term	Guidance	Example
	it is harder to <u>modify</u> them In the examples, each sentence is written twice: once with nouns, and once with pronouns (underlined). Where the same thing is being talked about, the words are shown in bold.	<u>She</u> waved to <u>him</u>. John's mother is over there. <u>His</u> mother is over there. The visit will be an overnight visit. <u>This</u> will be an overnight visit. <u>Simon</u> is the person: Simon broke it. <u>He</u> is the one <u>who</u> broke it.
punctuation	Punctuation includes any conventional features of writing other than spelling and general layout: the standard punctuation marks . , ; : ? ! - - () " ' ' ' , and also word-spaces, capital letters, apostrophes, paragraph breaks and bullet points. One important role of punctuation is to indicate <u>sentence</u> boundaries.	" <u>I'm going out</u> , <u>Usha</u> , and <u>I won't be long</u> ," Mum said.
root word	<u>Morphology</u> breaks words down into root words, which can stand alone, and <u>suffixes</u> or <u>prefixes</u> which can't. For example, <i>help</i> is the root word for other words in its <u>word family</u> such as <i>helpful</i> and <i>helpless</i> , and also for its <u>inflections</u> such as <i>helping</i> . <u>Compound</u> words (e.g. <i>help-desk</i>) contain two or more root words. When looking in a dictionary, we sometimes have to look for the root word (or words) of the word we are interested in.	<u>played</u> [the root word is <i>play</i>] <u>unfair</u> [the root word is <i>fair</i>] <i>football</i> [the root words are <i>foot</i> and <i>ball</i>]
schwa	The name of a vowel sound that is found only in unstressed positions in English. It is the most common vowel sound in English. It is written as /ə/ in the International Phonetic Alphabet. In the English writing system, it can be written in many different ways.	/ə'lon/ [<u>a</u>long] /bə'tə/ [<u>u</u>tter] /dɒktə/ [<u>o</u>ctor]
sentence	A sentence is a group of <u>words</u> which are grammatically connected to each other but not to any words outside the sentence. The form of a sentence's main clause shows whether it is being used as a statement, a question, a command or an exclamation. A sentence may consist of a single clause or it may contain several clauses held together by subordination or co-ordination. Classifying sentences as 'simple', 'complex' or 'compound' can be confusing, because a 'simple' sentence may be complicated, and a 'complex' one may be straightforward. The terms 'single-clause sentence' and 'multi-clause sentence' may be more helpful.	<u>John went to his friend's house. He stayed there till tea-time.</u> John went to his friend's house, he stayed there till tea-time. [This is a 'comma splice', a common error in which a comma is used where either a full stop or a semi-colon is needed to indicate the lack of any grammatical connection between the two clauses.] You are my friend. [statement] Are you my friend? [question] Be my friend! [command] What a good friend you are! [exclamation] Ali went home on his bike to his goldfish and his current library book about pets. [single-clause sentence] She went shopping but took back everything she had bought because she didn't like any of it. [multi-clause sentence]
suffix	A suffix is an 'ending', used at the end of one word to turn it into another word. Unlike <u>root words</u>, suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word. Contrast <u>prefix</u>.	call - <u>called</u> teach - <u>teacher</u> [turns a <u>verb</u> into a <u>noun</u>] terror - <u>terrorise</u> [turns a noun into a verb] green - <u>greenish</u> [leaves <u>word class</u> unchanged]

English Glossary of Terms

Term	Guidance	Example
syllable	A syllable sounds like a beat in a <u>word</u> . Syllables consist of at least one <u>vowel</u> , and possibly one or more <u>consonants</u> .	<i>Cat</i> has one syllable. <i>Fairy</i> has two syllables. <i>Hippopotamus</i> has five syllables.
synonym	Two words are synonyms if they have the same meaning, or similar meanings. Contrast <u>antonym</u> .	<i>talk</i> - <i>speak</i> <i>old</i> - <i>elderly</i>
tense	In English, tense is the choice between <u>present</u> and <u>past verbs</u>, which is special because it is signalled by <u>inflections</u> and normally indicates differences of time. In contrast, languages like French, Spanish and Italian, have three or more distinct tense forms, including a future tense. (See also: <u>future</u>.) The simple tenses (present and past) may be combined in English with the <u>perfect</u> and <u>progressive</u>.	<i>He <u>studies</u>.</i> [present tense - present time] <i>He <u>studied</u> yesterday.</i> [past tense - past time] <i>He <u>studies</u> tomorrow, or else!</i> [present tense - future time] <i>He <u>may study</u> tomorrow.</i> [present tense + infinitive - future time] <i>He <u>plans</u> to <u>study</u> tomorrow.</i> [present tense + infinitive - future time] <i>If he <u>studied</u> tomorrow, he'd see the difference!</i> [past tense - imagined future] Contrast three distinct tense forms in Spanish: ▪ <i>Estudia.</i> [present tense] ▪ <i>Estudió.</i> [past tense] ▪ <i>Estudiará.</i> [future tense]
trigraph	A type of <u>grapheme</u> where three letters represent one <u>phoneme</u> .	<i>High, pure, patch, hedge</i>
verb	The surest way to identify verbs is by the ways they can be used: they can usually have a <u>tense</u>, either <u>present</u> or <u>past</u> (see also <u>future</u>). Verbs are sometimes called 'doing words' because many verbs name an action that someone does; while this can be a way of recognising verbs, it doesn't distinguish verbs from <u>nouns</u> (which can also name actions). Moreover many verbs name states or feelings rather than actions. Verbs can be classified in various ways: for example, as <u>auxiliary</u>, or <u>modal</u>; as <u>transitive</u> or <u>intransitive</u>; and as states or events.	<i>He <u>lives</u> in Birmingham.</i> [present tense] <i>The teacher <u>wrote</u> a song for the class.</i> [past tense] <i>He <u>likes</u> chocolate.</i> [present tense; not an action] <i>He <u>knew</u> my father.</i> [past tense; not an action] Not verbs: ▪ <i>The <u>walk</u> to Halina's house will take an hour.</i> [noun] ▪ <i>All that <u>surfing</u> makes Morwenna so sleepy!</i> [noun]
vowel	A vowel is a speech sound which is produced without any closure or obstruction of the vocal tract. Vowels can form <u>syllables</u> by themselves, or they may combine with <u>consonants</u>. In the English writing system, the letters <i>a, e, i, o, u</i> and <i>y</i> can represent vowels.	
word	A word is a unit of grammar: it can be selected and moved around relatively independently, but cannot easily be split. In punctuation, words are normally separated by word spaces. Sometimes, a sequence that appears grammatically to be two words is collapsed into a single written word, indicated with a hyphen or apostrophe (e.g. <i>well-built</i>, <i>he's</i>).	<i><u>headteacher</u> or <u>head teacher</u></i> [can be written with or without a space] <i><u>I'm</u> going out.</i> <i><u>9.30 am</u></i>