

SPAG GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Active voice: many verbs can be active or passive, e.g. The cat scratched Anna (active voice), Anna was scratched by the cat (passive voice). In the active sentence, the subject (the cat) performs the action. In the passive sentence, the subject (Anna) is on the receiving end of the action. The two sentences give similar information, but with a difference in focus. The first is about what the cat did, and the second is about what happened to Anna.

Adjectives: adjectives are sometimes called 'describing words' because they describe a noun, e.g a big book.

Adverbs: an adverb is a word that describes, and so adds meaning to, a verb, e.g He ate his lunch quickly.

Adverbial: an adverbial is a group of words that is used, like an adverb, to add meaning to a verb or clause, e.g. The bus leaves in five minutes.

Antonym: two words are antonyms if their meanings are opposites, e.g hot and cold.

Apostrophe: apostrophes have two completely different uses. The first is to show the place of missing letters (e.g I'm for I am). These are also known as *apostrophes of omission*. The second is to show possession – that one thing belongs to another (e.g. Hannah's mother).

Article: An article (a, an or the) is a word that tells you whether a noun is specific or general, e.g She took a big bag to school [general] / She took the big bag to school [specific].

Auxiliary verb: auxiliary verbs are also known as 'helping' verbs. The 3 most common auxiliary verbs are be, do and have. They can be used to make questions, statements and negative sentences, e.g Do I know you? I have not seen her.

Brackets: (also known as 'parentheses') used when a writer wants to add information to a sentence that will give greater detail to the information presented. However, the information is extra and not really necessary, which means that it can be removed with ease and without changing the meaning of the sentence

Clause: a clause can be thought of as a building block for a sentence, and its main part is a verb. Clauses can sometimes be complete sentences, e.g. "Eat!" or Jack cried.

Colon: a punctuation mark that is often used before a list.

Comma: a punctuation mark used to help the reader by separating parts of a sentence, e.g. to separate items in a list, or to mark off extra information in a subordinate clause (I love shopping, except when it is raining).

Compound word: a compound word contains at least two root words, e.g. whiteboard, superman.

Conjunction: a conjunction is a word that links two words or phrases together within a sentence. There are two main types of conjunction. Coordinating conjunctions (and, or, but, so) join main clauses, e.g. It was raining but it wasn't cold. Subordinating conjunctions (common ones include when, before, after, if) introduce a subordinate clause, e.g. She went home before the lesson finished.

Determiner: a word that is used before a noun to show which particular example of the noun you are referring to. They can be split into different groups: *Articles:* a, an, the *Demonstratives:* this, that, these, those, which etc. *Possessives:* my, your, our, their, his, hers, whose, my friend's, our friends',

etc. **Quantifiers:** few, a few, many, much, each, every, some, any etc. **Numbers:** one, two, three, twenty, forty **Ordinals:** first, second, 1st 2nd, 3rd, last, next, etc.

Ellipsis: an ellipsis (...) is three dots used to show that a word or phrase has been missed out, to create a pause for effect, or to show an unfinished thought, e.g. The children opened the parcel and ... (pause for effect) it was completely empty

Exclamation mark: an exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence to indicate strong emotion, e.g. "Get out!"

Finite verb: the finite verb inflects (changes ending) to show person, number and tense, e.g. the verb to walk inflects to show changes in person (I walk, he walks), number (he walks, they walk) and tense (you walk, you walked).

First person: when text is written from the point of view of the main character involved in the action, it is in the first person, e.g. I went shopping.

Fronting: a word or phrase that normally comes after the verb may be moved before the verb. When this happens, we say it has been 'fronted', e.g. During the day, we will have lessons.

Fronted adverbial: When an adverbial that normally comes after the verb is moved before it e.g. *John ate breakfast before walking to school* becomes *Before walking to school, John ate breakfast.*

Homonym: two different words that both look the same and sound the same, e.g. the sound a dog makes is a bark / there is bark on a tree.

Homophone: two different words that sound exactly the same when pronounced, e.g. hear and here.

Infinitive: a verb's infinitive is the basic form and it is the version that will appear in a dictionary e.g. to walk, to be.

Inverted comma: a.k.a. speech marks or quotation marks. e.g. "I can't go walking in the rain!"

Main clause: a sentence contains at least one clause which is able to stand alone, e.g. It was raining. This is the main clause. It must contain a subject and a verb, and express a complete thought.

Modal verb: modal verbs are used to change the meaning of other verbs. They can express meanings such as certainty (he will), ability (she can) and obligation (they must). The main modal verbs are will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must and ought to.

Noun: a noun is often called a naming word because it names people, places and things. There are different types of nouns. A common noun is the name of a thing (e.g. boy, castle, banana). A proper noun is the name of a particular person, or place and it always begins with a capital letter (e.g. Wednesday, Mr Belzar, Bottisham).

Noun phrase: a phrase with a noun as its key word, e.g. some foxes. A noun phrase can be replaced with a pronoun, e.g. "I like singing in the bath" [noun phrase] can become "I like it" [noun phrase replaced with the pronoun 'it'].

Participle: verbs in English have two participles called 'present participle' (e.g. walking, taking) and 'past participle' (e.g. walked, taken). The present participle ends in 'ing' (e.g. walking) and the past participle often ends in 'ed' (e.g. walked), although it can be irregular (e.g. 'I keep' becomes 'I kept' rather than 'I kepted')

Passive voice: many verbs can be active or passive, e.g. The cat scratched Anna (active voice), Anna was scratched by the cat (passive voice). In the active sentence, the subject (the cat) performs the action. In the passive sentence, the subject (Anna) is on the receiving end of the action. The two sentences give similar information, but with a difference in focus. The first is about what the cat did, and the second is about what happened to Anna.

Past tense: verbs in the past tense describe something that happened in the past. Most verbs take a suffix 'ed' to form their past tense, but many commonly used verbs are irregular.

Phrase: a phrase is a group of connected words that could be replaced by a single word, e.g. The big grey elephant had a long thin trunk.

Plural: a plural noun normally has a suffix (-s or -es) and it means 'more than one'.

Possessive: A possessive form is a word or grammatical construction used to indicate a relationship of ownership in a broad sense. By adding an apostrophe to a noun, we can show possession, e.g. The girl's pencil needed sharpening. Possessive pronouns are used when a specific person/thing belongs to a specific person/thing, e.g. "The numeracy books are over there. Yours is on the top." Possessive pronouns do not have apostrophes.

Prefix: a prefix is added to the beginning of a word to turn it into another word, e.g. the prefix 'dis' changes appear to disappear.

Preposition: a preposition is a word that tells you when or where something is in relation to something else, e.g. after, before, on, under. [The dog is under the table.]

Present tense: verbs in the present tense usually describe something that is happening at the moment, or a state of being. The present tense form of a verb can also be used to describe events in the future, e.g. My train leaves at 4 o'clock.

Progressive: the progressive (also known as the 'continuous') form of a verb generally describes events in progress. It is formed by combining the verb's present participle (e.g. singing) with a form of the verb 'to be' (e.g. he is singing).

Pronouns: pronouns are used in place of nouns. There are several different types of pronouns, but the most common are personal pronouns, e.g. I, he, she, they, it.

Registers: 'varieties' of language which are tied to particular uses. For example, I regret to inform you that Mr Joseph Smith has passed away. (formal letter) "Have you heard that Joe's died?" (casual speech) Joe falls down and dies, centre stage. (stage direction)

Relative clause: a special type of subordinate clause that modifies a noun. It often does this by using a relative pronoun such as who or that to refer back to the noun, although the relative pronoun 'that' is often left out. For example: I met the boy who lives near school. [who refers back to the boy]; I loved the cake (that) we ate yesterday.

Relative pronouns:

Root word: a word that does not contain any smaller root words, and it can stand alone without a prefix or suffix.

Second person: text written in the second person refers to the writer's or speaker's audience, e.g. Your teacher is very proud of you.

Semicolon: this can be used to separate two main clauses in a sentence, e.g. I liked the book; it was a pleasure to read. A semicolon can also be used to separate items in a list if these items consist of

long phrases, e.g. I need large, juicy tomatoes; a pack of mature, grated cheddar cheese; and a delicious, chocolate birthday cake with candles.

Sentence: a sequence of words that makes complete sense, containing a subject, an object and a main verb. A sentence always ends with a full stop, an exclamation mark, or a question mark.

Stress: a syllable is stressed if it is pronounced more forcefully than the syllables next to it.

Subjunctive:

Subordination: a subordinate word/phrase tells us more about the meaning of the word/phrase it is subordinate to. Subordination can be thought of as an unequal relationship; the subordinate word/phrase is less important than the main word/phrase, e.g. an adjective is subordinate to the noun it describes. The subordinate word or phrase can be taken away, and the remaining text still makes sense.

Subordinate clause: a clause which is less important than some other part of the same sentence. A subordinate clause cannot stand alone because it does not express a complete thought; it is dependent upon a main clause, e.g. The apple that I ate was sour (the clause that I ate is subordinate to the apple was sour).

Subordinating conjunction: a conjunction that introduces a subordinating clause, e.g. although, because, after, until

Suffix: an ending used to change the meaning of a word, e.g. the suffix -ly changes the word quick to quickly.

Syllable: sounds like a beat in a word, e.g. hospital has 3 syllables (hos-pi-tal).

Synonym: two different words that have the same or similar meaning, e.g. talk and speak.

Tense: the tense of a verb tells you when the action took place (past, present or future),

Third person: text in the third person refers to someone else (not the writer or the writer's audience). They went to the cinema is in the third person.

Verb: a verb is often called a doing or action word. A verb tells us what someone or something is doing, e.g. She went to school.

Word class: every word belongs to a word class which summarises the way it can be used. The main word classes in English are noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, pronoun and conjunction.

Word family: the words in a word family are normally related to each other by a combination of form, grammar and meaning, e.g. teach and teacher.