



Notes for teachers on how the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test is marked

This document is intended to help teachers to prepare their children for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test by making sure children understand how their responses will be marked.

General advice

Children should take care to give their final answer in the space indicated in the test paper. They should cross through any answers that they do not wish to be marked so it is clear which is their intended response.

For example:

In ~~future~~, lunch will be served an hour later.
future

Where it is not clear which is the intended answer, markers will use the following conventions:

- If a child has written a correct response somewhere other than the answer space, but it is clear which question is being answered, and it is not contradicted by an alternative answer, the response will be marked as correct.
- Where a child has written a response in the intended answer space and an alternative response elsewhere (for example in the margin), the response provided in the answer space will be marked.
- Where a child has written several responses in, or near, the answer space and it is not clear which is to be marked, the responses will be marked as incorrect.

For example:

The film will be ~~reliced~~ on Friday at the cinema.
reliced

How specific question types are marked

This advice applies to the following papers:

- levels 3-5 Paper 1: short answer questions
- level 6 Paper 1: extended task
- level 6 Paper 2: short answer questions

Spelling

Correct spelling is not required, except where the question is assessing contractions. For these questions, the word must be spelt correctly and the apostrophe correctly placed.

Punctuation

Punctuation must be clear and unambiguous for the award of the mark. This means that:

- the punctuation mark must be visible to the marker;
- it must be recognisable as the intended punctuation mark; and
- its position in relation to text or other punctuation must be correct and clear.

Punctuation of direct speech

Direct speech can be punctuated with either single or double inverted commas.

To be marked as correct, closing punctuation must be placed inside the final inverted commas.

For example: *"I'm going to my friend's house for tea."*

If applicable, a comma must be used after a fronted reporting clause.

For example: *He said, "I'm going to my friend's house for tea."*

The use of the serial comma

The mark will not be awarded if a serial comma is used in a list of simple items.

For example, this would be unacceptable: *We bought apples, cheese, and milk.*

This would be acceptable: *We bought apples, cheese and milk.*

The serial comma is acceptable if it used to avoid ambiguity.

For example: *My favourite sandwiches are ham, beef and mustard, and tuna.*

Questions

To be marked as correct, questions must end in a question mark and have the form of a question.

For example: *Is your name Jo?* or *What is your name?*

A statement ending in a question mark would not be counted as a question.

For example: *Your name is Jo?*

Capital letters

Capital letters must be clear and unambiguous for the award of the mark. Where letters do not have unique capital letter forms, the height of the capital letter must be similar to, or greater than, that of letters with ascenders, and clearly greater than the height of letters that do not have ascenders. For example, in the word 'When', the height of the capital letter 'W' should be similar to, or taller than, the 'h'.

For example, this would be acceptable:



This would be unacceptable:



Where children need to write, re-write, or complete a sentence, capital letters within the sentence will be marked as incorrect, unless used to start a proper noun or the pronoun 'I'. This includes where an entire word is capitalised, for example for emphasis. Incorrect use of capital letters negates an otherwise correct response and will be marked as incorrect.

Where children are asked to write a short response that is not part of a sentence (for example, if they are asked to write a word or phrase in a box or table), the use of capital letters will not be taken into account when deciding whether the mark should be awarded. The only exceptions are if the word is a proper noun or the pronoun 'I', in which case a capital letter will be required for the award of the mark.

Accuracy in copied sentences

Where children are required to copy, or 'rewrite', a given sentence, the meaning and key words of the sentence must be preserved and accurate sentence punctuation must be used.

Minor copying errors, such as a change of article, are tolerated. Misspellings are not penalised, unless these are in contractions (see above) and are the assessment focus of the question.

For more information, please contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.