SPaG Glossary

Active and passive
Many verbs can be both active or passive. For example, bite:
The dog bit Ben. (Active) Ben was bitten by the dog. (Passive)
In the active sentence, the subject (the dog) performs the action. In the passive sentence, the subject (Ben) is on the receiving end of the action. The two sentences give similar information, but there is a difference in focus. The first is about what the dog did; the second is about what happened to Ben. All passive forms are made up of the verb to be + past participle:
Active: Somebody saw you. We must find them. I have repaired it.
Passive: You were seen. They must be found. It has been repaired.
In a passive sentence, the 'doer' (or agent) can sometimes be identified through the use of 'by ...'
Ben was bitten by the dog.
Very often, in passive sentences, the agent is unknown or insignificant and therefore not identified:
The computer has been repaired.
Passive forms are common in impersonal, formal styles. For example:
It was agreed that ... (compare to We agreed that ...).
Application forms may be obtained from the address below.

Adjective
An adjective is a word that describes somebody or something. *Old*, *white*, *busy*, *careful* and *horrible* are all adjectives. Adjectives either come before a noun, or after verbs such as *be*, *get*, *seem*, *look* (linking verbs):
A busy day, I'm busy, nice shoes, those shoes look nice
Adjectives (and adverbs) can have comparative and superlative forms.
old - older
hot - hotter
easy - easier
dangerous - more dangerous
The corresponding superlative forms are -est or most: -
small - smallest
big - biggest
funny - funniest
important - most important

Adverb
Adverbs give extra meaning to a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a whole sentence:
I really enjoyed the party. (adverb + verb)
She's really nice. (adverb + adjective)
He works really slowly. (adverb + adverb)
Really, he should do better. (adverb + sentence)
Many adverbs are formed by adding -ly to an adjective, for example *quickly*, *dangerously*, *nicely*, but there are many adverbs which do not end in *-ly*. Note too that some *-ly* words are adjectives, not adverbs (eg *lovely*, *silly*, *friendly*).
In many cases, adverbs tell us:
how **(manner)** *slowly*, *happily*, *dangerously*, *carefully*
where **(place)** *here*, *there*, *away*, *home*, *outside*
when **(time)** *now*, *yesterday*, *later*, *soon*

how often **(frequency)** *often, never, regularly*
Other adverbs show degree of intensity:
very slow(ly) fairly dangerous(ly) really good/well
The attitude of the speaker to what he or she is saying: *perhaps obviously fortunately*
Connections in meaning between sentences (see **connective**): *however furthermore finally*

An **adverbial phrase** is a group of words that functions in the same way as a single adverb. For example: *by car, to school, last week, three times a day, first of all, of course*:
They left yesterday. (Adverb) *She looked at me strangely.* (Adverb)
They left a few days ago. (Adverbial phrase)
She looked at me in a strange way. (Adverbial phrase)
Similarly, an **adverbial clause** functions in the same way as an adverb. For example:
It was raining yesterday. (Adverb)
It was raining when we went out. (Adverbial clause).

Ambiguity
A phrase or statement which has more than one possible interpretation. This sometimes arises from unclear grammatical relationships. For example, in the phrase: '*police shot man with knife*', it is not specified whether the man had the knife or the police used the knife to shoot the man. Both interpretations are possible, although only one is logical. In poetry, ambiguity may extend meanings beyond the literal. The sentence: '*Walking dogs can be fun*' has two possible interpretations: '*it is fun to take dogs for walks*' or '*dogs which go walking are fun*'.
Ambiguity is often a source of humour. Ambiguity may be accidental or deliberate.

Antonym
A word with a meaning opposite to another: *hot/cold, light/dark, light/heavy.*
A word may have more than one word as an antonym: *cold/ hot-warm; big/small-tiny-little-titchy*

Apostrophe (')
An apostrophe is a punctuation mark used to indicate either omitted letters
or possession.
Omitted letters
We use an apostrophe for the omitted letter(s) when a verb is contracted (shortened).
For example:
I'm (*I am*) *who's* (*who is/has*)
They've (*they have*) *he'd* (*he had/would*)
We're (*we are*) *it's* (*it is/has*)
Would've (*would have*) *she'll* (*she will*)
In contracted negative forms, *not* is contracted to *n't* and joined to the verb:
Isn't, didn't, couldn't etc.
In formal written style, it is more usual to use the full form.
There are a few other cases where an apostrophe is used to indicate letters that are in some sense 'omitted' in words other than verbs, eg *let's* (= *let us*),
o'clock (*of the clock*).
Note the difference between *its* (= '*belonging to it*') and *it's* (= '*it is*' or '*it has*'):
The company is to close one of its factories. (No apostrophe) *The factory employs 800 people.*
It's (= it is) the largest factory in the town. (Apostrophe necessary)
Possession
We use an apostrophe + *s* for the possessive form:
My mother's car
Joe and Fiona's house
The cat's tail

James's ambition
A week's holiday
With a plural 'possessor' already ending in *s* (eg *parents*), an apostrophe is added to the end of the word:
My parents' car
The girls' toilets
Irregular plurals (eg men, children) take an apostrophe + *s*:
Children's clothes
The regular plural form (-*s*) is often confused with possessive -'*s*:
I bought some apples. (Not *apple's*)
Note that the possessive words *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs*, and *its* are not written with an apostrophe.

Article
A, *an* and *the* are articles. A (*an* before a vowel sound) is the indefinite article; *the* is the definite article. Articles are a type of determiner.

Auxiliary verbs
These are verbs that are used together with other verbs. For example:
We are going. Lucy has arrived. Can you play?
In these sentences, *going*, *arrived* and *play* are the main verbs. *Are*, *has* and *can* are auxiliary verbs, and add extra meaning to the main verb.
The most common auxiliary verbs are *be*, *have* and *do* (all of which can also be main verbs).
Be is used in continuous forms *(be + -ing)* and in passive forms:
We are going away. Was the car damaged?
Have is used in perfect verb forms:
Lucy has arrived. I haven't finished.
Do is used to make questions and negatives in the simple present and past tenses:
Do you know the answer? I didn't see anybody.
More than one auxiliary verb can be used together. For example:
I have been waiting for ages. (*have* and *been* are auxiliary verbs)
The remaining auxiliary verbs are modal verbs, eg *can*, *will*.

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, *st*, *str*, *nt*, *pl*, *nd*.

Clause
A clause is a group of words that expresses an event (*she drank some water*) or a situation (*she was thirsty/she wanted a drink*).
It usually contains a subject (*she* in the examples) and verb (*drank/was/wanted*).
Note how a clause differs from a phrase:
A big dog (a phrase - this refers to 'a big dog' but doesn't say what the dog did or what happened to it)
A big dog chased me (a clause - the dog did something)
A sentence is made up of one or more clauses:
It was raining (one clause)
It was raining and we were cold. (Two main clauses joined by and)
It was raining when we went out. (Main clause containing a subordinate clause – the subordinate clause is underlined).
A main clause is complete on its own and can form a complete sentence (eg *It was raining).*

A subordinate clause (*when we went out*) is part of the main clause and cannot exist on its own. In the following examples, the subordinate clauses are underlined:
You'll hurt yourself if you're not careful.
Although it was cold, the weather was pleasant enough.
Where are the biscuits (that) I bought this morning?
John, who was very angry, began shouting.
Although most clauses require a subject and verb, some subordinate clauses do not. In many such cases, the verb be can be understood. For example:
The weather, although (it was) rather cold, was pleasant enough.
When (you are) in Rome, do as the Romans do.
See also **adverbial clause**, **noun clause**, **participle**, **phrase**, **relative clause**, **sentence**

Coherence and cohesion
Writing should be coherent and cohesive.

Coherence refers to the underlying logic and consistency of a text. The ideas expressed should be
relevant to one another so that the reader can follow the meaning.

Cohesion refers to the grammatical features in a text which enable the parts to fit together. One way of creating cohesion is through the use of **connectives**:
I sat down and turned on the television. Just then, I heard a strange noise.
The phrase '*just then*' links these events in time.
Cohesion is also achieved by the use of words (such as **pronouns**) that refer back to other parts of the text. In these examples, such words are underlined:
There was a man waiting at the door. I had never seen him before.
We haven't got a car. We used to have one, but we sold it.
I wonder whether Sarah will pass her driving test. I hope she does.

Colon (:)
A colon is a punctuation mark used to introduce a list or a following example (as in this glossary). It may also be used before a second clause that expands or illustrates the first:
He was very cold: the temperature was below zero.

Comma (,)
A comma is a punctuation mark used to help the reader by separating parts of a sentence. It sometimes corresponds to a pause in speech. In particular we use commas: -
To separate items in a list (but not usually before *and*):
My favourite sports are football, tennis, swimming and gymnastics.
I got home, had a bath and went to bed.
To mark off extra information:
Jill, my boss, is 28 years old.
After a subordinate **clause** which begins a sentence:
Although it was cold, we didn't wear our coats.
With many connecting **adverbs** (eg *however*, *on the other hand*, *anyway*,
Anyway, in the end I decided not to go.

Compound word
A word made up of two other words: *football*, *headrest*, *broomstick*.

Inferential
The reader can read meanings which are not directly explained. For example, the reader would

be able to make inferences about the time of year from information given about temperature, weather, etc and from characters' behaviour and dialogue.

Conditional
A conditional sentence is one in which one thing depends upon another. Conditional sentences often contain the **conjunction** if:
I'll help you if I can.
If the weather's bad, we might not go out.
Other conjunctions used in conditionals are unless, providing, provided and as long as.
A conditional sentence can refer to an imaginary situation. For example:
I would help you if I could. (but in fact I can't)
What would you do if you were in my position?
If the weather had been better, we could have gone to the beach.
The term 'conditional' is sometimes used to refer to the form *would* + verb:
Would go, *would help* etc.

Conjunction
A word used to link **clauses** within a sentence. For example, in the following sentences, *but* and *if* are conjunctions:
It was raining but it wasn't cold.
We won't go out if the weather's bad.
There are two kinds of conjunction:
Co-ordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or* and *so*). These join (and are placed between) two clauses of equal weight.
Do you want to go now or shall we wait a bit longer?
And, *but* and *or* are also used to join words or phrases within a clause.
Subordinating conjunctions (eg *when*, *while*, *before*, *after*, *since*, *until*, *if*, *because*, *although*, *that*). These go at the beginning of a subordinate **clause**:
We were hungry because we hadn't eaten all day.
Although we'd had plenty to eat, we were still hungry.
We were hungry when we got home.

Consonant
A consonant is a speech sound which obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract; for example, the flow of air is obstructed by the lips in *p* and by the tongue in *l*. The term also refers to those letters of the alphabet whose typical value is to represent such sounds, namely all except *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*. The letter *y* can represent a consonant sound (*yes*) or a vowel sound (*happy*).

Decode
Literally, this means to convert a message written/spoken in code into language which is easily understood. In reading, this refers to children's ability to read words - to translate the visual code of the letters into a word.

Determiner
Determiners include many of the most frequent English words, eg the, a, my, this. Determiners are used with nouns (this book, my best friend, a new car) and they limit (ie determine) the reference of the noun in some way. Determiners include:
Articles a/an, the
Demonstratives this/that, these/those
Possessives my/your/his/her/its/our/their
Quantifiers some, any, no, many, much, few, little, both, all, either, neither, each, every, enough

Numbers three, fifty, three thousand etc
Some question words which (which car?), what (what size?), whose (whose coat?)
When these words are used as determiners, they are followed by a noun (though not necessarily immediately):
This book is yours
Some new houses
Which colour do you prefer?
Many determiners can also be used as pronouns. These include the demonstratives, question words, numbers and most of the quantifiers. When used as pronouns, these words are not followed by a noun - their reference includes the noun:
This is yours (= this book, this money, etc)
I've got some, which do you prefer?

Digraph
Two letters representing one phoneme: bath; train; ch/ur/ch.

Direct speech and indirect speech
There are two ways of reporting what somebody says, direct speech and indirect speech. In direct speech, we use the speaker's original words (as in a speech bubble). In text, speech marks ('…' or "…" — also called inverted commas or quotes) mark the beginning and end of direct speech:
Helen said, 'I'm going home'.
'What do you want?' I asked.
In indirect (or reported) speech, we report what was said but do not use the exact words of the original speaker. Typically we change pronouns and verb tenses, and speech marks are not used:
Helen said (that) she was going home.
I asked them what they wanted.

Ellipsis
Ellipsis is the omission of words in order to avoid repetition. For example:
I don't think it will rain but it might. (= it might rain)
'Where were you born?' 'Bradford.' (= I was born in Bradford)
An ellipsis is also the term used for three dots (…) which show that something has been omitted or is incomplete.

Exclamation
An exclamation is an utterance expressing emotion (joy, wonder, anger, surprise, etc) and is usually followed in writing by an exclamation mark (!).
Exclamations can be interjections:
Oh dear!
Good grief!
Ow!
Some exclamations begin with what or how:
What a beautiful day!
How stupid (he is)!
What a quiet little girl.
Exclamations like these are a special type of sentence ('exclamative') and may have no verb.
see also interjection, sentence

Exclamation mark (!)
An exclamation mark is used at the end of a **sentence** (which may be exclamative, imperative or declarative) or an **interjection** to indicate strong emotion:
What a pity!
Get out!
It's a goal!
Oh dear!
See also **exclamation**, **sentence**

Figurative language
Use of metaphor or simile to create a particular impression or mood. A writer may develop an idea of a character's military approach to life by using phrases and words which are linked with the army, such as *he was something of loose cannon* **(metaphor)**; *he rifled through the papers; his*
arm shot out; he marched into the room; he paraded his knowledge. To link a character with a bird, she/he may use: *he flew down the stairs; they twittered to each other; he perched on his chair; his feathers were definitely ruffled.*

Grapheme
Written representation of a sound; may consist of one or more letters; for example the phoneme *s* can be represented by the graphemes *s*, *se*, *c*, *sc* and *ce* as in *sun*, *mouse*, *city*, *science*.

Homograph
Words which have the same spelling as another, but different meaning: *the calf was eating/my calf was aching; the North Pole/totem pole; he is a Pole.*
Pronunciation may be different: a *lead pencil/the dog's lead; furniture polish/Polish* people.

Homonym
Words which have the same spelling or pronunciation as another, but different meaning or origin.
May be a **homograph** or **homophone**.

Homophone
Words which have the same sound as another but different meaning or different spelling: *read/reed; pair/pear; right/write/rite.*

Hyphen (-)
A hyphen is sometimes used to join the two parts of a **compound** noun, as in *golf-ball* and *proofread*.
But it is much more usual for such compounds to be written as single words (e.g. *football*, *headache*, *bedroom*) or as separate words without a hyphen (*golf ball*, *stomach ache*, *dining room*, *city centre*).
However, hyphens are used in the following cases:
In compound adjectives and longer phrases used as modifiers before nouns:
A foul-smelling substance
A well-known painter
A German-English dictionary
A one-in-a-million chance
A state-of-the-art computer
A ten-year-old girl
In many compound nouns where the second part is a short word like *in*, *off*, *up* or *by*:

A break-*in*
A write-off
A mix-up
A passer-by
In many words beginning with the prefixes *co-*, *non-* and *ex-*:
Co-operate
Non-existent
Ex-husband
Hyphens are also used to divide words at the end of a line of print.

Infinitive
The infinitive is the base form of the verb without any additional endings. For example, play is an infinitive form (as opposed to playing, played or plays).
The infinitive is used with many auxiliary verbs:
I will play
He should play
Do you play?
The infinitive is often used with to (to play, to eat etc):
I ought to play
I want to play
I'm going to play
it would be nice to play
The simple present tense (I play, they play etc) has the same form as the infinitive, except for the third person singular (he/she/it plays).

Inflection
Inflection is a change to the ending of a word to indicate tense, number or other grammatical features. For example:
Walk - walks/walked/walking
Shoe - shoes
Old - older/oldest
See also suffix
Modal verb
The modal verbs are:
Can/could
Will/would
Shall/should
May/might
Must/ought
These auxiliary verbs are used to express such ideas as possibility, willingness, prediction, speculation, deduction and necessity. They are all followed by the infinitive. Ought is followed by to + infinitive:
I can help you.
We might go out tonight.
You ought to eat something.
Stephanie will be here soon.
I wouldn't do that if I were you.
I must go now.
These verbs can occur with other auxiliary verbs (be and have):
I'll be leaving at 11.30.
You should have asked me.
They must have been working.

In this context have is unstressed and therefore identical in speech to unstressed of; this is why the misspelling of for standard have or 've is not uncommon.

Noun

A noun is a word that denotes somebody or something. In the sentence My younger sister won some money in a competition, 'sister', 'money' and 'competition' are nouns.
Many nouns (countable nouns) can be singular (only one) or plural (more than one).
E.g. sister/sisters, problem/problems, party/parties. Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example: butter, cotton, electricity, money, happiness
A collective noun is a word that refers to a group. For example, crowd, flock, team. 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: -
The team have won all their games so far, we think of 'the team' as 'they' (rather than 'it').
Proper nouns are the names of people, places, organisations, etc. These normally begin with a capital letter: Amanda, Birmingham, Microsoft, Islam, November.
Noun phrase is a wider term than 'noun'. It can refer to a single noun (money), a pronoun (it) or a group of words that functions in the same way as a noun in a sentence, for example:
A lot of money
My younger sister
A new car
The best team in the world
Similarly, a noun clause functions in the same way as a noun. For example:
The story was not true. (Noun)
What you said was not true. (Noun clause)

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 of dialogue.
A new paragraph begins on a new line, usually with a one-line gap separating it from the previous paragraph. Some writers also indent the first line of a new paragraph.
Paragraphing helps writers to organise their thoughts, and helps readers to follow the story line, argument or dialogue.

Parenthesis

A parenthesis is a word or phrase inserted into a sentence to explain or elaborate. It may be placed in brackets or between dashes or commas:
Sam and Emma (his oldest children) are coming to visit him next weekend.
Margaret is generally happy — she sings in the mornings! — but responsibility weighs her down.
Sarah is, I believe, our best student.
The term parentheses can also refer to the brackets themselves.

Person

In grammar, a distinction is made between first, second and third person.
One uses the first person when referring to oneself (I/we); the second person when referring to one's listener or reader (you); and the third person when referring to somebody or something else (he/she/it/they/my friend/the books etc).
In some cases the form of the verb changes according to person:
I/we/you/they know
I/we/you/they have
We/you/they were
He/she knows
He/she/it has

I/he/she/it was
See also agreement

Phoneme
A phoneme is the smallest contrastive unit of sound in a word. There are approximately 44 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 'little' 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):
To
Shoe
Through

Phrase
A phrase is a group of words that act as one unit. So *dog* is a word, but *the dog*, *a big dog* or *that dog over there* are all phrases. Strictly speaking, a phrase can also consist of just one word. For example, in the sentence *Dogs are nice*, '*dogs*' and '*nice*' are both one-word phrases.
A phrase can function as a noun, an adjective or an adverb:
A noun phrase *a big dog*, *my last holiday*
An adjectival phrase (*she's not*) *as old as you*, (*I'm*) *really hungry*
An adverbial phrase (*they left*) *five minutes ago*, (*she walks*) *very slowly*
If a phrase begins with a **preposition** (like *in a hurry*, *along* the lane), it can be called a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase can be adjectival or adverbial in meaning:
Adjectival *(I'm) in a hurry, (the man) with long hair*
Adverbial *(they left) on Tuesday, (she lives) along the lane*

Prefix
A prefix is a **morpheme** which can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. For example:
Inedible
Disappear
Supermarket
Unintentional

Preposition
A preposition is a word like *at*, *over*, *by* and *with*. It is usually followed by a **noun phrase**. In the examples, the preposition and the following noun phrase are underlined:
We got home at midnight.
Did you come here by car?
Are you coming with me?
They jumped over a fence.
What's the name of this street?
I fell asleep during the film.
Prepositions often indicate time (*at midnight/during the film/on Friday*), position (*at the station/in a field*) or direction (*to the station/over a fence*).
There are many other meanings, including possession (*of this street*), means (*by car*) and accompaniment (*with me*).
In questions and a few other structures, prepositions often occur at the end of the clause:
Who did you go out with?
We haven't got enough money to live on.
I found the book I was looking for.

In formal style, the preposition can go before whom or which (*with whom*, *about which* etc):
With whom do you wish to speak?
Many prepositions (eg *on*, *over*, *up*) can also be used as **adverbs** (without a following noun or pronoun):
We got on the bus. (preposition - followed by a noun phrase)
The bus stopped and we got on. (adverb - no following noun or pronoun)

Pronoun
There are several kinds of pronoun, including:
Personal pronouns
I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, it
I like him. They don't want it.
Possessive pronouns
Mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its
Is this book yours or mine?
Reflexive pronouns
Myself, herself, themselves etc.
I hurt myself. Enjoy yourselves!
Indefinite pronouns
Someone, anything, nobody, everything etc.
Someone wants to see you about something.
Interrogative pronouns
Who/whom, whose, which, what
Who did that? What happened?
Relative pronouns
Who/whom, whose, which, that
The person who did that … The thing that annoyed me was …
Many determiners can also be used as pronouns, including this/that/these/ those and the quantifiers (some, much etc). For example:
These are mine.
Would you like some?
Pronouns often 'replace' a noun or noun phrase and enable us to avoid repetition:
I saw your father but I didn't speak to him. (= your father)
'We're going away for the weekend.' 'Oh, are you? That's nice.' (= the fact you're going away)

Punctuation
Punctuation is 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 (inverted commas).
Question mark (?)
A question mark is used at the end of an interrogative sentence (e.g. who was that?) or one whose function is a question (e.g. you're leaving already?)

Relative clause
A relative clause is one that defines or gives information about somebody or something. Relative clauses typically begin with relative pronouns (who/whom/whose/which/that):
Do you know the people who live in the house on the corner? (Defines 'the people')
The biscuits (that) Tom bought this morning have all gone. (Defines 'the biscuits')
Our hotel, which was only two minutes from the beach, was very nice. (Gives more information about the hotel)

Root word
A word to which prefixes and suffixes may be added to make other words;
For example in unclear, clearly, cleared, the root word is clear.

Segment
To break a word or part of a word down into its component phonemes, for example: c-a-t; ch-a-t; ch-ar-t; g-r-ou-n-d; s-k-i-n.

Semi-colon (;)
A semi-colon can be used to separate two main clauses in a sentence:
I liked the book; it was a pleasure to read.
This could also be written as two separate sentences:
I liked the book. It was a pleasure to read.
However, where the two clauses are closely related in meaning (as in the above example), a writer may prefer to use a semi-colon rather than two separate sentences.
Semi-colons can also be used to separate items in a list if these items consist of longer phrases. For example:
I need large, juicy tomatoes; half a pound of unsalted butter; a kilo of fresh pasta, preferably tagliatelle; and a jar of black olives.
In a simple list, commas are used.

Sentence
A sentence can be simple, compound or complex.
A simple sentence consists of one **clause**:
It was late.
A **compound sentence** has two or more clauses joined by *and*, or, *but* or *so*.
The clauses are of equal weight (they are both main clauses):
It was late but I wasn't tired.
A **complex sentence** consists of a main clause which itself includes one or more subordinate clauses:
Although it was late, I wasn't tired. (Subordinate clause beginning with *although* underlined)
Simple sentences can also be grouped as follows according to their structure:
Declarative (for statements, suggestions, etc.):
The class yelled in triumph. Maybe we could eat afterwards.
Interrogative (for questions, requests, etc.):
Is your sister here? Could you show me how?
Imperative (for commands, instructions, etc.):
Hold this! Take the second left.
Exclamative (for exclamations):
How peaceful she looks. What a pity!
In writing, we mark sentences by using a capital letter at the beginning, and a full stop (or question mark or exclamation mark) at the end.

Singular and **plural**
Singular forms are used to refer to one thing, person etc. For example: *tree*, *student*, *party*.
Many nouns (countable nouns) can be **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one). The plural is usually marked by the ending *-s*: *trees*, *students*, *parties*.
Some plural forms are irregular. For example: *children*, *teeth*, *mice*.
Other nouns (mass nouns) do not normally occur in the plural. For example:
Butter, *cotton*, *electricity*, *money*, *happiness*.
Verbs, **pronouns**, and **determiners** sometimes have different singular and plural forms:
He was late. They were late

Where is the key? Have you seen it? Where are the keys? Have you seen them?
Do you like this hat? Do you like these shoes?
Note that *they/them/their* (plural words) are sometimes used to refer back to singular words that don't designate a specific person, such as *anyone* or *somebody*. In such cases, they usually means 'he or she':
If anyone wants to ask a question, they can ask me later. (= he or she can ask me)
Did everybody do their homework?
Work with a partner. Ask them their name.

Standard English
Standard English is the variety of English that is held by many to be 'correct' in the sense that it shows none of the regional or other variations that are considered by some to be ungrammatical, or non-standard English.
e.g. *I was talking to my friend* not *I were talking to my friend*

Subject and object
In the sentence *John kicked* the ball, the subject is *'John'*, and the object is *'the ball'*.
The subject is the person or thing about which something is said. In sentences with a subject and an object, the subject typically carries out an action, while the object is the person or thing affected by the action. In declarative sentences (statements), the subject normally goes before the verb; the object goes after the verb.
Some verbs (e.g. *give*, *show*, *buy*) can have two objects, indirect and direct.
For example:
She gave the man some money.
Here, *'some money'* is the direct object (= what she gave). *'The man'* is the indirect object (= the person who receives the direct object).

Suffix
A suffix is a morpheme which 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, egg from present to past (worked) or from singular to plural (accidents).
A derivational suffix changes the word class, e.g. from verb to noun (worker) or from noun to adjective (accidental).

Synonym
Words which have the same meaning as another word, or very similar: wet/damp. Avoids overuse of any word; adds variety.

Tense
A tense is a verb form that most often indicates time. English verbs have two basic tenses, present and past, and each of these can be simple or continuous. For example:
Present past
I play (simple) I played (simple)
I am playing (continuous) I was playing (continuous)
Additionally, all these forms can be perfect (with have):
Present perfect, past perfect
I have played (perfect) I had played (perfect)
I have been playing I had been playing (perfect continuous)
English has no specific future tense. Future time can be expressed in a number of ways using will or present tenses.
For example:
John will arrive tomorrow.

John will be arriving tomorrow.
John is going to arrive tomorrow.
John is arriving tomorrow.
John arrives tomorrow.

Verb
A verb is a word that expresses an action, a happening, a process or a state. It can be thought of as a 'doing' or 'being' word. In the sentence Mark is tired and wants to go to bed, 'is', 'wants' and 'go' are verbs. Sometimes two or more words make up a verb phrase, such as are going, didn't want, has been waiting.
Most verbs (except **modal verbs**, such as can or will) have four or five different forms. For example:
Base form or infinitive
+ -s + -ing (present participle)
Simple past past participle:
wait waits waiting waited, make makes making made drive drives driving drove driven
A verb can be **present or past**:
I wait/she waits (present)
I waited/she waited (past)
Most verbs can occur in **simple or continuous forms** (be + -ing):
I make (simple present)/I'm making (present continuous)
She drove (simple past)/she was driving (past continuous)
A verb can also be perfect (with have):
I have made/I have been making (present perfect)
He had driven/he had been driving (past perfect)
If a verb is regular, the simple past and the past participle are the same, and end in -ed. For example:
Wanted
Played
Answered
Verbs that do not follow this pattern are irregular. For example:
Make/made
Catch/caught
See/saw/seen
Come/came/come
See also **active** and **passive**, **auxiliary verbs**, **infinitive**, **modal verbs**, **participle**, **person**, **tense**

Vowel
A phoneme produced without audible friction or closure. Every syllable contains a vowel. A vowel phoneme may be represented by one or more letters. These may be vowels (*maid)* or a combination of vowels and consonants (*start; could*).

Word class
The main word classes are **verb**, **noun**, **adjective**, **adverb**, **pronoun**, **determiner**, **preposition** and **conjunction**. These are all dealt with separately in this glossary.
Note that a word can belong to more than one class. For example:
Play verb *(I play)* or noun *(a play)*
Fit noun *(a fit),* verb *(they fit)* or adjective *(I'm fit)*
Until preposition *(until Monday)* or conjunction *(until I come back)*
Like verb *(I like)* or preposition *(do it like this)*
Hard adjective *(it's hard work)* or adverb *(I work hard)*

That determiner *(that book)* or pronoun *(who did that?)* or conjunction *(he said that he …)*