

Glossary

accent	a sum of those features of a person's pronunciation that are typical of the person's regional and linguistic background
accuracy	the effect of using language in a way that is normally considered acceptable, and would be thought correct by native speakers. Activities designed to develop accuracy focus on detail and are normally contrasted with activities that promote fluency.
active	(See voice and participle .)
adjective	a word that describes somebody or something. Adjectives normally come before a noun (e.g. <i>a <u>busy</u> day</i>), or after verbs such as <i>be</i> , <i>get</i> , <i>seem</i> , <i>look</i> (e.g. <i>I'm <u>busy</u></i>).
adjectival phrase	a group of two or more words functioning as a single adjective (<i>a hat <u>with a large feather</u>, she looks <u>like her mother</u></i>). (See also prepositional phrases .)
adverb	<p>a word that gives extra meaning to a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a whole sentence. Many adverbs are formed by adding <i>-ly</i> to an adjective, e.g. <i>quickly, dangerously, nicely</i>, but many common adverbs do not end in <i>-ly</i>, e.g. <i>often, then, there</i>. Some <i>-ly</i> words are adjectives, not adverbs (e.g. <i>lovely, lonely, friendly</i>); they use phrases such as <i>in a friendly way/manner</i> when they function adverbially.</p> <p>Adverbs are categorised according to meaning: adverbs of manner, place, time, frequency and degree. Where a number of adverbs occur together, the usual word order is manner, place and time, e.g. <i>she sang beautifully at the concert this afternoon</i>.</p> <p>An adverb may also be used as an intensifier, e.g. <i>She's <u>really</u> kind; he works <u>really</u> slowly</i>.</p> <p>Adverbs can also be used as a comment on the whole sentence, e.g. <i><u>Really</u>, he should do better</i>.</p> <p>Other adverbs indicate the attitude of the speaker to what he or she is saying (<i>perhaps, obviously</i>), or connections in meaning between sentences (<i>however, finally</i>). These adverbs usually occur initially but in less formal and spoken English they may occur medially or finally, e.g. <i>She's over 50 <u>actually</u></i>.</p>
adverbial phrase	a group of words that functions in the same way as a single adverb, e.g. <i>last week, three times a day, first of all, of course</i> . (See also prepositional phrases .)
adverb particles	when words such as <i>in, off, up</i> are not followed by an object, they are referred to as adverb particles rather than prepositions, e.g. <i>The sun has gone <u>in</u></i> .
adverbial clause	adverbial clauses function as adverbs. They can be identified by asking the same questions: <i>When? Where? How? Why?</i> and so on. They include adverbial clauses of time, place, manner, reason, condition, concession, purpose, result, comparison or degree. (See also subordinate clauses .)
agreement (or concord)	in some cases the form of a verb changes according to its subject, so the verb and subject 'agree', e.g. <i>I am/he is/they are; I was/you were; I like/she likes, I don't/he doesn't</i> . (See also countable nouns .)
ambiguity	a word, phrase or statement that has more than one possible interpretation, sometimes arising from unclear grammatical relationships (e.g. <i>Police killed man with knife</i>). In poetry, it often serves to extend the meaning beyond the literal.
analogy	the perception of similarity between two things; relating something known to something new. In spelling, using known spellings to spell unknown words (e.g. <i>night – knight – right – sight – light – fright</i>). In reading, using knowledge of words to attempt previously unseen words.
antonym	a word with a meaning opposite to another (e.g. <i>hot – cold, satisfaction – dissatisfaction</i>), the opposite of synonym .
apostrophe	An apostrophe has two functions: to indicate that a letter is missing (<i>don't, I've</i>) and to indicate possession with nouns, e.g. <i>The boy's coat</i> . When the noun is plural the apostrophe follows the plural <i>s</i> , as in <i>the girls' coats</i> . (See also possessive s , contractions and auxiliaries .)
appropriate	describes a text, word, utterance or style that is suitably phrased for its intended audience and form. 'Appropriate' accepts that different contexts require different treatments and is in this respect to be differentiated from 'correct', which is more concerned with the right grammatical formulation of an expression.

article	a type of determiner . There is a definite article (<i>the</i>) and an indefinite article (<i>a</i> or <i>an</i>). The absence of an article is sometimes termed the zero article, e.g. with plurals or uncountable nouns, as in <i>trains are crowded</i> , <i>beauty is truth</i> . (See also determiner .)
articulation	the production of different speech sounds through the use of the speech organs: pharynx, tongue, lips, jaw, soft and hard palate.
aspect	a grammatical category that combines with time distinctions in a verb phrase to form the perfect and continuous tenses. English has two aspects, the perfect aspect , which is formed from the auxiliary <i>have</i> and (in the case of regular and some irregular verbs) the participle <i>-ed</i> : <i>I have called, had told</i> ; and the progressive aspect , which is formed from the auxiliary <i>be</i> and the participle <i>-ing</i> , denoting an event in progress or continuing within a specified period, e.g. <i>I was playing all afternoon</i> .
assimilation	the tendency for sounds (e.g. consonant sounds at the end of words) to take on features of adjacent sounds and thus change the way they are pronounced. For instance, <i>ten</i> in <i>ten pounds</i> can sound like <i>tem</i> as /m/ is pronounced with the same lip position as /p/.
audience	the people addressed by a text. The term includes listeners, readers of print, film/TV audiences, and users of information technology.
auxiliary	verbs (also called 'helping verbs') that combine with a main verb to form the negative, interrogative and perfect or progressive aspect or the passive form. <i>Have</i> helps to form present perfect and past perfect; <i>be</i> helps to form the passive, present and past continuous; <i>do</i> helps to form question and negative in present simple and past simple. Auxiliary verbs, including modal auxiliaries, may be used on their own in short answer forms, e.g. <i>Have you seen it? Yes, I have</i> . (See also modal .) In informal English they are frequently contracted, e.g. <i>don't, I'm</i> . (See also apostrophe .)
back-channelling	ways in which the listener indicates to the speaker that he or she is being understood, e.g. by the use of interjections like <i>oh, mm, OK, eh</i> .
blend	the process of combining phonemes into larger elements such as clusters, syllables and words. Also refers to a combination of two or more phonemes, particularly at the beginning and end of words, e.g. <i>st, str, nt, pl, nd</i> .
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning. (See also ICT .)
causality	(See discourse markers and subordinate clauses .)
chronological	an adjective used to describe writing organised in terms of sequences of events in time.
chunk	a manageable unit of language extracted for analysis or to be used for other learning activities.
clause	a structural unit, smaller than a sentence but larger than a phrase or word, which normally contains a verb. A main clause makes sense on its own and can form a complete sentence (<i>It was raining</i>). A subordinate clause (sometimes called 'dependent') amplifies the main clause, but does not make complete sense on its own and can only stand as an independent grammatical unit (<i>when we went out</i>) in spoken discourse (<i>Did you lock the door? Yes, when we went out</i>). When attached to a main clause, a subordinate clause makes a complete sentence, e.g. <i>It was raining when we went out. / When we went out it was raining</i> . Subordinate clauses can sometimes be abbreviated to phrases, omitting verb and subject, which are understood from the context, e.g. <i>When in Rome, do as the Romans do</i> . (See also syntax , simple , compound and complex sentence , ellipsis .)
cliché	a very common idiom or stereotyped phrase that has been so over-used as to have lost all originality or effectiveness, e.g. <i>to sell like hot cakes</i> .
cleft sentence	a sentence split into two clauses for emphasis, eg. <i>It was Brenda who told me, What is most important is to check the measurements</i>
cloze	an exercise in which certain words are deleted from a text and a gap left. The learner's task is to supply the missing words. Words can be deleted in a specific way (e.g. adjectives, conjunctions), or randomly (every <i>n</i> th word). It is often used for assessment purposes.
coherence	the underlying logical connectedness of a text, whereby concepts and relationships are relevant to each other and it is possible to make plausible inferences about underlying meaning.
cohesive ties	a cohesive device or tie helps to clarify relationships between components of a long piece of text. (See also discourse , reference , ellipsis , connectives and substitution .)

collective noun	a collective noun refers to a group (e.g. <i>crowd, flock, team</i>). Although these are singular in form, we often think of them as plural in meaning and use them with a plural verb. For example, if we say <i>The team <u>have</u> won all <u>their</u> games so far</i> , we think of the team as <i>they</i> (rather than <i>it</i>). (See also noun.)
collocation	the tendency for certain words to occur together, typically adjectives and nouns (e.g. <i>golden opportunity</i> but not <i>golden chance</i> ; <i>lean meat</i> not <i>skinny meat</i>), but also prepositions with verbs, nouns and adjectives, and verbs with nouns and prepositions, e.g. <i>to take an interest in, be aware of</i> .
colloquial	(See informal.)
communicative function	(See language function.)
comparative and superlative	forms of adjectives and adverbs that convey different degrees of intensity. The comparative expresses a relationship of degree between two: <i>taller, happier, more secluded</i> ; the superlative expresses the limits of the quality: <i>tallest, happiest, most secluded</i> . Some adjectives use the endings <i>-er/-est</i> ; others, usually longer adjectives, use <i>more/most</i> . (The 'rule' is that only one of these methods should be used at once.) When the endings <i>-er, -est</i> are added, certain spelling patterns apply, e.g. <i>healthy/healthier/healthiest; sad, sadder, saddest</i> . Comparison may be unequal (<i>She works more quickly than I do; He is tidier than me</i>), or equal (<i>he is as tidy as me</i>).
complement	some verbs do not take an object, but may be followed by a complement, e.g. <i>Jai wants to be a doctor</i> . In this example, <i>Jai</i> (subject) and <i>a doctor</i> refer to the same person, making <i>a doctor</i> a subject complement. The verb <i>to be</i> , as well as verbs such as <i>seem</i> or <i>become</i> , are commonly followed by a complement, which may be a noun or noun phrase, or an adjective or adjectival phrase, as in <i>I am very happy</i> . Another example of a complement is an object complement, e.g. <i>You make me happy</i> , where <i>me</i> is the direct object and <i>happy</i> the object complement. (The terms subject, object and complement may refer to a group of words, as well as a single word.) (See also syntax.)
complex sentence	a sentence containing at least one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses, e.g. <i>I'll phone you</i> (main clause) <i>as soon as I am ready</i> (subordinate clause). In the complex sentence, <i>Local residents believe that</i> (main clause) <i>more police on the street would reduce crime</i> (subordinate clause), the subordinate clause functions as a direct object of the verb <i>believe</i> linked by the subordinator <i>that</i> . Complex sentences also occur with more than one subordinate clause, as in <i>The man who I spoke to</i> (relative clause) <i>said he would call back</i> (noun clause) <i>when the meeting had finished</i> (adverbial clause). In general the subordinate clause would not stand alone other than in spoken discourse. (See also clause, and conjunction.)
compound sentence	a compound sentence has two or more main clauses of equal weight joined by <i>and, or, but</i> or <i>so</i> (e.g. <i>It was late but I wasn't tired</i>). Each main clause could be an independent sentence. The clauses are typically linked by the conjunctions <i>and, but, or, so</i> , e.g. <i>We had a picnic in the park and the children fed the ducks</i> . (See also clause, conjunction.)
compound word	a word made up of two other words, e.g. <i>football, headrest, playground, database, earring, handout, backlash</i> .
comprehension	understanding of a written text or spoken utterance. With literal comprehension, the reader has access to the surface details of the text, and can recall details that have been directly related. With inferential comprehension, the reader can read meanings that are not directly explained, e.g. make inferences about the time of year from references to festivals, descriptions of weather, activities and so on. With evaluative comprehension, the reader can offer an opinion on the effectiveness of the text for its purpose.
comprehension questions	a teaching or assessment method whereby teachers ask learners questions to check understanding of a written text or spoken utterance.
concession	adverbial clauses of concession introduce an element of contrast into a sentence and are sometimes called contrast clauses. The most common conjunctions that introduce clauses of concession are <i>although, though, even though</i> .
condition	conditional sentences are usually divided into three basic types referred to as Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3: Type 1: If + present + <i>will</i> Type 2: If + past + <i>would</i> Type 3: If + past perfect + <i>would have</i>

conjunction	a word used to link clauses within a sentence, a type of connective or connective word . Co-ordinating conjunctions (e.g. <i>and, but, or, so</i>) join two clauses of equal weight into a compound sentence; subordinating conjunctions (e.g. <i>when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that</i>) introduce a subordinate clause in a complex sentence. The conjunction <i>that</i> is used to introduce both relative clauses and noun clauses. It is often omitted in the case of noun clauses, e.g. <i>He said (that) he was coming</i> .
connective	a word or phrase that links different parts of a text (clauses, sentences, paragraphs). Connectives can be conjunctions (e.g. <i>but, when, because</i>) or connecting adverbs (e.g. <i>however, then, therefore</i>). Connectives maintain the cohesion of a text, e.g. by: addition (<i>and, also, furthermore</i>); opposition (<i>however, but, nevertheless, on the other hand</i>); cause (<i>because, this means, therefore</i>); time (<i>just then, immediately, as soon as possible</i>). Particular connectives tend to occur in particular text types, e.g.: of time, in chronological narratives; of opposition or cause, when presenting an argument or persuading to a viewpoint. Pronouns (e.g. <i>A survey of adult learners will take place shortly. It will be the largest of its kind to date.</i>) and prepositional phrases (e.g. <i>in other words, after all that</i>) can also act as connectives.
connotation	the tendency for certain words to carry emotional meaning. Connotation can be negative or positive, e.g. <i>his friends</i> may be positive or neutral, but <i>his cronies</i> has negative connotation.
consonant	a speech sound that obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract; for example, the flow of air is obstructed by the lips in <i>p</i> and by the tongue in <i>t</i> . The term also refers to the 21 letters of the alphabet whose typical value is to represent such sounds, namely all except the vowels <i>a, e, i, o, u</i> . There are 24 distinctive consonant sounds in English, which are normally represented by the above letters, singly or in combination. The letter <i>y</i> can represent a consonant sound (<i>yes</i>) or a vowel sound (<i>happy, cycle</i>).
consonant digraph	a combination of two consonant letters to represent a single consonant sound, e.g. <i>ch</i> in <i>chess</i> , <i>th</i> in <i>thanks</i> .
content words	or information words carry the meaning of a sentence, usually nouns or verbs as opposed to grammatical words such as <i>the</i> and <i>to</i> . In sending a telegram or text message, the content words would be the ones included, e.g. <i>Arriving 2pm. Send car.</i>
context	can refer to language or a non-linguistic situation in which spoken or written language is used. A description of the situational context takes into consideration the place, the type of interaction, the number of people involved and the relationship between them, etc. The context can play a large part in choice of language, vocabulary, or formal or informal register. The term linguistic context (also called co-text) refers to the language in which a particular item occurs, e.g. to understand the meaning of a word, it is often necessary to consider it in the context of the sentence, phrase or the text in which it occurs: <i>peak viewing time</i> as opposed to <i>they climbed right to the peak</i> .
context cue	enables a learner to use either a situational or linguistic context to infer the meaning of a linguistic item that is not otherwise clear.
contractions	contracted forms are often used for subject pronoun + auxiliary, e.g. <i>I'm, he's</i> , and for auxiliary and negative, e.g. <i>don't, doesn't</i> . Contracted forms are regularly used in spoken and informal written English, but not in formal written English. (See apostrophe .)
convention	(See discourse convention .)
countable/ uncountable nouns	the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns is essential to be able to decide when to use singular or plural forms and when to use the indefinite, definite and zero articles . Countable or count , or non-mass nouns can be singular (only one) or plural (more than one), e.g. <i>sister/sisters, problem/problems, party/parties</i> , and can be introduced by determiners denoting distinction in numbers, e.g. <i>a/one/every/either car</i> in the singular, and <i>several/three/many/these cars</i> in the plural. Uncountable or non-countable , or mass nouns (e.g. <i>butter, sugar, electricity, money, police</i>) do not normally occur in the plural, are treated as singular for subject-verb agreement and are introduced by a restricted set of determiners, e.g. <i>the butter, some cotton, no money, any information</i> . Many basically non-countable nouns, particularly nouns denoting materials, have countable uses, e.g. <i>two coffees</i> , in the sense of two cups of coffee, or a selection of herbal <i>teas</i> , a painting in <i>oils</i> . Most abstract nouns are uncountable, e.g. <i>happiness, intelligence</i> .
cross-cultural features of communication	refers to the fact that languages and cultures have similar or different conventions of communications. The differences may be linguistic (e.g. in how often and when <i>please</i> and <i>thank you</i> are used) or non-linguistic (e.g. in the physical distance between two people in conversation).

cue cards	cards containing words or pictures for use by learners in practical activities. Also referred to as 'prompt cards'.
decode	translate the visual symbol into component sounds that make up a word.
definite article	(See article.)
deixis	is where the meaning of pronouns, adverbs, etc. (deictics) is determined by the physical context – the setting, time, persons involved, e.g. <i>here, there, now, this, that</i> .
demonstrative	<i>this</i> and <i>that</i> are often referred to as demonstrative pronouns, e.g. in <i>this is mine</i> . If followed by a noun, they are sometimes referred to as demonstrative adjectives, e.g. <i>this book is mine</i> . They are a subset of determiners. (See also determiner.)
derivation	the etymology or origin of words, from earlier forms of the word: <i>woman</i> is derived from <i>wifman</i> ; <i>table</i> from Latin <i>tabula</i> .
descriptive	descriptive texts describe events, processes or states. They often make greater use of adjectives and figurative language than other forms of writing. (See also chronological, narrative, persuasive, discursive and explanatory for other types of text.)
detailed reading	indicates a form of reading that is at the opposite end of the spectrum from skimming or scanning . Detailed reading involves careful reading in order to extract specific information, but also to gain a complete understanding of the text's intentions and the way in which language choice and syntax combine to produce a particular message.
determiner	refers to a class of words, occurring before a noun. The definite and indefinite article (<i>the, a, an</i>) are types of determiner. Other examples include <i>this, some, any</i> . (See also articles and demonstrative .)
digraph	two letters representing one phoneme, e.g. <i>th, tr</i> and <i>ch</i> in: <i>bath; train; ch/ur/ch</i> .
dialogue	an exchange between two participants. Taped dialogues are often used to introduce language in context.
diphthong	a sound, perceived as a single vowel sound, but which consists of two vowel sounds, articulated together (e.g. the vowel sound in <i>right</i> or in <i>rain</i>).
direct speech	The term direct speech is used to describe the way the spoken word is represented in writing: <i>'I'm coming,' said Mary</i> . The actual words spoken are enclosed by quotation marks or 'inverted commas'. (See also reported speech .)
discourse	a stretch of language longer than a sentence. Discourse analysis involves studying these larger linguistic units and concerns the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used, as well as relationships between different parts of a written or spoken text. (See also cohesion, reference, deixis, ellipsis and substitution .)
discourse convention	ways in which discourse is typically organised in a particular language and/or culture, e.g. the conventional way to close a formal letter or open a telephone conversation.
discourse marker	a cohesive device or tie used to structure spoken or written discourse, e.g. <i>By the way, Right, Anyway</i> . They can: be sequence markers (sequencing adverbs) , e.g. <i>after that, finally</i> ; show logical relations, e.g. <i>in this way, accordingly in a text</i> ; show contrast, e.g. <i>however, on the other hand</i> ; indicate additional information, e.g. <i>and, moreover, in addition</i> ; indicate the purpose of part of the text, e.g. <i>for example, to sum up, to cut a long story short</i> . Discourse markers used primarily in speech include insertions that occur at the beginning of an utterance or to signal a transition in the evolving progress of a conversation, e.g. <i>well, right, now, mind you, you know, you see</i> .
discourse type	refers to the type of text under consideration, e.g. <i>a formal letter, a newspaper article, a poem, a prepared speech, an interview, a social conversation</i> . Terms similar in meaning include text type and genre .
discursive writing	reflective writing that aims to present a complete picture of a topic through analysis of its various aspects and through the inclusion of other people's/writers' arguments and counter-arguments.
drill	a practice technique used for developing accuracy in spoken English, where learners are asked either to repeat a given sentence exactly or make minimal changes to it. Types of drill include repetition, substitution (in which learners are asked to change one word of a given sentence) or incremental , in which learners add a word or phrase to a given sentence.
dyslexia	dyslexia results from differences in the structure and function of the brain. Dyslexic adults often show special talent in areas that require visual, spatial, and motor integration, such as art, music or engineering. Their problems in language processing distinguish them as a group. This means that a dyslexic person has problems translating language to thought (as in listening or reading) or thought to language (as in writing or speaking).

ear-pinning	the aural equivalent of scanning in reading. The listener is interested only in a specific item of information and will concentrate on listening for that, e.g. when listening for railway announcements.
echoing	the tendency for speakers to repeat, in part, the previous speaker's words, to show agreement or surprise, e.g.: <i>Where's Bob? He's gone to India. He's gone to India?</i>
eliciting	a technique used to encourage learners' contribution when new language is taught, and to find out how much they know already. Rather than being presented with information, learners are given a stimulus and encouraged to provide the information themselves.
elision	refers to the omission of certain sounds in connected, and especially rapid, speech, e.g. <i>a cuppa tea</i> for <i>a cup of tea</i> .
ellipsis	grammatical ellipsis is a feature of discourse , where part of the structure of a sentence has been missed out. It may already have been mentioned, as in the reply <i>I think I will</i> ^ to the question <i>Will you be there?</i> Or ^ <i>Really enjoyed the party ...</i> ^ <i>lovely food. Sounds good</i> ('That sounds good'); <i>Spoken to Jim today</i> ('I've spoken to Jim today'); <i>Nice idea</i> ('That was a nice idea') in which subjects, main verbs and sometimes articles are omitted. The omissions assume the message can be understood by the recipient.
embedded questions	are contained within another question or statement, e.g. <i>Can you tell me where the bank is?</i> (See also question .)
explanatory	an adjective used to describe text written to explain how or why something happens. Explanatory text tends to use connectives expressing cause and effect (e.g. <i>so, therefore, as a result</i>) and time (e.g. <i>later, meanwhile</i>) and the passive voice (e.g. <i>Tax is usually deducted at source</i>) more than other forms of text.
familiar	describes contexts, situations, sources, topics or words of which the learner has some prior knowledge or experience. (See informal .)
feedback	the on-going reaction speakers receive from their listeners which helps them evaluate the success of their communication. Feedback may be verbal or non-verbal (e.g. facial expressions, gestures).
flash cards	cards used by teachers as prompts in practice activities with learners.
formal	depicts a style of language where the choice of words, syntax and address is determined by a distance from the audience, which may be dictated by the context (e.g. a letter of application, official documents, or business meetings) or the result of a lack of knowledge of this audience (e.g. polite conversations with strangers) or by difference in status (e.g. doctor and patient). Formal language tends to be characterised by more elaborate grammatical structures and by longer and more formal or technical vocabulary (e.g. <i>receive</i> rather than <i>get</i> , <i>thank you</i> rather than <i>thanks</i> , <i>I beg your pardon</i> rather than <i>What?</i> , <i>an abdominal pain</i> rather than <i>a tummy ache</i>). (See also informal .)
format	the way in which a text is arranged or presented (e.g. as a book, leaflet, essay, video, audiotape, electronic) or the way in which it is structured (e.g. the use made of headings, sub-headings, diagrams/photographs with captions). (See also genre and discourse type .)
fronting	putting items at the front of a sentence for special emphasis, e.g. <i>Crazy he is to do that!</i>
function	(See language function .)
future simple	(See tense .)
genre	originally an identifiable category or type of literary composition (e.g. novel, drama, short story, poetry, autobiography). Now used more widely to refer to different types of written form, literary and non-literary (e.g. story, list, letter). Different genres have recognisable features of language and structure. Terms similar in meaning are discourse type and text type .
gist	the main point or idea of a text. Reading for gist is thus reading for identification of the main point only. Listening for gist means listening to a passage in order to pick out the topic and the main points but not too much detail.
grammar	(See syntax , word order and morphology .)
grapheme	the smallest distinctive unit in a writing system representing a sound. A grapheme may consist of one or more letters: for example, the phoneme <i>s</i> can be represented by the graphemes <i>s</i> , <i>se</i> , <i>c</i> , <i>sc</i> and <i>ce</i> as in <i>sun</i> , <i>mouse</i> , <i>city</i> , <i>science</i> .
graphic knowledge	the ability to understand the key features of the English writing system, including the basic shape of the letters, the plural form of nouns, spelling patterns in verb endings, the difference between upper and lower case, etc.

high-frequency words	words that occur frequently; someone who is unable to recognise or use these words will therefore be at a disadvantage, e.g. <i>the, do, and, my</i> . A number of attempts have been made (e.g. by Dolch) to identify those words that learners most need to acquire in order to advance in their learning.
homonym	words that have the same spelling or pronunciation as another, but a different meaning or origin.
homophone	words that have the same sound as another but a different meaning or different spelling: <i>read/reed; pair/pear; right/write/rite</i> .
hypertext	a word coined in 1965 to describe electronic texts, where a collection of documents contain cross-references or 'links' that allow the reader to move easily from one document to another with the aid of a browser program.
hypotheses	hypotheses or hypothetical statements may refer to the present, past or future. They describe conditions, actions, situations or events which are imagined or unreal, e.g. <i>What would you do if you won the lottery?</i> (See also condition .)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology. Other acronyms concerned with the use of ICT in language teaching include CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning).
idiom	a group of words whose meaning cannot be predicted from the constituent parts, e.g. <i>out of the blue, learn by heart, red herring</i> . An idiom may also be referred to as an 'idiomatic expression'.
idiomatic usage	the use of words or phrases in a sense other than their literal meaning, e.g. <i>a fat cheque, lion's share, broken heart</i> .
imperative	a form of the verb that expresses a command or instruction (e.g. <i>Hold this! Take the first right. Let's go now.</i>)
incremental drill	(See drill .)
indefinite article	(See article .)
indefinite pronoun	(See pronoun .)
infer meaning	meaning is not always stated overtly in a text but may be implied. Inferring involves picking up clues to help with 'reading between the lines'.
infinitive	The base or stem form of a verb, e.g. <i>speak</i> often functions as an infinitive. It is often called the 'bare infinitive' when it is used without <i>to</i> , e.g. after modals (<i>you must <u>come</u></i>) and the 'to-infinitive' when it is preceded by <i>to</i> , e.g. <i>I want <u>to come</u></i> .
inflected forms of words (or inflection)	the way in which words change, often by change in ending, e.g. to show differences in tense or number: <i>work<u>ed</u>, flower<u>s</u></i> .
informal	a style of language where choices of words, grammatical construction and address are determined by a connection with the audience that may be actual or sought, e.g. conversations with friends, letter to family, e-mails, text messages. Informal language tends to be more colloquial and familiar than formal language and to use less technical or complex vocabulary, e.g. <i>give us a break, we've been slaving away</i> (informal) as opposed to <i>We would appreciate your understanding but we have been working very hard</i> (formal).
information gap	activities where individual learners do not have all the information needed to fulfil a task and therefore need to communicate in order to complete the task.
-ing form	(See participle .)
instructional	text written to help readers to achieve particular goals (e.g. recipes, vehicle repair manuals, self-assembly instructions, safety procedures). Instructional texts tend to use imperative verbs and sequence markers often placed at the beginning of sentences such as <i>first, then, next</i> to form a series of commands.
intensifier	a word (<i>adverb</i> or <i>pronoun</i>) that increases the impact of another word or phrase, usually an adjective or adverb . Examples include the adverbs <i>very, extremely, so, such</i> ; or pronouns such as <i>what</i> or <i>how</i> as in <i>How amazing! What a sight!</i>
interlocutor	a term sometimes used when discussing oral skills. The interlocutor is the person to whom the learner is speaking, e.g. when the learner is shopping, the interlocutor may be a shop assistant.
interrogative	used in the phrase 'interrogative forms', in contrast to positive and negative statements. (See also questions .)

intonation	the aspect of phonology that is concerned with the rise and fall of the voice or the way in which changes in the musical pitch of the voice are used to structure speech and to contribute to meaning. Intonation can change according to a speaker's attitude and can indicate the difference between certainty and uncertainty, or between politeness and rudeness. Intonation may also distinguish questions (by rising) from statements by falling, as in <i>Sure?</i> \uparrow <i>Sure</i> \downarrow , or indicate contrastive and emotive stress (as in <i>I said <u>two</u>, not three</i> , or <i>I just <u>hate</u> that advertisement</i>).
intransitive verbs	intransitive verbs do not need an object to complete their meaning. They cannot form passive sentences.
jigsaw reading	an activity whereby different learners read different texts, or different versions of the same text, and exchange information gained from their reading, in order to build up 'the complete picture'.
kernel sentence	may be a simple sentence given to learners for them to expand and develop. This approach may be used to improve learners' writing skills.
key words	the words that carry the substance of a phrase or the meaning of a sentence. Identifying the key words of a text is therefore a means of understanding its gist . The term is also applied to key words in any subject that learners have to understand if they are to progress.
kinaesthetic	used to describe activities that involve bodily movement. Kinaesthetic learners need to become totally involved in real-life situations like going on trips or building things. They find that tracing patterns of words with their finger on the page, or 'drawing' them in the air, helps to secure spelling patterns in the memory.
language experience	an approach to learning that uses the learner's own words to provide the basis for language work. Typically, a teacher adopting a language-experience approach will produce a written version of a 'spoken text' supplied by the learner, so that there is a written text with which the learner is familiar, to be used for further work in reading and writing.
language function	the purpose for which a speaker or writer is using the language, e.g. <i>to request action, give an opinion, express feeling, invite</i> .
layout	textual features, typographical or visual, typical of particular text types that help indicate the purpose of a text and contribute to its overall meaning. (See also format .)
letter string	a group of letters that together represent a phoneme or morpheme .
linking (linkage)	the tendency, in connected speech, for words to sound as if connected to each other, e.g. <i>wrap it up</i> might sound like <i>wra pi tup</i> . English often introduces an /r/ sound between vowels to aid linking, e.g. <i>the cinema /r/ and the theatre</i> .
loan word	words introduced from one language to another. English has many loan words, some of which retain, or remain close to, their original form, e.g. <i>spaghetti, shampoo, ketchup, sofa, double entendre, bourgeois</i> , while others have changed almost beyond recognition, e.g. <i>bankrupt</i> from Italian <i>banca rotta</i> .
lower case	a term used to describe small letters, as opposed to upper case or capital letters. In print, lower-case letters will be of varying size, with some having 'ascenders' and some having 'descenders' (parts of the letter rising above and below the main body of the letter, respectively), and some having neither.
markers	(See also discourse markers .)
metalinguage	the language we use when talking about language itself. It includes words like <i>sentence, noun, paragraph, and preposition</i> . Acquisition of metalinguage is seen as a crucial step in developing awareness of, and proficiency in, communication, particularly in written language.
metaphor	a figurative expression where something is written or spoken of in terms usually associated with something else. Much everyday language uses metaphor (e.g. <i>to launch a new book/film</i>); overworked metaphors can soon become tired and clichéd (e.g. <i>at the end of the day</i>).
mnemonic	a device to aid memory, for instance to learn particular spelling patterns or spellings, e.g. <i>I Go Home Tonight: There is a <u>rat</u> in <u>separate</u></i> .
modal	auxiliary verbs that combine with the stem form of the verb to express a range of meanings, such as possibility, obligation, necessity, ability. The nine central modal verbs are <i>can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must</i> . Modals do not use <i>do</i> to form negatives and interrogatives. Semi-modals are fixed idiomatic phrases that have similar functions to modals, e.g. <i>had better, have got to, be going to</i> . Marginal auxiliary verbs include <i>used to, ought to</i> , as well as <i>dare to</i> and <i>need to</i> , used in interrogative and negative sentences, which behave like modals, e.g. <i>You needn't write this down; dare I ask if you told him?</i> Modal adverbs, such as <i>possibly, probably, surely, certainly</i> are especially common in spoken English.

morpheme	the smallest unit of meaning. A word may consist of one morpheme (<i>house</i>), two morphemes (<i>house/s</i> ; <i>hous/ing</i>) or three or more morphemes (<i>house/keep/ing</i> ; <i>un/happi/ness</i>). Suffixes and prefixes are morphemes.
morphology	the branch of grammar that concerns itself with the structure of words. For example, the word <i>unworkable</i> can be divided into three parts: a negative prefix <i>un-</i> , the lexical stem <i>work</i> , and an adjective suffix <i>-able</i> . The addition of a morpheme can change the meaning of an item: <i>possible/impossible</i> ; <i>book/books</i> ; <i>wait/waited</i> . It can also change the word class: adjective – <i>happy</i> , noun – <i>happiness</i> , adverb – <i>happily</i> .
multiple choice	is a format used in practice and assessment activities where learners must choose the correct response out of the three or four choices offered, to show their understanding or knowledge of the language or text.
narrative	describes text that re-tells events, often in chronological sequence. Narrative text may be purely fictional, or it may include some information; it may be in prose or poetic form.
negative	statements, questions, and commands can have both a positive and negative form. Full negative forms occur in formal style and in emphatic speech, e.g. <i>DO NOT TOUCH</i> . Contracted forms (e.g. <i>don't</i>) are normal in informal written and spoken English. In written contracted forms, the apostrophe is used where a vowel has been omitted.
non-verbal signalling	aspects of communication that do not involve spoken or written language, e.g. body language and eye contact. Conventions of non-verbal signalling may differ from culture to culture.
noun	<p>a word that denotes somebody or something (e.g. <i>My younger sister won some money in a competition</i>). All nouns fall into one of two classes: proper nouns or common nouns. Common nouns can then be subdivided into countable and uncountable nouns (also known as count and non-count nouns).</p> <p>Nouns that make non-specific reference to things, people, creatures, etc. are called common nouns, e.g. <i>sister, money, competition, dog</i>.</p> <p>Proper nouns are the names of specific people, places, organisations, etc. These normally begin with a capital letter (e.g. <i>Amanda, Birmingham, Microsoft, November</i>).</p> <p>Those that name a concept or idea are called abstract nouns, e.g. <i>happiness, love, justice, grief, pride, conscience</i>. (See also collective noun.)</p>
noun clause	noun clauses may be derived from statements or questions. They are introduced by: <i>that, the fact that</i> or the appropriate question word, e.g. <i>I know what he said, I know that it is true</i> . They can function as subjects or objects of the verb. When functioning as subject, <i>it</i> is often used as the preparatory subject, e.g. <i>it is well known that power corrupts</i> . (See also conjunctions .)
noun phrase	A noun phrase has at its head a noun, an adjective or numeral which acts as a modifier , adding further detail and specificity. In the phrase <i>There were high levels of lead pollution</i> , the noun <i>levels</i> is premodified by <i>high</i> and postmodified by <i>of lead pollution</i> . (Two other examples are <i>two books by Ozeki</i> ; <i>new students from Colombia</i> .)
object	The term direct object refers to the person or thing on which the action indicated by the verb has an effect, e.g. <i>Sam wrote a letter</i> , in which <i>a letter</i> is the object. Verbs such as <i>give, send</i> may have an 'indirect object', e.g. <i>Sam sent Ali a letter</i> , where <i>a letter</i> is the direct object, and <i>Ali</i> , the recipient, is the indirect object. (See also word order .)
object pronouns	a personal pronoun denoting a person or thing to which an action or feeling is directed, e.g. <i>me, you, him, them</i> . (See also word order .)
open questions	(See questions .)
organisational features (of text)	refers to those aspects of the visual display of text that give a clue to its status and to its relation to other pieces of text. Such features include: contents pages, chapter headings and other sub-headings, bullet-point lists, captions to photographs and illustrations, text presented in special display boxes, tables, footnotes, indexes, etc. (See also layout and format .)
paragraph	a section of a piece of writing. A new paragraph marks a change of focus, a change of time, a change of place or a change of speaker in a passage or dialogue. A new paragraph begins on a new line, usually with a one-line gap separating it from the previous paragraph, and sometimes indented.

participles	there are two main forms of participle: the present participle or <i>-ing</i> form of the verb and the past participle. In the case of regular verbs and some irregular verbs, the past participle/passive participle has the same form as the past tense, e.g. <i>We've <u>walked</u> a mile already. Yesterday we <u>walked</u> ten miles, She <u>found</u> it in the field, it was <u>found</u> in the field;</i> in the case of most irregular verbs they are different: <i>I <u>saw</u> him yesterday but haven't <u>seen</u> him today, he was <u>seen</u> yesterday.</i> Passive and perfect forms of participles are also used, e.g. <i>having found</i> and <i>having been found</i> .
participle constructions	participle constructions are generally more typical of formal style than of informal. They can be used to replace adverbial and relative clauses, e.g. <i>He walked all the way, <u>carrying</u> his sister on his back; <u>Seen</u> from this angle, it looks like ... ; The man <u>walking</u> towards us is my boss.</i> Participles are frequently used as adjectives, e.g. <i>The speech was boring</i> (active); <i>I was bored</i> (passive).
particles	(See adverb particles.)
parts of speech	sometimes referred to as word classes, e.g. <i>noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, conjunction, determiner, particles, articles.</i>
passive	(See verb, voice, active and passive.)
past continuous	(See verb tense.)
patterns	(See repeated language patterns.)
person	a grammatical term referring to the use of pronouns and verbs to indicate: direct reference to the speaker – first person (<i>I said ... , I am ...</i>); to the addressee – second person (<i>you said ... , you are ...</i>), or to others – the third person (<i>she said ... , they are, ...</i>). (See agreement.)
pelmanism	a game used to help learners develop memory and recognition in reading. Pairs of word cards are shuffled and placed face down. Learners turn up two cards. If the two cards are the same, the player keeps the cards. If not, they replace them and try again at their next turn.
personal key words	refers to those words that are important to learners in terms of their daily lives; no two people's personal key words will be exactly the same, since they will include, for example, a person's address, the names of family members, employer's name and address, etc.
personal pronouns	(See pronoun.)
persuasive	describes a text that aims to persuade the reader. A continuous persuasive text typically consists of a statement of the viewpoint, arguments and evidence for this thesis, possibly some arguments and evidence supporting a different view, and a final summary or recommendation. Other types of persuasive text (e.g. advertisements) use a combination of textual features including words, sounds and images, in order to persuade.
phoneme	the smallest contrastive unit of sound in a word. There are approximately 46 phonemes in English (the number varies depending on the accent). A phoneme may have variant pronunciations in different positions; for example, the first and last sounds in the word <i>little</i> are variants of the phoneme //l/. A phoneme may be represented by one, two, three or four letters. The following words end in the same phoneme (with the corresponding letters underlined): <i><u>to</u>, <u>shoe</u>, <u>through</u>.</i>
phonetic alphabet	(See phonemic alphabet.)
phonemic alphabet	the English phonemic alphabet (see page 411) includes the 46 distinctive sounds (phonemes) of the English language. The International Phonetic Alphabet on the other hand is designed to represent the way a language is pronounced and can be used for describing many languages.
phonic	relating to vocal, or speech, sounds. As a plural noun, phonics denotes a method of teaching reading and spelling that is based on establishing the link between the sound of a word and its graphical representation.
phonetic symbol	a symbol used to denote a particular sound in language.
phonic relationship	the relationship between letters of the alphabet and the sounds of the language they represent. This may also be referred to as a sound–symbol relationship.
phonological awareness	awareness of sounds within words, demonstrated, for example, by the ability to segment and blend component sounds and to recognise and generate sound patterns such as rhymes.
phonology	the study of the sound systems of languages.

phrasal and prepositional verb	verbs consisting of two or more words, one a verb and the other a preposition (e.g. <i>come from</i>) or adverbial particle (e.g. <i>pick up</i>). Phrasal-prepositional verbs comprise a verb, particle and preposition, e.g. <i>get away with</i> .
phrase	a group of two or more words smaller than a clause, forming a grammatical unit. Phrases can be structured around a noun (<i>her new red dress</i>), a verb (<i>has been talking, will be coming</i>), an adverb (<i>I will be home <u>as soon as possible</u></i>), an adjective (<i>That house is <u>larger than mine</u></i>), a preposition (<i>I saw a man <u>in a raincoat</u></i>).
pitch	the auditory sense that a sound is 'higher' or 'lower'. Changes in pitch are an important feature of intonation.
plural	in English, plural nouns are usually formed by inflection, adding <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> . A number of common nouns have irregular plurals, e.g. <i>men, women, children</i> . Plural nouns and pronouns are generally followed by the third person plural form of the verb. (See agreement, countable nouns.)
possessive adjectives	determiners such as <i>my, your, her, his, its, their, our</i> .
possessive pronouns	pronouns showing possession and replacing the noun or noun phrase, e.g. <i>mine, yours, his, hers, ours, yours</i> . (See pronouns.)
possessive s	the possessive <i>s</i> indicates possession. It is also referred to as apostrophe s . In written English, in the case of singular nouns, an apostrophe precedes the <i>s</i> ; e.g. <i>the child's book</i> ; in the case of plural nouns, the apostrophe follows the <i>s</i> , e.g. <i>the boys' coats are wet</i> .
predicate	the predicate is what is said about the subject. It is the whole of the sentence except the subject.
prefix	a morpheme that can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, e.g. <i>inedible, disappear, supermarket, unintentional</i> . (See morphology.)
pre-/post-modification	(See noun phrase.)
preposition	a word that is followed by a noun or <i>-ing</i> form of the verb. Prepositions often indicate time (<i>at midnight/during the film/on Friday</i>), position or place (<i>at the station/in a field</i>), direction (<i>to the station/over a fence</i>) or idiomatic expression (<i>over 65, in advance</i>). There are many other meanings, including possession (<i>of this street</i>), means (<i>by car</i>) and accompaniment (<i>with me</i>). (See also adverb particles.)
prepositional phrases	a group of words organised around a preposition, e.g. <i>at home, in front of the TV, by car, to work</i> . Prepositional phrases can function as adverbs or adjectives. (See adverbial phrases and post-modification.)
present perfect	(See verb tense.)
pre-teaching	an approach whereby learners are prepared for a listening or reading, or writing and speaking, task by being presented with key vocabulary and grammar points before being given access to a text.
pronoun	is a word that stands in for a noun or noun phrase. There are several kinds of pronoun: personal pronouns (<i>I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, it</i>), possessive pronouns (<i>mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its</i>), reflexive pronouns (<i>myself, herself, themselves</i>), indefinite pronouns (<i>someone, anything, nobody, everything</i>), interrogative pronouns (<i>who, whose, which, what</i>) and relative pronouns (<i>who/whom, whose, which, that</i>).
proof-read	to check a piece of work thoroughly, e.g. before publication.
punctuation	a way of marking text to help readers' understanding. The most commonly used marks in English are: apostrophe, colon, comma, dash, ellipsis, exclamation mark, full stop, hyphen, semi-colon and speech marks (quotation marks or inverted commas).
quantifiers	quantifiers are a sub-set of determiners that modify nouns and show how many things or how much of something we are talking about. They include words or phrases like <i>few, little, a lot of</i> . Some quantifiers combine with countable nouns, others with uncountable nouns: <i>How many eggs are there?/ only a few left/ How much butter is left? Only a little (bit)</i> .
questions	questions are usually divided into <i>yes/no</i> questions and <i>wh-</i> questions. Both types involve inversion of subject-verb order and use the auxiliaries <i>do</i> and <i>did</i> to form questions in the simple present and past, e.g. <i>Do you know him? What did he do?</i> <i>wh-</i> questions are questions introduced by a word beginning with <i>wh-</i> or <i>h-</i> , e.g. <i>how, what, when, who, whose, why</i>

yes/no questions expect the answer *yes* or *no*, e.g.: *Do you eat meat? Are you sure?*

(See also **embedded questions** and **reported questions**.)

Alternative questions require respondents to choose between two options, e.g. *Can you help me, or are you too busy?* **Closed questions** allow only a limited range of responses, e.g. *When are you leaving?* **Open questions** allow a wide range of responses, e.g. *What do you think?*

question tags	are added to a statement, to ask for confirmation from the listener or to check whether something is true. They normally consist of a verb and pronoun in question word order. The negative form usually follows a positive statement, and the positive form a negative statement, e.g. <i>She's a dentist, isn't she? It isn't difficult, is it?</i>
reference	a way of maintaining cohesion . Pronoun reference, for example, makes it clear to what a pronoun refers to in a text, e.g. in <i>Sam hoped to go back to the town where he was born</i> , it is clear that <i>he</i> refers to <i>Sam</i> . (See deixis and discourse .)
reflexive pronouns	(See pronouns .)
register	a variety of language selected for use in a specific social situation. In particular, the register differentiates formal from informal use of language, e.g. the register of weather forecasting which will vary in different social, and in written and spoken, contexts.
relative clause	a type of subordinate clause, introduced by relative pronouns such as <i>who, which, whose, that</i> . A defining relative clause gives information essential to the meaning of the sentence, e.g. in <i>The sister who lives in Canada is getting married</i> , the relative clause makes it clear which of a number of sisters is being referred to. Where the relative pronoun is the object of the verb, it can be omitted, e.g. <i>The present I received from him was beautiful</i> . These clauses are sometimes known as 'contact relative clauses'. A non-defining relative clause gives additional information, which could be omitted without affecting the meaning of the basic sentence, e.g. <i>My eldest sister, who lives in Canada, is getting married</i> . Non-defining relative clauses are placed between two commas.
relative pronouns	relative clauses are introduced by relative pronouns <i>who, which, whose, that</i> . The relative pronoun may be the subject or the object of the clause. In defining relative clauses the relative pronoun can be omitted where it is the object of the verb, e.g. <i>The food (that) I ate was off</i> . In formal written English, <i>whom</i> is used for a relative pronoun object when it refers to a person, and <i>of which</i> for possession. <i>When, where, why</i> can be used as relative pronouns in relative clauses of time, place and reason.
repeated language patterns	a phrase to describe the repetition of vocabulary and the recurrence of structural features in grammar and spelling that enables a learner to make accurate predictions about the sound and the sense of words and constructions, and therefore obtain meaning from text.
reported questions	reported questions are introduced with <i>if</i> or <i>whether</i> in the case of <i>yes/no</i> questions, e.g. <i>he asked me if I was ready</i> , or a question word for <i>wh-</i> questions, e.g. <i>He asked me what time it was</i> . Reported questions have normal subject-verb word order and do not have a question mark at the end of the sentence.
reported speech	reported speech or indirect speech is used when we are telling someone what another person says or said. Statements, questions and commands may be reported. The reporting verb, e.g. <i>say</i> or <i>tell</i> may be in the present or past, and this often affects the tenses in the reported statement, as in the following two ways of reporting the actual words <i>I'm ready</i> : <i>The boss <u>says</u> that he <u>is</u> ready.</i> <i>The boss <u>said</u> that he <u>was</u> ready.</i> Pronouns and adverbs may also need to change, e.g. ' <i>We're here</i> ' would become <i>He said <u>they</u> were <u>there</u></i> .
rhetorical questions	a question that is asked for effect, not for information.
role play	a technique often used to develop fluency and confidence in oral skills. It involves free practice in a classroom situation that has been designed to simulate, as closely as possible, a real-life, language-use situation.
root word	a word to which prefixes and suffixes may be added to make other words, e.g. in <i>unclear, clearly, cleared</i> , the root word is <i>clear</i> . It is also referred to as the stem .
scan	to look over a text very quickly, trying to find information by locating a key word.
schwa	(See stress .)
script	the alphabet or writing system used in a particular language.

semantics	(the branch of linguistics concerned with meaning in language.
segment	to break a word or part of a word down into its component phonemes , e.g.: <i>c-a-t; ch-a-t; ch-ar-t; g-r-ou-n-d; s-k-i-n.</i>
sentence	a sentence can be simple , compound or complex . It is a complete unit of meaning and normally has one subject , a finite verb and a predicate . In writing, sentences are marked by using a capital letter at the beginning, and a full stop (or question mark or exclamation mark) at the end. As well as being described by structure, sentences can be classified by purpose. A statement is a sentence primarily designed to convey information (<i>I am happy</i>). A question seeks to obtain information (<i>Are you happy?</i>). A command or imperative instructs someone to do something (<i>Cheer up</i>). An exclamation conveys the speaker/writer's reaction (<i>How happy you look today!</i>). (See also word order .)
sequence markers	are sequencing adverbs such as <i>firstly, next, after that, finally</i> .
short answer forms	auxiliary verbs, including modal auxiliaries, may be used in short answer forms , e.g. <i>Have you seen it? Yes, I have. Can you swim? No, I can't</i> . In spoken English, single word forms are common as short answers or responses: <i>absolutely, right, definitely</i> .
sight vocabulary	words that a learner recognises on sight without having to decode them or work them out.
simile	a figurative expression where the writer creates an image in the reader's mind by explicitly comparing a subject to something else. Similes are widely used in everyday language, e.g. <i>as green as grass, as strong as an ox</i> . Many are idiomatic, e.g. <i>he smokes like a chimney</i> .
simple	when applied to narrative , words or sentences, an adjective that indicates a basic, uncomplicated structure. A simple sentence structure, for example, follows the standard pattern of subject , verb and, optionally, object ; a simple narrative will follow a chronological sequence and be told from one viewpoint only.
simple sentence	a sentence consisting of one clause only, e.g. <i>It was late</i> . (See also sentence .)
skim	to read to get an initial overview of the subject matter and main ideas of a passage.
sound-symbol	(See phonic relationship .)
standard English	the variety of English used in public communication, particularly in writing. It is not limited to a particular region and can be spoken with any accent. There are differences in vocabulary and grammar between standard English and other varieties, e.g.: <i>we were robbed</i> and <i>look at those trees</i> are standard English; <i>we was robbed</i> and <i>look at them trees</i> are non-standard. It is necessary to be able to use standard English, and to recognise when it is appropriate to use it in preference to any other variety. Standard British English is not the only standard variety; other English-speaking countries, such as the United States and Australia, have their own standard forms.
statement	one of the four basic sentence types. It is contrasted with questions , commands and exclamations . The basic word order of a statement is subject followed by the predicate , which will consist of a verb followed by an object , complement or prepositional phrase . (See also sentence , word order .)
straightforward	describes subjects and materials that learners often meet in their work, studies or other activities. Straightforward content is put across in a direct way with the main points easily identifiable; usually the sentence structures of such texts are simple, and learners will be familiar with the vocabulary.
stress	the emphasis with which a syllable is pronounced. In any word there will be one stressed syllable, e.g. <i>im port ant</i> . There will also be one or more stressed words within a sentence, e.g. <i>I've just been to York. In the mor ning</i> . In each phrase, clause or sentence, one word will receive the main stress. In the word <i>important</i> , where the second syllable is stressed, the others are referred to as unstressed syllables . In an unstressed syllable, the vowel is pronounced as a reduced or unstressed vowel . The most common unstressed syllable in English is the schwa , i.e. the sound of the last syllable in <i>father</i> or the first syllable in <i>about</i> .
stress-timed rhythm	the rhythm of a language refers to the pattern of alternation between stressed and unstressed syllables. English has a stress-timed rhythm , meaning that stressed syllables occur at regular intervals, with the unstressed syllables between them being shortened to fit the time between the stressed syllables. The number of unstressed syllables between the stressed syllables can vary, but the time taken to articulate them may not.

structure	the way in which letters are built up into words, words built up into sentences and sentences built up into paragraphs, etc. Learners use structural features to process new words (e.g. by recognising that the suffix <i>-ly</i> usually indicates an adverb, or that the prefix <i>re-</i> will convey the sense of 'again') and new forms of organisation (e.g. a new paragraph will introduce a new idea, a new time, or perhaps a new viewpoint).		
style	style can be defined as the selection of a set of linguistic features from all the possibilities in a language in relation to context, purpose, audience. These choices will depend on whether the writer wants to write in a <i>formal</i> or <i>informal</i> , <i>non-specialist</i> or <i>technical style</i> . Famous writers can often be identified by their particular characteristics of style, e.g. Hemingway's style. All language users have the opportunity to make linguistic choices that will determine the style of a piece of writing or an utterance.		
subject	a grammatical term for the agent in a sentence. The subject is the 'who' or 'what' that the sentence is about. The subject of a sentence must 'agree' with its verb, e.g. a singular subject requires a singular verb. When the verb is in the active voice, the subject of the sentence is the 'doer', e.g. <i>Dave met Lynette at the station</i> . When the verb is in the passive voice, the subject is the recipient of the action, e.g. <i>Lynette was met by Dave at the station</i> . (See word order, active and passive.)		
subordinate clauses	can be classified under three headings: noun clauses: <i>they told us <u>that the train had been cancelled</u></i> relative or adjectival clauses: <i>I read the book <u>which you recommended</u></i> adverbial clauses: <i>A rainbow came out <u>while we were driving home</u></i> They combine with a main clause to form a complex sentence. They do not usually occur alone except in spoken English. (See clause.)		
substitution	a cohesive device in discourse. Substitution occurs when a pronoun such as <i>one</i> is used to avoid repetition of a noun, e.g. <i>I chose a green pen, but Anton wanted a red one; He likes ice cream and so do I</i> .		
suffix	a morpheme that is added to the end of a word. There are two main categories: an inflectional suffix changes the tense or grammatical status of a word, e.g. from present to past (<i>worked</i>) or from singular to plural (<i>accidents</i>); a derivational suffix changes the word class, e.g. from verb to noun (<i>worker</i>) or from noun to adjective (<i>accidental</i>).		
summary/summarise	condensing material into a shorter form while still retaining the overall meaning and main points. The written form is sometimes called <i>précis</i> . Summarising demonstrates receptive skills of reading or listening comprehension, and evaluation and selection. It also demonstrates productive skills of writing or speaking in re-casting the material concisely and accurately.		
syllable/ syllabification	each beat in a word is a syllable. Dividing longer words into syllables can help learners understand word structure, which in turn can help reading, speaking and spelling.		
synonym	a word that has a similar meaning (in a particular context) to another word (<i>child/kid; loyal/faithful</i>), as opposed to <i>antonym</i> , where the meaning is the opposite.		
syntax	the aspect of grammar that is concerned with the relationship between words, in phrases, clauses and sentences. (The other principal branch of grammar is <i>morphology</i> .) Language users can make syntactic choices within certain rules and patterns. Adult native speakers have much implicit syntactic knowledge, which can be used to help predict the possible meanings of unknown words within sentences when reading. Syntax is also concerned with the analysis of clause and sentence structure. (See complex sentence, compound sentence and clause.)		
tense	a term used to describe distinctions in the time (past, present, future) of the action, happening or process expressed by the verb. These distinctions are normally shown by changes in the verb form, often together with adverbials of time and frequency. The tenses combine with the continuous and perfect verbal aspects to form further simple and continuous forms of each tense: <table border="0" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> present <i>I wait</i> (simple) <i>I am waiting</i> (continuous) </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> past <i>I waited</i> (simple) <i>I was waiting</i> (continuous) </td> </tr> </table>	present <i>I wait</i> (simple) <i>I am waiting</i> (continuous)	past <i>I waited</i> (simple) <i>I was waiting</i> (continuous)
present <i>I wait</i> (simple) <i>I am waiting</i> (continuous)	past <i>I waited</i> (simple) <i>I was waiting</i> (continuous)		

Additionally, all these forms can be perfect (with *have*):

present perfect

I have waited (perfect)

I have been waiting (perfect continuous)

past perfect

I had waited (perfect)

I had been waiting (perfect continuous)

Future time can be expressed in a number of ways using *will* or present tenses, e.g.: *Rita will arrive tomorrow*; *Rita will be arriving tomorrow*; *Rita is going to arrive tomorrow*; *Rita is arriving tomorrow*; *Rita arrives tomorrow*. (See also aspect, modal and verbs.)

text	words (and images) that are organised to communicate. Includes written, spoken and electronic forms.
text types	(See discourse types and genres.)
transitive verbs	verbs that are followed by an object to complete their meaning. They can form passive sentences.
turn taking	one of the most widely recognised conventions of conversation in English-speaking cultures, with people speaking one at a time, taking turns to speak. Speakers develop (consciously or unconsciously) ways of signalling the wish to speak and of indicating to another person that it is their turn.
upper case	a term used to describe capital letters. In print, in any given font and font size, all upper case letters will be the same height. (See lower case.)
vague language	includes very frequent nouns such as <i>thing</i> and <i>stuff</i> and phrases such as <i>I think</i> , <i>I don't know</i> , <i>and all that</i> , <i>or so</i> , <i>sort of</i> , <i>whatever</i> , which serve to approximate and make statements less assertive.
varieties of English	dialects, or mutually intelligible forms of the English language that differ in systematic ways from each other, and which vary according to social groups or geographical region. Regional dialects are associated with speakers from particular locations (<i>standard English</i> , <i>Australian English</i> , <i>Geordie</i> , <i>Scottish vernacular</i>), and social dialects are associated with demographic groups (female and male language, different language used by older and younger speakers, or members of different ethnic groups, e.g. <i>Black English pidgin</i>). Other varieties or styles of English would include <i>academic English</i> , <i>business English</i> .
verb	a word that expresses an action, a happening, a process or a state. It can be thought of as a 'doing' or 'being' word. There are three major classes of verb: lexical, or full, verbs (<i>walk</i> , <i>read</i>); primary verbs (<i>be</i> , <i>have</i> , <i>do</i>), which may have either a main or auxiliary verb function; and modal verbs (e.g. <i>can</i> , <i>will</i> , <i>might</i>). Lexical verbs can be divided into transitive and intransitive verbs. Regular verbs form their past tense with the addition of the suffix <i>-ed</i> to the verb stem for both the past tense form and participle form. Irregular verbs, on the other hand, often have different forms for the past tense and participle, e.g. <i>be</i> , <i>was/were</i> , <i>been</i> , and often form the past tense and participle by changing the vowel of the verb stem, e.g. <i>swim</i> , <i>swam</i> , <i>swum</i> . A combination of two or more words is known as a verb phrase, such as <i>are going</i> , <i>didn't want</i> , <i>has been waiting</i> . (See also voice, accent, tense, modal and auxiliary verbs.)
vocabulary	body of words used in a particular language or in a particular field, e.g. the vocabulary of science.
voice	choice of voice enables the writer or speaker to place the focus on the 'doer' of the action (active voice) or on the action itself and its recipient (passive voice), e.g.: <i>The boy chased the cat</i> . <i>The cat was chased by the boy</i> .
vowel	a phoneme produced without audible friction or closure. Every syllable contains a vowel. There are five vowel letters in the alphabet – <i>a</i> , <i>e</i> , <i>i</i> , <i>o</i> , <i>u</i> – but twenty distinctive vowel sounds in English, which are normally represented in writing by the above letters singly or in combination. A vowel phoneme may be represented by one or more letters. These may be vowels (<i>maid</i>), or a combination of vowels and consonants (<i>start</i> ; <i>could</i>). Most English vowels can be long or short, e.g. <i>ship/sheep</i> . Where the vowel represents one phoneme but consists of two sounds, it is referred to as a diphthong.
vowel digraph	a combination of two vowel letters to represent a single vowel sound, e.g. <i>ea</i> in <i>please</i> , <i>oo</i> in <i>look</i> .
wh– question	(See question.)
word family	a group of words related through their origin, form and meaning, e.g. <i>farm</i> , <i>farmer</i> , <i>farming</i> ; <i>work</i> , <i>workforce</i> , <i>workings</i> , <i>worksheet</i> ; <i>telephone</i> , <i>microphone</i> , <i>answerphone</i> .

word order	<p>although variations are possible, the basic word order in a sentence that is not a question or command is usually subject–verb–object, followed optionally by adverbials in the order, manner, place, time.</p> <p>In questions and question tags, the auxiliary verb precedes the subject: <i>What time is it? Has she arrived yet?</i></p> <p>Exclamations usually start with <i>how</i> or <i>what</i> + adjective/noun or adverb followed by subject verb: <i>What a beautiful day it is! How stupid I am!</i></p> <p>Other rules of word order include the order of direct and indirect object (<i>He gave Irene a book</i>) and the position of adverbs of manner, place, time.</p> <p>(See also sentence, clause, syntax, subject, object.)</p>
writing frame	a structured prompt to support writing. A writing frame may take the form of opening phrases of paragraphs, and may include suggested vocabulary. It often provides a template for a particular text type.
yes/no question	(See question.)

The phonemic alphabet

Consonants

p	pen	/pen/	s	see	/si:/
b	bad	/bæd/	z	zoo	/zu:/
t	tea	/ti:/	ʃ	shoe	/ʃu:/
d	did	/dɪd/	ʒ	vision	/ˈvɪʒn/
k	cat	/kæt/	h	hat	/hæt/
g	get	/get/	m	man	/mæn/
tʃ	chain	/tʃeɪn/	n	now	/naʊ/
dʒ	jam	/dʒæm/	ŋ	sing	/sɪŋ/
f	fall	/fɔ:l/	l	leg	/leg/
v	van	/væn/	r	red	/red/
θ	thin	/θɪn/	j	yes	/jes/
ð	this	/ðɪs/	w	wet	/wet/

Vowels and diphthongs

i:	see	/si:/	ʌ	cup	/kʌp/
i	happy	/ˈhæpi/	ɜ:	fur	/fɜ:(r)/
ɪ	sit	/sɪt/	ə	about	/əˈbaʊt/
e	ten	/ten/	eɪ	say	/seɪ/
æ	cat	/kæt/	əʊ	go	/gəʊ/
ɑ:	father	/ˈfɑ:ðə(r)/	aɪ	my	/maɪ/
ɒ	got	/gɒt/	ɔɪ	boy	/bɔɪ/
ɔ:	saw	/sɔ:/	aʊ	now	/naʊ/
ʊ	put	/pʊt/	ɪə	near	/nɪə(r)/
u	actual	/ˈæktʃuəl/	eə	hair	/heə(r)/
u:	too	/tu:/	ʊə	pure	/pjʊə(r)/

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The following books will be found useful for further examples of terms used about language and about ESOL topics:

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- Crystal, D. (1988) *Rediscover Grammar*. Harlow: Longman.
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For a more advanced guide to differences and distinctions between formal and informal English with particular reference to grammar and vocabulary, see:

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S. and Finegan, E. (1999) *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Longman.
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For a detailed encyclopedic introduction to language and language study, see:

- Crystal, D. (1995) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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