



# NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

# Brushing up

Improving your spelling, grammar and punctuation



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ISBN 978-1-907171-23-9

Published by: National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)  
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We wish to thank the authors Vincent Banville, Joseph O'Connor, Sheila O'Flanagan and Mary Stanley for allowing us to use extracts from their books. Thanks also to New Island, publishers of the Open Door series, for allowing us to use images of the book covers.

## **What is NALA?**

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is an independent membership organisation. We work to ensure that adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs.

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# Introduction



Welcome to 'Brushing Up'. This learning support workbook covers the basics of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Many of us find these difficult. It is designed as a starting point for you to use either on your own or with the support of a tutor.

The workbook will give you information and tips about spelling, grammar and punctuation. It also provides you with exercises to practise over time so you can improve these skills.

## Starting off

Many people struggled with learning spelling, grammar and punctuation. Once we finished in school, we may not have used these skills as much in everyday life and we may have forgotten them or be a little "rusty".

This workbook has tips to help you read and write more confidently. It does not cover every part of spelling, grammar or punctuation but it is a start. You can contact us if you would like to learn more.



Where you see the pen symbol, these are exercises for you to do. The answers to the exercises are at the end of the book.



You will find some tips where you see the lightbulb symbol.



## NALA

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**If you call outside of these hours, please leave your name and number and we will be happy to call you back.**

# Vowels and consonants

In the English language there are 26 letters in the alphabet.

The 26 letters are made up of 5 vowels (in red below) and 21 consonants (in blue).

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z [CAPITAL letters]

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z [lower case]

To remember the 5 vowels – a e i o u - think of a sentence that uses them all.

Examples:

- An elephant is often upset.
- You brought me to A & E, now IOU.



Fill in the missing vowels in these sentences.

**Salt in your diet**

M\_\_ny of us are g\_\_tting f\_\_r m\_\_re s\_\_dium  
(s\_\_lt) \_\_n our di\_\_t than is recommend\_\_d. This  
c\_\_uld lead to serio\_\_s he\_\_lth pr\_\_blems.



Fill in the missing consonants in these sentences.

**Salt in your diet**

It i\_\_ recom\_\_en\_\_ed that we ta\_\_e 1500mg o\_\_  
so\_\_iu\_\_ per \_\_ay. T\_\_is is abou\_\_  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a  
tea\_\_poo\_\_, or 3.75 grams, of sa\_\_t.



The answers are on page 51.

# 100 most common words



**These 100 words make up, on average, half of all the words we read and write.**

Learning these words is a good place to start when working on your spellings.

This list was originally compiled by Edward Dolch, University of Illinois. Edward Fry updated it more recently. We have listed the words in alphabetical order.

a	each	it	out	to
about	find	like	part	two
all	first	long	people	up
an	for	look	said	use
and	from	made	see	was
are	get	make	she	water
as	go	many	sit	way
at	had	may	so	we
be	has	more	some	were
been	have	my	than	what
but	he	no	that	when
by	her	not	the	which
called	him	now	their	who
can	his	number	them	will
come	how	of	then	with
could	I	oil	there	words
day	if	on	these	would
did	in	one	they	write
do	into	or	this	you
down	is	other	time	your



**The next time you finish writing something, check to see which of these words you have used. Use this list to see if you've written them correctly.**



**Select a newspaper article and find some of these words.**

# Using a dictionary

**A dictionary lists words from A to Z and explains what each word means.**

In a dictionary the words are arranged in alphabetical order. This means the words are arranged in the same order as the alphabet: words beginning with A come first, words beginning with B come second and so on through the alphabet.

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z** [CAPITAL letters]

**a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z** [lower case]

Example: Look at these words arranged in alphabetical order.

Apple, Banana, Kiwi, Orange, Pear, Strawberry



**You should find a range of easy to use dictionaries in your local bookstore, your library or online.**



**Put these words in alphabetical order.**

elephant   dingo   spider   bear   cougar

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**The first letter of a word is the first clue. All the words that begin with that letter are grouped together. The next clue is the second letter, and so on.**

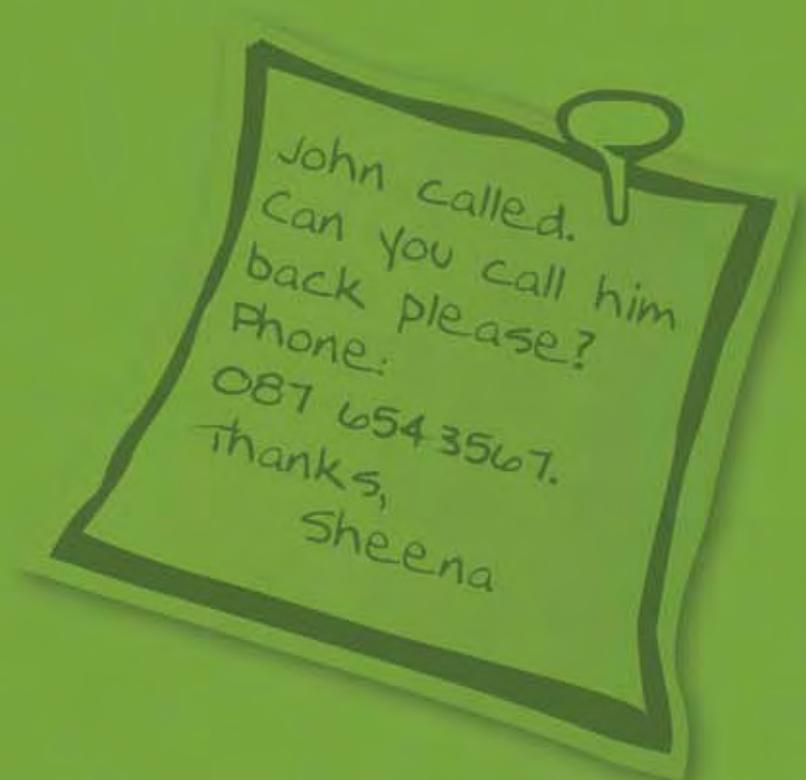


**Put these words in alphabetical order. Note they begin with the same first letter so you need to check the second letter.**

train   table   teapot

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Brushing up on spelling



John called.  
Can you call him  
back please?  
Phone:  
087 6543567.  
Thanks,  
Sheena

# Brushing up on spelling

## Spelling Tips

There is no one way to learn how to spell. As there are many different approaches you will have to find what works best for you. The spelling of some words is exactly as they sound – words such as “cat”, “ran” or “bus”.

Sometimes there are rules that can be learnt, for example “i” before “e” except after “c”. However other times you just have to learn the word off! Improving your spelling takes time, practice and patience.

The NALA freephone team is available to assist you. We are happy to hear from you, whether you need some support or would like to know more about going back to learning.

### 1. Practise, practise, practise.

If you're not sure how to spell a word, find out the correct spelling, then write it down and practise it. Keep a notebook of words you are learning and soon you will have your own personal dictionary. Then over time, as you practise these words, you will see your progress.

### 2. When you are practising spellings, use as many senses as you can.



### 3. Little and often!

Practise words a few at a time rather than trying to do a large number all at once. Find out what works best for you – it may be one or two words or as many as three or four. Look out for those words in text around you. Each time you learn another word, go back and practise the ones you learned before.

### 4. Sound out the word.

Words have one or more syllables or parts. A syllable is the number of beats in a word. Break up the words into syllables or parts.

Examples:

Spelling has two syllables: spell - ing

Memory has three syllables: mem - or - y



## 5. Review and review some more!

If you already know some of the words on your list, practise them once or twice. You can do this by spelling them out loud to yourself. You will be surprised how many words you already know. Reviewing the spellings transfers the knowledge from your short-term to your long-term memory. We need to get the spellings into our long-term memory to keep them.

## 6. Write it down.

Practise spellings by writing them down. By looking at the letters and writing them down, you will become familiar with them and spot mistakes more easily. You want to train your hands to write the correct letters in the right order. Try out the ways to practise spellings on the next few pages.

**a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z**



Now you practise writing out the alphabet.

---

## 7. Read a lot.

Read everything you see around you – not just books. For example, food packets, newspapers, catalogues, billboards, road signs and so on. This will fix the look of many common spelling patterns in your memory and this will help you to spot if one of your spellings doesn't "look right".

## 8. Use a mobile phone.

If you have a mobile phone use it to help you with your spellings.

- Save spellings in your notes on your phone and review them if you have a spare minute.
- Download spelling apps and bookmark websites that you use.
- Take photographs of any words you don't know.
- Record a word if you are not sure how to spell it and come back to it later when you have time.



**Make learning opportunities for yourself – a minute here and there during the day can help achieve your learning goals.**



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Ways to practise spellings

Look at something you have written. Are there words that you think are not spelt right? Choose a word you would like to learn to spell.

When you have chosen the word you want to spell, find out how to spell it.

You can do this by:

- looking up a dictionary
- asking somebody

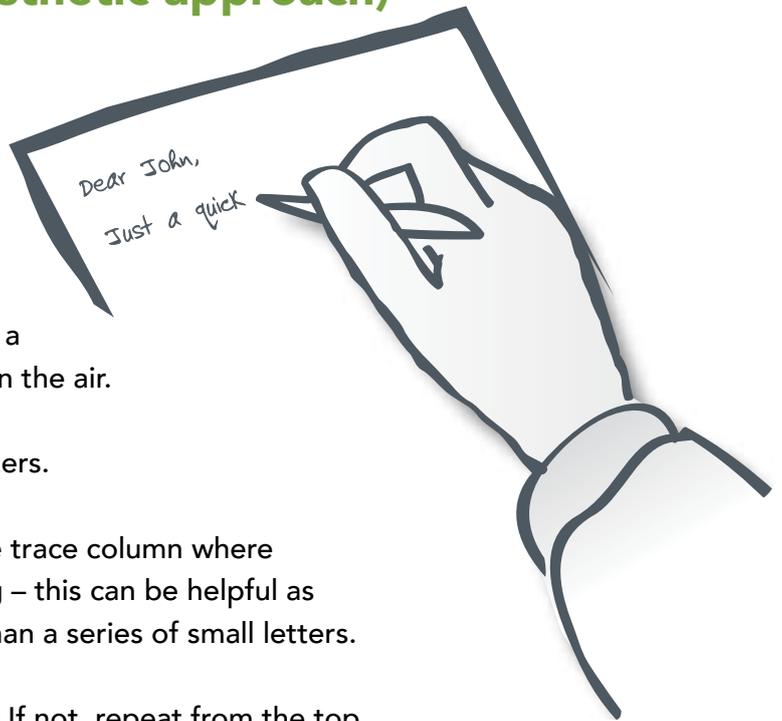
## When you have the correct spelling, how can you learn it?

There are many ways of developing spelling skills.

### 1. Learn by doing (kinaesthetic approach)

#### Look, say, trace, cover, write, check

- **Look** at the word carefully.
- **Say** the word.
- **Trace** over each letter with a finger or a pen or make the shape of the letters in the air.
- **Cover** the word and try to say the letters.
- **Write** the word without looking at the trace column where the word is written. Use joined writing – this can be helpful as you see the word as one unit rather than a series of small letters.
- **Check** if it has been written correctly. If not, repeat from the top.



Practise the same word again after 10 minutes, at the end of the day and the following day until you are happy that you can spell it. Repetition is key to learning.



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# Ways to practise spellings

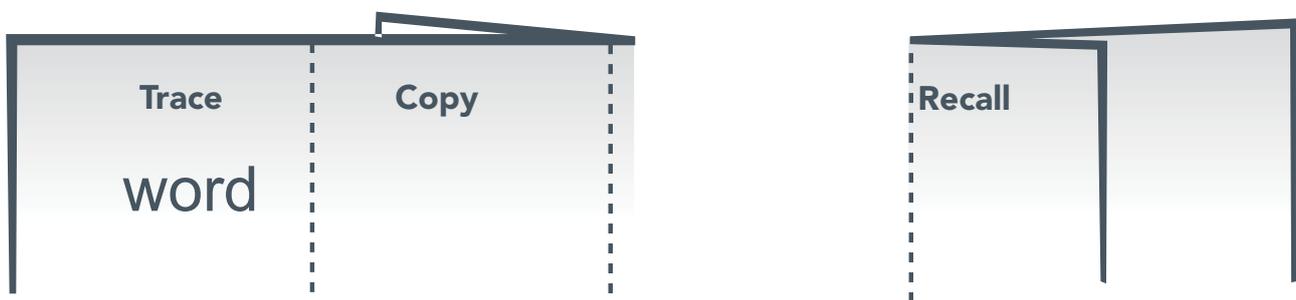


A version of this method is: “**Trace, Copy and Recall**”

Get a piece of paper and draw three columns. Put a heading in each - as shown here.



Then fold over the “Recall” part to hide it. Now you only see the first two columns.



## Then

- Choose a word you want to learn to spell.
- **Trace** it in the first column, saying each letter as you trace.
- Go to the second column and **copy** the word. Check the word – did you copy it correctly? If not, copy again, focusing on the part you need to remember.
- Cover those two columns by flipping the paper over to the “**Recall**” column and write out the word from memory.
- Then **check** the spelling.
  - If you got it right, well done – now write the word in a sentence.
  - If you got it wrong, underline which part of the word you need to focus on and try again.

## 2. Learn by seeing (visual approach)



Look at the word and ask yourself...

- **What does the word look like?**
  - How many tall letters are there and where do they come in the word?
  - Is there a shape to the word that will help you to remember it?
- **Can I break the word up?**

Examples: party breaks up as par / ty  
forgetful breaks up as for / get / ful (remember there is only one “l”)

# Ways to practise spellings

- **Within the word, are there smaller words?**

Examples: together = to / get / her  
shoelace = shoe / lace

- **Does the word have a familiar beginning or ending?**

Example: unkind = un + kind  
helpful = help + ful (remember there is only one "l")  
singing = sing + ing

## 3. Learn by hearing, saying and sounding

- **Sound out the word.**

Example: in – de – pend – ent

- **Say the word as it is written.**

Examples: k – nee  
lam – b

- **Look out for words that have sound patterns or rhymes.**

Example: hand, sand, land, stand, understanding



## 4. Memory aids

It's also helpful to make up funny memory aids.

Examples: Do you have trouble remembering which has two s's – desert (arid land) or dessert (a sweet treat)? Remember that with dessert, you'd like seconds – so the de**ss**ert you eat has 2 s's.

Do you have trouble remembering how to spell separate?  
Remember there is "**a rat**" in the middle of se**par**ate.

Do you have trouble remembering to spell teacher?  
Remember there is an "**ache**" in te**ach**er.

# Spelling rules



**A root word is a word that has nothing added at the beginning or the end.**

New words can be made from root words by adding **beginnings (prefixes)** and **endings (suffixes)**.

## Prefixes

A prefix is added to the **beginning** of a root word to change its meaning or to make a new word.

The most common prefixes are “un” and “dis”. Both of these prefixes mean **not**.

Example:      “un”    +    happy    =    **unhappy**  
                  ↓                    ↓                    ↓  
                  prefix            root word            new word

Some words can have both “un” or “dis” in front of them.

Examples: able:      **dis**able or **un**able  
                  satisfied: **dis**satisfied or **un**satisfied



**Write the opposite of these words using the prefixes “un” or “dis”.**

- |               |       |             |       |
|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. true       | _____ | 6. expected | _____ |
| 2. believable | _____ | 7. healthy  | _____ |
| 3. appear     | _____ | 8. honest   | _____ |
| 4. certain    | _____ | 9. lucky    | _____ |
| 5. aware      | _____ | 10. agree   | _____ |

**Other common prefixes include: “in”, “under”, “re”, “sub”, “im”, “mis”**



**Match the prefixes on the left to the root words on the right to make new words.**

<u>Prefix</u>	<u>Root word</u>
im	estimate
under	mature
dis	take
mis	marine
sub	trust

Some of these prefixes can go with more than one word.



**The answers are on page 51.**

# Suffixes

A suffix is added to the **end** of a root word to change its meaning or make a new word.

The most common suffixes are “ed” and “ing”.

In these sentences the root word is **walk**.

I walk every day.

We can add the suffixes “ed” or “ing” to make new words.

I walk**ed** yesterday.

I am walk**ing** to the shop.

Other examples of common suffixes are:

“ary”, “ery”, “ory”, “less”

– These suffixes usually make adjectives.

“ed”, “ing”, “ise”

– These suffixes are used with verbs.

“er”, “ship”, “ism”

– These suffixes usually form nouns.

## Adding a suffix to root words ending with an “e”

1. When a root word ends in “e” and the suffix begins with a consonant, keep the “e” when adding the suffix.

Root word	+“ful”	+“ment”	+“less”
care	care <b>ful</b>		care <b>less</b>
excite		excite <b>ment</b>	
use	use <b>ful</b>		

2. When a root word ends in “e” and the suffix begins with a vowel, drop the “e” when adding the suffix.

Root word	+“ing”	+“ed”
care	care + ing = car <b>ing</b>	care + ed = car <b>ed</b>
love	love + ing = lov <b>ing</b>	love + ed = lov <b>ed</b>
use	use + ing = us <b>ing</b>	use + ed = us <b>ed</b>

There are some **exceptions**. This means they don’t follow the above rule.

Examples: argue – argument      nine – ninth      true – truly

### Note:

The final “e” is not dropped from words ending in “ee”, “oe” and “ye”.

Examples: agree – agreeing      see – seeing      canoe – canoeing  
hoe – hoeing      dye – dyeing      eye – eyeing

# Adding a suffix to root words ending with a “y”



**Rule 1:** For words ending in “y”, keep the “y” when adding “ing” and “ish”.

Examples: carry**ing**                  cry**ing**  
              funny**ish**                heavy**ish**

**Rule 2:** When a vowel comes before the final “y” in a word, keep the “y” when adding the suffix.

Examples:

Root word	+“ed”	+“ing”	+“ment”
delay	delay <b>ed</b>	delay <b>ing</b>	
employ	employ <b>ed</b>	employ <b>ing</b>	employ <b>ment</b>
stay	stay <b>ed</b>	stay <b>ing</b>	

Exceptions    day – daily                  lay – laid  
                  pay – paid                say – said

**Rule 3:** When a consonant comes before the final “y” in a word, change the “y” to an “i” when adding the suffix.

Examples:

Root word	+“er”	+“est”	+“ed”
funny	funni <b>er</b>	funni <b>est</b>	
carry	carri <b>er</b>		carri <b>ed</b>
heavy	heavi <b>er</b>	heavi <b>est</b>	

## Adding a suffix to root words ending with an “ie”

When a root word ends in “ie”, change the “ie” to “y” when adding “ing”.

Examples:    lie – ly**ing**                  die – dy**ing**                  tie – ty**ing**



Remember the more you read, the more you will become familiar with words. Then you will know if they don’t “look right”.

# Doubling the final consonant

Some root words double the last letter before adding a suffix which begins with a vowel – such as “er”, “ed” or “ing”.

These root words are those that end in a **single vowel** + a **consonant**.

Example: Swim: Sw**i**m ends in a single vowel (i) + a consonant (m)  


So when adding ‘ing’ you have to double the last letter.

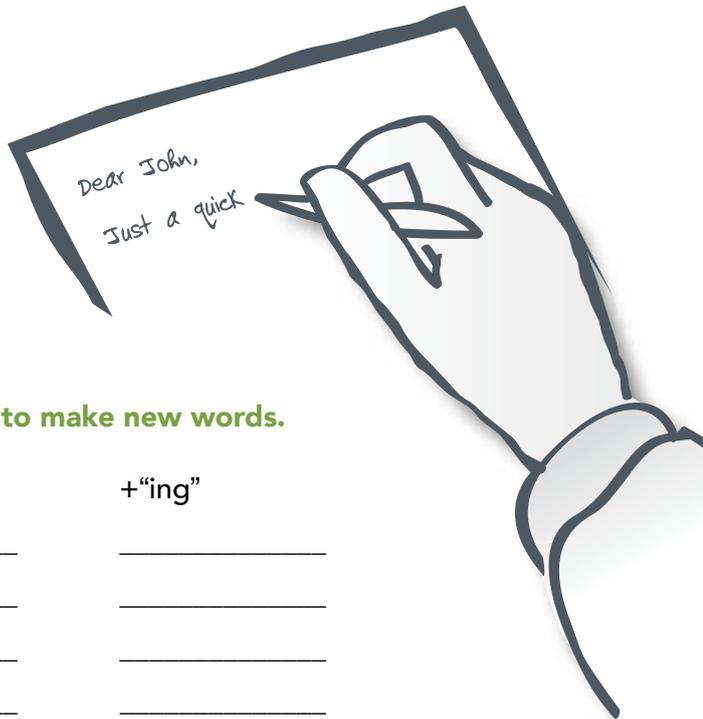
s w **i** m + “ing” = sw**i**mming



Put a ✓ next to the words that double the last letter and X against those that don’t.

**vowel consonant**

run (vc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	shop ( )	<input type="checkbox"/>
wash (cc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	clap ( )	<input type="checkbox"/>
sun (vc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	want ( )	<input type="checkbox"/>
help (cc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	stop ( )	<input type="checkbox"/>



Add “er”, “ed” and “ing” to these root words to make new words.

	+“er”	+“ed”	+“ing”
Bat	_____	_____	_____
Pot	_____	_____	_____
Skip	_____	_____	_____
Trip	_____	_____	_____
Slip	_____	_____	_____
Fit	_____	_____	_____
Wet	_____	_____	_____



The answers are on page 51.



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**Watch out for the exceptions** (words that don't follow the above rule).

Root word	Adding suffix 'ing'	Adding suffix 'ed'
saw	saw <b>ing</b>	saw <b>ed</b>
box	box <b>ing</b>	box <b>ed</b>
snow	snow <b>ing</b>	snow <b>ed</b>

## Exercise



**Read this passage.**

### Going back to learning

When I look back now I was very scared and unsure of taking that first step. Of course it was the best thing I ever did. I began learning with a one-to-one tutor for two hours a week. Then after a while I moved into a small group and had more hours. I loved coming to the centre for my classes and made some great friends. Over a year I worked on my spelling, reading, writing and maths.

One day the tutor introduced us to computers and we went on the internet. I was amazed at all the information you could look up. My kids are unhappy with this as they now can't get me away from the laptop at home.



**Underline the prefixes and suffixes.**

**Read the text again. This time, underline the prefixes and suffixes.**



**Write out the prefixes and suffixes here.**



**The answers are on page 51.**

# When to use the suffix “able” or “ible”

These suffixes usually mean “able to be ...”

Examples:	available:	able to be used or obtained
	breakable:	able to be broken
	audible:	able to be heard
	visible:	able to be seen

## Words ending in “able”

- When a word ends in “able” the main part of the word is usually a complete word which makes sense on its own.

Examples:	drink	+	able	=	drink <b>able</b>
	laugh	+	able	=	laugh <b>able</b>

- When a word ends with a “y”, the “y” usually changes to “i” before adding the suffix “able”.

Examples:	rely	+	able	=	reli <b>able</b>
	envy	+	able	=	envi <b>able</b>

- When the word ends with an “e”, you usually drop the “e” before adding the suffix “able”.

Examples:	believe	+	able	=	believ <b>able</b>
	value	+	able	=	valu <b>able</b>

## Words ending in “ible”

- When a word ends in “ible” you usually can’t break them into separate words that make sense on their own.

Examples:	sens	+	ible	=	sens <b>ible</b>
	horr	+	ible	=	horri <b>ible</b>

- Most words with “s” or “ss” before the ending take “ible”.

Examples:	poss <b>ible</b>	respons <b>ible</b>
-----------	------------------	---------------------



Put the following words into sentences.

1. believable \_\_\_\_\_
2. edible \_\_\_\_\_
3. impossible \_\_\_\_\_
4. acceptable \_\_\_\_\_
5. accessible \_\_\_\_\_

# “ie” or “ei”?



Many words that we see have “i” before “e”.

Examples: achieve, believe, die, field, friend, piece, pier

However there are some rules you need to know:

**Rule 1:** “i” before “e” except after “c”

This means use “ei” after “c”.

Examples: ceiling, conceit, deceit, perceive, receipt, receive

**Rule 2:** “ie” after “c” with a ‘shen’ sound

Examples: ancient, efficient, sufficient, conscience

**Rule 3:** “ei” where “ei” sounds like ‘ay’

Examples: freight, neighbour, reign, rein, weight

**Watch out for the exceptions** (words that don’t follow the above rules).

either          neither          height          leisure          foreign          science



**Fill in “ie” or “ei” in these words.**

1. I hope to achieve a good result in my exam.
2. Mrs. Smith makes a great shepherd’s pie.
3. When will I receive the deposit back?
4. What a lovely piece of furniture!
5. I bought some foreign exchange in the bank.



**Put the following words into sentences.**

1. weird \_\_\_\_\_
2. receipt \_\_\_\_\_
3. neighbour \_\_\_\_\_
4. weight \_\_\_\_\_
5. leisure \_\_\_\_\_



The answers are on page 51.

# Homonyms

There are many words in English that sound the same, but have different meanings and are spelt differently. These words are called homonyms.

Examples:

to	too	two
by	buy	bye
through	threw	
aloud	allowed	

Look at these pairs of homonyms.

Homonym	Meaning of the word	Homonym	Meaning of the word
dear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>expensive</li><li>a polite greeting in a letter</li></ul>	deer	a fast-running graceful animal
pain	hurt caused by an injury or illness	pane	a sheet of glass in a window
right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>correct</li><li>on or towards the right hand side</li></ul>	write	put letters or words on paper



Use words from the box below to fill in the gaps in these sentences.

right mail sent to wait weight two write scent male

1. That is not the \_\_\_\_\_ way to do that.
2. Will you \_\_\_\_\_ to me soon? I like hearing the news.
3. I can't \_\_\_\_\_ to hear from my friend in Australia.
4. She has lost a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ recently.
5. I sent \_\_\_\_\_ emails yesterday.
6. I am sorry I have not written \_\_\_\_\_ you for so long.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ swan is called a cob.
8. I have no \_\_\_\_\_ in my inbox.
9. I do not like the \_\_\_\_\_ of that perfume.
10. He \_\_\_\_\_ a letter to his son in France.



The answers are on page 52.

# Plurals



## Plural means more than one.

To get the plural of most words, you just add “s”.

Examples:      one computer      two computers  
                  one dog              two dogs

However for words that end in “ch” “z” “sh” “s” “x” or “ss” you make the plural by adding “es”.

Examples:      one kiss              two kisses  
                  one lunch            two lunches

## For words ending in “y”

- If there is a vowel before the “y”, you just add “s”.

Examples:      one boy              two boys  
                  one day              two days

- If there is a consonant before the “y”, drop the “y” and add “ies”.

Examples:      one daisy            two daisies  
                  one family          two families



Add “s” or “es” to make the words plural.

**Note:** Remember what happens to some words ending in “y”.

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. monitor _____ | 5. baby _____   |
| 2. way _____     | 6. switch _____ |
| 3. box _____     | 7. brush _____  |
| 4. crash _____   | 8. party _____  |



The answers are on page 52.



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Exercise: Reading a novel



Read this extract from the book “Bruno, peanut and me” by Mary Stanley.

## CHAPTER TWO

We lived in a house by the sea.

From the windows in our house we could see the railway line, a high wall and then the sea. In the summer we swam and played in the water.

In the winter we watched the sea going in and out, pulling back across the sand until it almost disappeared, then slowly washing in again until all the rocks were under water.

In spring, the tides were so high they splashed over the wall and on to the railway track.

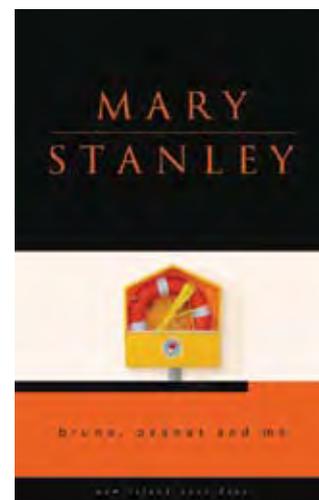
“Hah,” said Bruno. “I wonder will it keep coming in, until the tracks are covered and it comes right up to our house.”

“Oh, no,” said Peanut, with one more thing to worry about. “What will happen then?”

“We’ll be flooded and we’ll be washed away,” said Bruno, happily.

“Oh, no,” repeated Peanut.

“Don’t worry, Peanut,” I said to my little sister. “We’ll get an ark and sail away, like Noah did.”



Read the piece again looking closely at the words. Did you understand them all? Underline the words you had difficulty with. Look those words up in a dictionary and then try to learn to spell them.



Check your local library or bookshop for this book and more titles from the Open Door series.

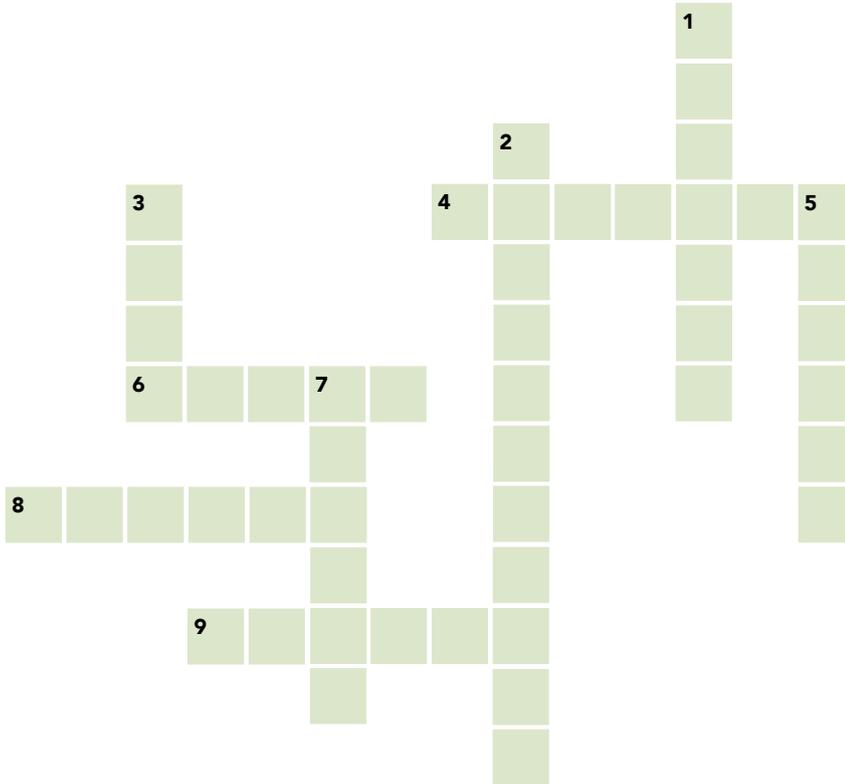
# Exercise: Crossword puzzle



**Fill in this crossword puzzle.**

The answers are in the extract from “Bruno, peanut and me” on page 22.

Hint! Watch out for the clue numbers and check if they are across or down.



## Across

4. These can be single or double glazed. (7 letter word)
6. They lived in a \_\_\_\_\_ by the sea. (5 letter word)
8. “Don’t worry, Peanut,” I said to my little \_\_\_\_\_. (6 letter word)
9. The coldest season. (6 letter word)

## Down

1. We will be ----- and washed away. (7 letter word)
2. The opposite to appeared. Hint: use a prefix (11 letter word)
3. He built the ark. (4 letter word)
5. The warmest season. (6 letter word)
7. The season between the answers to 9 across and 5 down. (6 letter word)



**Enjoy the crossword. If you get stuck, give yourself a break and then come back to it. Remember the crossword is fun and looking up the answer is not cheating.**



**The answers are on page 52.**

# Your spelling dictionary

There are new words that you will come across. It is often useful to write these words down so you can look them up if you need to.

You can keep your own spelling dictionary and jot down new words you find. This is laid out in alphabetical order.

A a		N n	
B b		O o	
C c		P p	
D d		Q q	
E e		R r	
F f		S s	
G g		T t	
H h		U u	
I i		V v	
J j		W w	
K k		X x	
L l		Y y	
M m		Z z	



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Brushing up on grammar



# Brushing up on grammar

It is important to understand and use basic grammar rules. In the following pages you will be able to work on these.

## Parts of speech

Every word is part of a word group or parts of speech. There are eight parts of speech.

**Nouns** are the names of people, places, things, ideas and feelings.

Some nouns:

- People – boy, mother
- Place – bank, road, Dublin
- Thing – card, pen, shoe
- Idea – anger, belief, kindness

Example:

Sean ate his **lunch**.

More on nouns on page 28.

**Pronouns** are small words which take the place of a noun in a sentence.

Some pronouns:

I	me	mine	
we	us	ours	
you	yours	who	
he	him	his	it
she	her	hers	
they	them	theirs	
that	these	this	those

Example: **He** ate **his** lunch.

More on pronouns on page 29.

**Verbs** are action or doing words.

Some verbs:

- |       |      |         |
|-------|------|---------|
| dance | jump | run     |
| drive | cook | paint   |
| am    | was  | will be |

Example:

Mary **ate** her dinner.

More on verbs on page 31.

**Adverbs** describe or tell us more about verbs. They may also describe adjectives.

Some adverbs:

- |         |        |        |
|---------|--------|--------|
| clearly | fast   | always |
| very    | slowly | loudly |

Example:

She ate her dinner **quickly**.

More on adverbs on page 32.

# Parts of speech



**Adjectives** describe or tell us more about nouns or pronouns.

Some adjectives:

The **blue** coat.

The **happy** girl.

He is **funny**.

Example:

The man and his **lively** dog walked through the park.

More on adjectives on page 30.

**Conjunctions** are words that join two words or groups of words.

Some conjunctions:

and            but            or

although    so            unless

because    neither    either

Example:

The man **and** his lively dog walked through the park.

More on conjunctions on page 33.

**Prepositions** are words that show the relationship between a noun (or pronoun) to another noun (or pronoun) in the sentence.

Some prepositions:

at            in            on            across

beside    under    against

Example:

The man and his lively dog walked **through** the park.

More on prepositions on page 34.

**Interjections** are words used to show strong feeling or emotion.

Some interjections:

Ouch!            Oh!            Ow!

Ahem            Hurrah!            Gosh!

Example:

**Ouch!** The dog bit me!

More on interjections on page 35.



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Nouns

**Nouns are the names of people, places, things, ideas and feelings.**



**Underline the nouns.**

1. My hair grows very fast.
2. He is a carpenter.
3. Please park your car in the garage.
4. I felt delighted when I passed the test.
5. She ate her breakfast quickly.

**There are different types of nouns.**

**Common nouns** name people, places or things.

Common nouns:

- People – girl, father, cousin
- Place – hospital, shop, river, street
- Thing – card, pen, shoe, umbrella



Common nouns are written in lower case letters.

**Proper nouns** name a particular person, place or thing.

Proper nouns:

- People – John Doyle, Mr. Owens
- Place – Mater Hospital, Arnotts, River Lee, Henry Street
- Thing – Friday, July, Christmas Day



For proper nouns, the first letter is a capital letter.

**Abstract nouns** may be ideas or activities or feelings.

Abstract nouns:

- anger    courage    laughter    calm
- height    length    kindness    dark

She is full of **kindness**.



Kindness is an abstract noun because you can't physically touch, feel, hear, taste, smell or see it.

**Collective nouns** describe groups of people, animals or things.

Collective nouns:

- A group of ships is called a **fleet**.
- A group of cows is called a **herd**.
- A group of players is called a **team**.
- A group of ants is called a **colony**.

# Pronouns



**Pronouns are small words which take the place of a noun in a sentence.**

Examples:	The man arrived at 10.	<b>He</b> arrived at 10.
	The girls sang in the musical.	<b>They</b> sang in the musical.
	The horse ate the hay.	The horse ate <b>it</b> .



**Underline the pronouns in the following sentences.**

1. They go swimming every Saturday.
2. The puppy ate it.
3. The politician annoyed me.
4. They were very satisfied with the meal.
5. We stayed in it for a week.

**A pronoun may be first, second or third person. It can also be singular and plural.**

Some examples are:

I	me	mine	
we	us	ours	
you	yours	who	
he	him	his	it
she	her	hers	
they	them	theirs	
that	these	this	those



**In each sentence below, fill the gaps with a suitable pronoun.**

1. I enjoyed my holiday but \_\_\_\_\_ sounded better.
2. The girl listens to her mother because she likes \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Is that child \_\_\_\_\_ ?
4. Don't forget to bring \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. Vegetables are good for you so you should eat \_\_\_\_\_ .



**The answers are on page 52.**



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Adjectives

**Adjectives describe or tell us more about nouns or pronouns.**

Examples:	Tom is <b>happy</b> .	Happy is an adjective describing the proper noun Tom.
	It was <b>bad</b> .	Bad is an adjective describing the pronoun it.
	The <b>fast</b> athlete.	Fast is an adjective telling us more about the noun athlete.



**Underline the adjectives in the following sentences.**

1. Several old folk caught an awful flu.
2. The baby slept soundly for the first night.
3. You should eat some healthy food each day.
4. The fast river flowed through the green countryside.
5. The young girl stayed out late last night.



**Use the adjectives in the box to fill in the gaps.**

anxious    careful    foolish    showery    thirsty

1. I am very \_\_\_\_\_ with money.
2. Scotland gets very \_\_\_\_\_ weather.
3. I drank lots after the marathon as I was very \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jack feels \_\_\_\_\_ when he has to speak in public.
5. It would be \_\_\_\_\_ to drive through a red traffic light.



**Fill the gaps with suitable adjectives.**

**There are many adjectives you can use here.**

1. Some people think that Cork is the \_\_\_\_\_ city in Ireland.
2. She bought a \_\_\_\_\_ present.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ weather spoiled a \_\_\_\_\_ trip.
4. Mary scored \_\_\_\_\_ goals in the \_\_\_\_\_ minute.
5. Did that \_\_\_\_\_ book win the \_\_\_\_\_ award?



**The answers are on page 52.**

# Verbs



## Verbs are action or doing words.

Examples: I **walk** to work every day. He **jogs** once a week.  
Peter **went** to the library. The woman **drives** to town.  
She **is** angry with Jack. She **has** a cold.

The time of the action is called the **tense**. The three main tenses are:

1. Past tense = the action has already happened.
2. Present tense = the action is taking place now – in the present.
3. Future tense = the action will take place in the future.

Examples:

Past tense	Present tense	Future tense
I walked	I walk	I will walk
I jogged	I jog	I will jog
I went	I go	I will go
I drove	I drive	I will drive
I was	I am	I will be
I had	I have	I will have



### Underline the verbs in the following sentences.

1. Sean jumped out of the plane.
2. The twins will start school next year.
3. She plans a holiday every year.
4. The bank sent a statement last week.
5. I broke my leg on Tuesday.



### Fill the gaps with suitable verbs.

There are many verbs you can use here.

1. His nephew \_\_\_\_\_ a new car.
2. The letter was \_\_\_\_\_ by express post.
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ the robin singing this morning.
4. The garda \_\_\_\_\_ the area for clues to the crime.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ the car boot and put the shopping in there.

# Adverbs

**Adverbs describe or tell us more about verbs. They may also describe adjectives.**

Most adverbs are used with verbs and are formed by adding 'ly' to the adjective.

Examples: clear – clearly      brave – bravely      slow – slowly

Adverbs tell us:

<b>Time</b>	We will meet <b>tomorrow</b> .
<b>Place</b>	He came <b>here</b> yesterday.
<b>Manner</b>	They tiptoed <b>quietly</b> into the house.
<b>Degree</b>	I am <b>very</b> weak.
<b>Number (amount)</b>	She <b>often</b> goes to the cinema.



**Underline the adverbs in the following sentences.**

1. She sang sweetly.
2. They seldom meet anymore.
3. The baby slept very badly.
4. Olive was very hungry after her swim.
5. I carefully opened the package.



**Fill the gaps with suitable adverbs.**

**There are many adverbs you can use here.**

1. They arrived \_\_\_\_\_ to the party.
2. He spoke \_\_\_\_\_ to the canvasser at the door.
3. They lived \_\_\_\_\_ in a big old farmhouse.
4. She danced \_\_\_\_\_ with her partner.
5. The passengers waited \_\_\_\_\_ in line to get on the train.



**The answers are on page 53.**



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Conjunctions



**Conjunctions are words that join two words or groups of words.**

Examples: The man **and** his dog went everywhere together.  
It was bulky **but** light.  
She will wait **until** you arrive.  
I will go to the party **if** you come too.



**Write a sentence using the following conjunctions.**

1. although \_\_\_\_\_
2. because \_\_\_\_\_
3. before \_\_\_\_\_
4. since \_\_\_\_\_
5. unless \_\_\_\_\_



**Use the conjunctions in the box to fill in the gaps in the sentences below.**

as      but      if      until      when

1. She didn't go out \_\_\_\_\_ it stopped raining.
2. Close the window \_\_\_\_\_ you go out.
3. He hates fruit \_\_\_\_\_ he eats plenty of vegetables.
4. You don't have to queue \_\_\_\_\_ you buy your tickets in advance.
5. I need to see your proof of age \_\_\_\_\_ I can't sell alcohol to anyone under 18.



**The answers are on page 53.**



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Prepositions

**Prepositions are words that show the relationship of a noun (or pronoun) to another noun (or pronoun) in the sentence. It also shows position or location.**

Examples: The dog ran **across** the street. We arrived **at** the wedding.  
Patrick lives **by** the beach. The computer is **on** the table.



**Use the prepositions in the box to fill in the gaps.**

across    during    off    through    with

1. The woman fell \_\_\_\_\_ her bike.
2. The boy placed his coat \_\_\_\_\_ the chair.
3. Kate works \_\_\_\_\_ the summer.
4. I went to the cinema \_\_\_\_\_ my friends.
5. The boy walked \_\_\_\_\_ the woods.



**Fill each gap with a suitable preposition.**

1. Martina moved the sofa \_\_\_\_\_ the window.
2. The girl divided the winnings \_\_\_\_\_ the family.
3. The bicycle crashed \_\_\_\_\_ the Luas.
4. I received a letter \_\_\_\_\_ my uncle.
5. The people walked \_\_\_\_\_ the bridge.



**Put the following prepositions into sentences.**

1. around \_\_\_\_\_
2. beside \_\_\_\_\_
3. in \_\_\_\_\_
4. near \_\_\_\_\_
5. off \_\_\_\_\_



**The answers are on page 53.**

# Interjections



**Interjections are words used to show strong feeling or emotion. It is a big name for a little word!**

Interjections are short exclamations like **Oh!** **Um!** or **Ah!** We use them quite often, usually more in speaking than in writing.

They are included in a sentence (usually at the start) to express a feeling such as surprise, disgust, joy, excitement or enthusiasm.

Examples: **Hey!** Stop that cat!  
**Dear** me!

**Oh,** that is shocking.  
**Jeepers,** that was close.

## Yes and No

Introductory expressions such as **yes**, **no**, **indeed**, and **well** are also classed as interjections.

Examples: **Indeed**, this happens all the time.  
**Yes**, I will apply for that job.

I'm sure I don't know half the people who come to my house. **Indeed**, for all I hear, I shouldn't like to.

Oscar Wilde

**Some interjections are sounds.**

Examples: **Phew!** I'm never going there again.  
**Yum!** My compliments to the chef.



**Use the interjections in the box to fill in the gaps.**

Humph    Hurry    No    Oh my gosh    Yum

1. “ \_\_\_\_\_ ! This sandwich is lovely,” said Mary.
2. “ \_\_\_\_\_ ! The bus is about to leave,” he cried.
3. John arrived at his surprise party. “ \_\_\_\_\_ !” he said.
4. “ \_\_\_\_\_ ! I could have told you that,” Jake replied.
5. “ \_\_\_\_\_ , I'm not going tomorrow night,” she said.



**The answers are on page 54.**

# Exercise: Reading a paragraph



Read the paragraph below. Decide what part of speech each word is. Then check your answers in the boxes below.

A young woman was seriously injured after a minibus and a car crashed in the city centre yesterday. The accident happened on the corner of O'Connell Street and Abbey Street. The woman, Mary Jones from Crumlin, was quickly moved to a nearby hospital by ambulance and she is in intensive care. A passenger was also taken to hospital with minor cuts and bruises. The driver was treated for shock.

## Nouns

Common		Proper	
woman	accident	passenger	O'Connell Street
minibus	shock	cuts	Abbey Street
car	corner	bruises	Mary Jones
city	hospital	driver	Crumlin
centre	ambulance		
yesterday	intensive care		

## Pronouns

she

## Verbs

was  
injured  
crashed  
happened  
moved  
is  
taken  
treated

## Adjectives

young  
nearby  
minor

## Adverbs

seriously  
quickly  
also

## Conjunctions

and

## Other words

a the of

## Prepositions

after  
in  
on  
from  
to  
by  
with  
for



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Exercise: Reading an article



Read this article once all the way through.



Then read it again and underline the nouns and write them in the noun box on the next page.

Do the same for the adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

## UNPLUG AND OPEN A BOOK ... THE JOY OF SLOW READING

**W**hy not try this over the weekend – switch off your devices and switch on your brain. Grab that book, curl up in a comfy armchair and lose yourself.

At a time when much of what we read is on a screen, the idea of leafing through the pages of a good book is a dying art form. Slow reading is the new game in town, with claims that it benefits your brain and cuts stress.

Slow reading clubs are popping up all over, from Notting Hill to Wellington, New Zealand. They all follow the same format – people arrive at a cafe, grab a drink and shut off their mobile

phones. Then they sink into cozy chairs and read in silence for an hour.

The point of the club isn't to talk about literature, but to get away from pinging electronic devices and read without interruption.

Slow reading promotes a return to the focused reading habits of years gone by, before smartphones and social media started eating into our time and attention spans.

Slow readers list many benefits from improving their ability to concentrate, reducing stress levels and deepening their ability to think, listen and empathise.

Now, where did I leave that book?



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Exercise: Reading an article

**Nouns**

**Verbs**

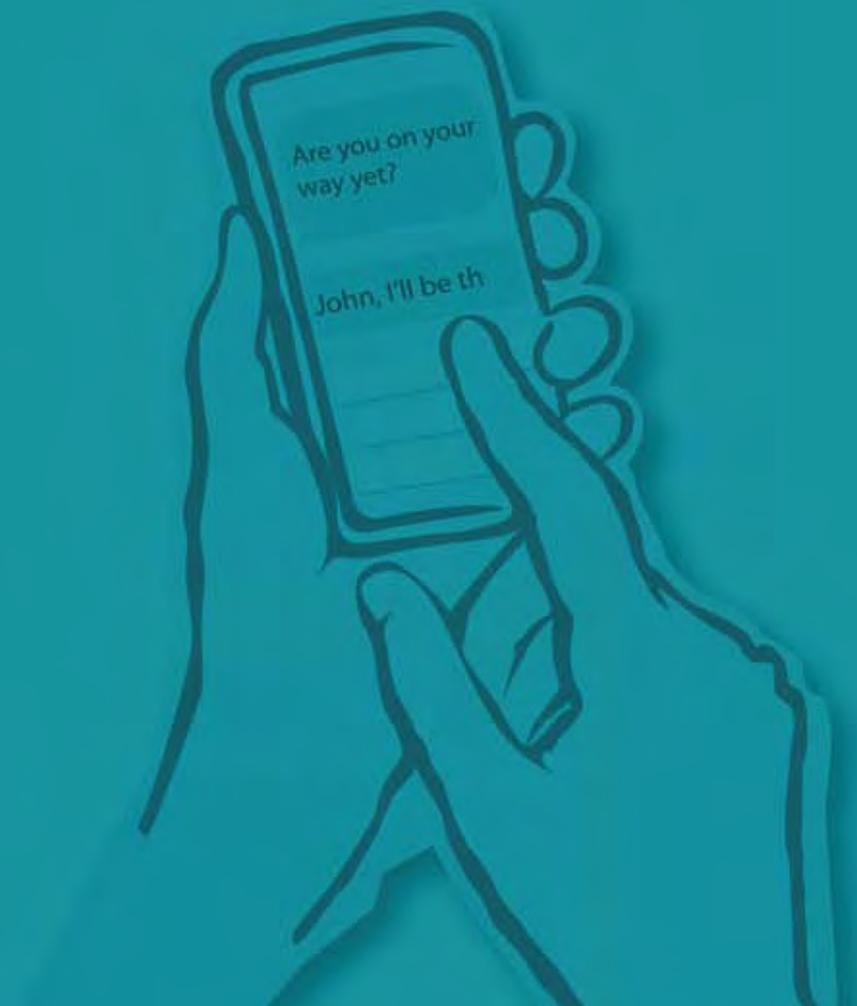
**Adjectives**

**Adverbs**



**The answers are on page 54.**

# Brushing up on punctuation



# Brushing up on punctuation

Knowing where and when to use punctuation marks can greatly improve your writing.

Punctuation means the correct use of the following:

Full stop	.	Colon	:
Question mark	?	Semi-colon	;
Exclamation mark	!	Brackets	( )
Comma	,	Dash	—
Inverted commas or quotation marks	“ ”	Hyphen	—
Apostrophe	'		

## Sentences

A sentence is always made up of at least one **noun (or pronoun)** and at least one **verb**.  
A sentence has a complete thought.

Examples: **Siobhan sings.**      **John eats.**  
**We arrived.**              **They won!**

A sentence can also be a question.

Example: How many pictures will I take?

A sentence normally starts with a **capital letter** and **ends with a full stop**. Sometimes the full stop is replaced by a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!).

Examples: **M**ary wore a dress.  
**S**he wore a lovely blue dress to the party.  
**W**hat colour was the dress.



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# Sentences



Put a ✓ next to the lines that are sentences and X against those that are not.

1. John sent a picture to his friend.
2. I went to the town and I bought
3. Mary Jones
4. Can I have the camera?
5. I saw a picture in the paper.
6. It's raining here because



Complete each sentence by selecting the correct ending.

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I went to America on my holidays    | so I left work early.          |
| I have learned to use a computer so | I did not enjoy it.            |
| I had a bad headache                | I can now book my own tickets. |
| I went to a film last night but     | at the end of a sentence.      |
| You always put a full stop          | and I really enjoyed it.       |



Finish the following sentences.

Remember to put in a full stop or a question mark.

1. My camera is very \_\_\_\_\_
2. What time can you \_\_\_\_\_
3. Computers are \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much is the \_\_\_\_\_
5. I need to buy a digital camera because \_\_\_\_\_



The answers are on page 54.

# Using capital letters

## Capital letters are used on the following occasions:

1. At the **beginning of all sentences.**
2. For the **names of people.** Examples: **A**nn, **D**erek, **R**yan, **M**urphy.
3. For the **names of places.** Examples: **D**ublin, **C**ork, **P**aris, **H**enry **S**treet.
4. For the **title of a person.** Examples: **M**r., **M**rs., **D**r.
5. For the names of the **days** of the week and **months** of the year. Examples: **M**onday, **A**pril.
6. For **titles** of books, films and newspapers. Examples: **T**reasure **I**sland, **T**itanic
7. For **abbreviations** or shortened words. Examples: **R**d., **A**ve.
8. **For the word "I" when it refers to yourself.** Example: **I** will buy the ticket when **I** get paid.



**Remember, "I" is always a capital letter no matter where it comes in a sentence.**



**Underline the words below that should have a capital letter.  
Then re-write the sentences.**

### **gaa senior hurling final 2014**

kilkenny and tipperary played an incredible draw in this year's all-ireland senior hurling final at croke park. the score was kilkeny 3-22 to tipperary 1-28. two weeks later kilkeny beat tipperary by 2-17 to 2-14 in a replay on saturday 27 september at croke park.

### **cycling capers**

i never liked to cycle and kate knew it. she asked me how i was going to get to school without a lift from mr. turner next door. "if i were you i would get on the bike", she sniggered. the last time i had cycled with my best friend tom i had landed at the doorstep of doctor smith.



**The answers are on page 55.**



If you have any questions as you are using this book, call the NALA freephone support line, **1800 20 20 65**, Monday to Friday, 9.30 am – 5 pm.

# When to use punctuation marks

## Full stop

A full stop is used:

- - at the **end of a sentence**
- to **show an abbreviation** – Ms. Ave., T.D.

Example: Ms. Murphy lives on Kildare Ave.

## Question mark



The question mark is used **at the end of a question**.

Examples: What is your address?  
Where are you going?

## Exclamation mark



An exclamation mark is used to **show strong feeling** such as surprise, excitement, anger or joy.

Examples: Ah! She's so cute.



**Read out loud the following paragraph from 'Maggie's Story' by Sheila O'Flanagan. Mark where you think the full stops, question marks and exclamation marks should go. Remember to put in the capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.**

the kitchen door opened tom strode into the room he sat down  
on the chair and stretched his legs out in front of him

"What's for tea" he asked

maggie turned to look at her twenty-year-old son he was  
glancing through the paper ignoring her she stirred the pot  
on the hob

"Curry" she said.

he looked up from the paper "what sort"

"Chicken curry"

"With fruit"

"Yes"

"Good" said Tom in satisfaction "I'm starving"



**The answers are on page 55.**

# Comma

## A comma is used:



When listing three or more words	I bought coffee, tea, sugar and milk.
To divide up a sentence	Her cat, Felix, ran away yesterday Jane Smyth, the nurse, went home early.
Before direct speech	“Would you like a drink?” he asked. “Thanks, I’ll have tea,” she replied.



Usually we don't use a comma before the word 'and'.

Example: We saw Mary and Peter at the park.



Read the following paragraph out loud.

Mark where you think the full stops, commas and capital letters should go.

john bought the paper and read all the ads for flats as soon as he saw one that looked nice he went there immediately even though the ad said after six o clock he knew if the flat was a good one he would probably find a queue of people all down the street finding a good flat in dublin at a good price was like finding a needle in a haystack

## Inverted commas or quotation marks



Inverted commas are used to show what someone has said (direct speech).

Example: “Will you meet me later?”



Put the inverted commas into the following sentences.

1. Please open the window, she said. It's very hot.
2. Jake isn't available today, he explained. Can you come back tomorrow?
3. Yes, said Maud. I am free.
4. Help! she cried. Stop that man!
5. Will we go to the film at 6 pm? he asked.



The answers are on page 55.

# Apostrophe



**The apostrophe can have two meanings:**

1. It is used to **show ownership** – that something belongs to someone or something.
2. It is used to **show that one or more letters have been left out.**

## 1. Showing ownership

For one owner (singular)	Insert <b>'s</b>	The girl's coat is on the stand. The boy's shoes are dirty. Mary's house is around the corner.
For one owner (singular) and word ends in "s"	Place only the apostrophe after the word or add <b>'s</b>	James' school is closed tomorrow. or James's school is closed tomorrow.
For more than one owner (plural)	Insert <b>'s</b>	The girls' coats are on the stand. The boys' shoes are dirty. The sisters' house is close by.
For more than one owner (plural) and word does <b>not</b> end in "s"	Add <b>'s</b> to the plural word	The children's school is closed. The men's hats were blown off.



**Use a coloured pen to mark in the apostrophe in these sentences.**

**Note:** The apostrophe here is showing ownership.

1. Janes hair is very dark.
2. He found Toms book on the floor.
3. The babies clothes were put into the washing machine.
4. I think my friends writing is very neat.
5. She read Tonys work yesterday and said it was excellent.
6. Mr. Murphys house is larger than Mr. O'Briens.
7. Patrick washed the boys football jerseys yesterday.
8. His mothers cooking is excellent.
9. The mans legs were tired after the marathon.
10. The ships hooter sounded.



**The answers are on page 55.**

# Apostrophe



**Rewrite these sentences using an apostrophe to change the underlined text.**

**Note:** The apostrophe here is showing ownership.

Example: The bag was packed with clothes for women.

The bag was packed with women's clothes.

1. The husband of Jess died.

---

2. He listened to the singing of the choir.

---

3. Tom had work for seven days.

---

4. The hands of the clock moved.

---

## 2. Showing that one or more letters have been left out.

The apostrophe is placed where the missing letter or letters are. This is called a contraction.

Examples: I am – I'm      I would not – I wouldn't  
is not – isn't      you are – you're



**Rewrite these sentences using the apostrophe.**

**Hint:** Use the apostrophe to show where letters are left out.

1. Do not go. \_\_\_\_\_

2. I cannot drive. \_\_\_\_\_

3. He did not do it. \_\_\_\_\_

4. We have not got a new car. \_\_\_\_\_

5. They are in bed. \_\_\_\_\_



**The answers are on page 55.**

# Colon and semi-colon



## Colon

A colon is used:	Example
● When introducing a statement	There are two choices: run away or stay.
● When introducing a list	The main cities in Ireland are: Dublin, Cork and Galway.
Before a direct quotation or direct speech	The postman said: "The parcel won't fit."



**Insert the colon in the following sentences.**

1. This is what she said "Come on Ireland!"
2. Never forget think before you speak.
3. This house has everything I need two bedrooms, a backyard and a garage.
4. Here are three cities that begin with C Copenhagen, Cairo and Cork.

## Semi-colon



**A semi-colon is used to separate sentences that have a link to each other.**



Example: His bicycle was old; the bell didn't work.  
Some people drive to work; others use public transport.



**Mark the semi-colon in the following sentences.**

1. She got the train into the city after work the shops were open late.
2. He got a bargain it was in the sale.
3. Her car was old the wipers don't work.
4. The rain lasted all day the clothes didn't dry.
5. I have finished the main course now I have to make dessert.
6. We made too many mistakes we lost the game.
7. You should stop eating so much food you'll burst.
8. Mary loves the sofa it's very comfortable.



**The answers are on page 56.**

# Other symbols – brackets, dashes and hyphens

## Brackets



**Brackets are used to give extra information.** They must be used in pairs.

Example: I don't care if he (John) won the prize, I want some of it.  
The top teams were: Mary's (80 points) and Paul's (100 points).



**Mark the brackets in the following sentences.**

1. She got a nice bonus €200.
2. James Ann's boyfriend bought the tickets.
3. He was an active member of the GAA Gaelic Athletic Association.

## Dashes

**The dash is used to divide up a sentence.**

Examples: Things have changed – mainly for the better.



This job – it's not urgent – can be finished later.

Here the dash adds in a piece of information that is not essential to the sentence.



**Mark the brackets or dashes in the following sentences.**

1. She painted the room yellow everyone hates it.
2. He packed his lunch sandwich, apple and drink.
3. The playground was cold and wet it was deserted.

## Hyphens

**The hyphen is half the size of a dash.** It links words together.



Examples: I got a present of a four-pound cake.

I am long-sighted.



**Rewrite the following sentences with correct punctuation.**

**Remember to put in the capital letters at the beginning of a sentence.**

1. i hope you pass the driving test \_\_\_\_\_
2. are you both going away for your holidays \_\_\_\_\_
3. she had one wish to win the lotto \_\_\_\_\_
4. please don't make a mess said his mother \_\_\_\_\_

# Exercises on punctuation



Read this extract from the book “The shorter Irish male” by Joseph O’Connor

My Leaving Certificate maths exam has haunted my nights for the last thirteen years. I was always desperate at maths. I could never understand it. Teenage life seemed so full of real problems that inventing ones in order to solve them seemed absurd. Why was it important to know how quickly a half-full train doing average speed would get to Limerick Junction via Portarlinton when I could spend my days dreaming up witty things to murmur during the slow sets at the Prez? (“Listen, Concepta, can I buy you a fizzy orange after ‘Freebird’ or would you rather just have the money?”) Even now, I only remember one mathematical fact. The Square on the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides. The other two sides of *what*, I never knew. (Smoked salmon, is it?)



Answer these questions.

How do you think this person felt about maths? And why?

---

---

Think of a strong memory from your teenage years. What is it?

---

---



Check your local library or bookshop for this book and more titles from the Open Door series.

# Exercise: Bringing it all together



Read this extract from the book “An accident waiting to happen” by Vincent Banville. Take your time reading it and while you are reading it think about the spellings and the punctuation marks. If you do not understand any words mark them and look them up in a dictionary. Also think about the words that you would like to learn to spell.

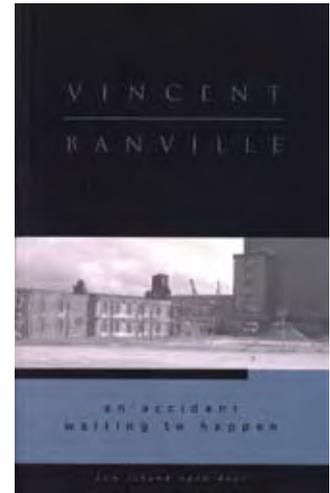
We were in the sitting room, watching the Teletubbies and eating rice crispies, when my wife Annie came down. She has red hair and a temper to match. She also has definite views on how Emily should be brought up.

Now shaking her head, she said, “What did I tell you? No television, no comfort food. You’ll have the child spoiled. If we don’t train her in before she comes to the age of reason” –

“Train her in?” I cut in. “Why can’t we let her be a free spirit? Do her own thing.”

“At the age of two?”

“Well, she can walk and talk. Sing, dance, say her abc’s. I know she sometimes puts her shoes on the wrong feet, but that can happen to anyone.”



Fill in the gaps in the following extract from “An accident waiting to happen”

We were in the \_\_\_\_\_ room, \_\_\_\_\_ the Teletubbies and \_\_\_\_\_ rice crispies, when my wife Annie came down. She has red hair and a temper to match. She also has definite views on how \_\_\_\_\_ should be brought up.

Now \_\_\_\_\_ her head, she said, “What did I tell you? No television, no comfort food. You’ll have the child \_\_\_\_\_. If we don’t train her in before she comes \_\_\_\_\_ the age of reason” -.

“Train her in?” I cut in. “Why can’t we let her be a free spirit? Do her own thing.”

“At the age of \_\_\_\_\_?”

“Well, she can \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Sing, dance, say her abc’s. I know she sometimes puts her shoes on the wrong feet, but that can happen to anyone.”

# Answers



## Vowels and consonants [page 4]

Many of us are getting far more sodium (salt) in our diet than is recommended. This could lead to serious health problems.

It is recommended that we take 1500mg of sodium per day. This is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a teaspoon, or 3.75 grams, of salt.

## Using a dictionary [page 6]

- |             |           |          |
|-------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. Bear     | 2. Cougar | 3. Dingo |
| 4. Elephant | 5. Spider |          |

- |          |           |          |
|----------|-----------|----------|
| 1. table | 2. teapot | 3. train |
|----------|-----------|----------|

## Prefixes [page 13]

Put the prefix before the word.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. untrue       | 6. unexpected |
| 2. unbelievable | 7. unhealthy  |
| 3. disappear    | 8. dishonest  |
| 4. uncertain    | 9. unlucky    |
| 5. unaware      | 10. disagree  |

Match the prefixes.

- |          |               |          |
|----------|---------------|----------|
| immature | underestimate | distrust |
| mistake  | submarine     |          |

## Doubling the final consonant [page 16]

Put ✓ to double the last letter and X if not.

- |      |      |   |      |      |   |
|------|------|---|------|------|---|
| run  | (vc) | ✓ | shop | (vc) | ✓ |
| wash | (cc) | X | clap | (vc) | ✓ |
| sun  | (vc) | ✓ | want | (cc) | X |
| help | (cc) | X | stop | (vc) | ✓ |

Add “er”, “ed” and “ing”.

- |      |         |         |          |
|------|---------|---------|----------|
| Bat  | Batter  | Batted  | Batting  |
| Pot  | Potter  | Potted  | Potting  |
| Skip | Skipper | Skipped | Skipping |
| Trip | Tripper | Tripped | Tripping |
| Slip | Slipper | Slipped | Slipping |
| Fit  | Fitter  | Fitted  | Fitting  |
| Wet  | Wetter  | Wetted  | Wetting  |

## Exercise [page 17]

Underline the prefixes and suffixes.

When I look back now I was very scareded and unsure of takinging that first step. Of course it was the best thing I ever did. I began learninging with a one-to-one tutor for two hours a week. Then after a while I moved into a small group and had more hours. I loved cominging to the centre for my classes and made some great friends. Over a year I worked on my spellinging, readinging, writinging and maths.

One day the tutor introduced us to computers and we went on the internet. I was amazed at all the information you could look up. My kids are unhappy with this as they now can't get me away from the laptop at home.

## “able” and “ible” [page 18]

Put the following words into sentences.

[Please note: There are many sentences you could make with the words. These are just examples.]

- Her story is very **believable**.
- Are those flowers **edible**?
- It is **impossible** for me to run a marathon!
- It is **acceptable** to call in.
- The restaurant is **accessible**.

## “ie” or “ei” [page 19]

Fill in “ie” or “ei” in these words.

- I hope to achieieve a good result in my exam.
- Mrs. Smith makes a great shepherd's pie.
- When will I receieve the deposit back?
- What a lovely piece of furniture!
- I bought some foreiegn exchange in the bank.

Put the following words into sentences.

[Please note: There are many sentences you could make with the words. These are just examples.]

- That was a **weird** experience.
- You get a **receipt** when you pay.
- Our **neighbour** dropped in her keys.
- I put on some **weight** over Christmas.
- We have a new **leisure** centre in the town.

# Answers

## Homonyms [page 20]

Fill in the gaps in these sentences.

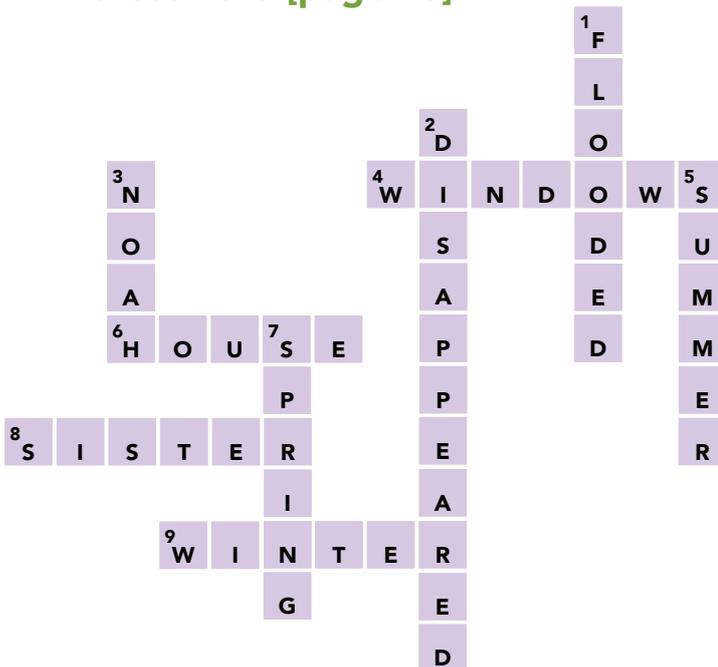
- |           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| 1. right  | 6. to    |
| 2. write  | 7. male  |
| 3. wait   | 8. mail  |
| 4. weight | 9. scent |
| 5. two    | 10. sent |

## Plurals [page 21]

Add "s" or "es" to make the words plural.

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. monitors | 5. babies   |
| 2. ways     | 6. switches |
| 3. boxes    | 7. brushes  |
| 4. crashes  | 8. parties  |

## Crossword [page 23]



## Nouns [page 28]

Underline the nouns.

- My hair grows very fast.
- He is a carpenter.
- Please park your car in the garage.
- I felt delighted when I passed the test.
- She ate her breakfast quickly.

## Pronouns [page 29]

Underline the pronouns.

- They go swimming every Saturday.
- The puppy ate it.
- The politician annoyed me.
- They were very satisfied with the meal.
- We stayed in it for a week.

Fill the gaps with a suitable pronoun.

[Please note: These are just examples, other pronouns may fit in.]

- I enjoyed my holiday but **yours** sounded better.
- The girl listens to her mother because she likes **her**.
- Is that child **yours**?
- Don't forget to bring **them**.
- Vegetables are good for you so you should eat **them**.

## Adjectives [page 30]

Underline the adjectives.

- Several old folk caught an awful flu.
- The baby slept soundly for the first night.
- You should eat some healthy food each day.
- The fast river flowed through the green countryside.
- The young girl stayed out late last night.

Use the words in the box to fill in the gaps.

- |            |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. careful | 2. showery | 3. thirsty |
| 4. anxious | 5. foolish |            |

Fill the gaps with suitable adjectives.

[Please note: These are just examples, other adjectives may fit in.]

- Some people think that Cork is the **best** city in Ireland.
- She bought a **beautiful** present.
- The **rainy** weather spoiled a **great** trip.
- Mary scored **two** goals in the **final** minute.
- Did that **awful** book win the **big** award?

# Answers



## Verbs [page 31]

**Underline the verbs.**

1. Sean jumped out of the plane.
2. The twins will start school next year.
3. She plans a holiday every year.
4. The bank sent a statement last week.
5. I broke my leg on Tuesday.

**Fill the gaps with suitable verbs.**

[Please note: These are just examples, other verbs may fit in.]

1. His nephew **bought** a new car.
2. The letter was **sent** by express post.
3. I **heard** the robin singing this morning.
4. The garda **scanned** the area for clues to the crime.
5. **Open** the car boot and put the shopping in there.

## Adverbs [page 32]

**Underline the adverbs in the following sentences.**

1. She sang sweetly.
2. They **seldom** meet anymore.
3. The baby slept very badly.
4. Olive was very hungry after her swim.
5. I carefully opened the package.

**Fill the gaps with suitable adverbs.**

[Please note: These are just examples, other adverbs may fit in.]

1. They arrived **early** to the party.
2. He spoke **angrily** to the canvasser at the door.
3. They lived **peacefully** in a big old farmhouse.
4. She danced **happily** with her partner.
5. The passengers waited **patiently** in line to get on the train.

## Conjunctions [page 33]

**Write a sentence using the following conjunctions.**

[Please note: There are many sentences you could make with the words. These are just examples.]

1. I had porridge for breakfast **although** I usually have cornflakes.
2. She got the bus **because** her car broke down.
3. Please ring us **before** you make the booking.
4. It is a long time **since** I saw him.
5. Peter will get the 5 o'clock train **unless** he is delayed.

**Use the conjunctions to fill in the gaps.**

1. until
2. when
3. but
4. if
5. as

## Prepositions [page 34]

**Use the prepositions to fill in the gaps.**

1. off
2. across
3. during
4. with
5. through

**Fill each gap with a suitable preposition.**

1. Martina moved the sofa **under** the window.
2. The girl divided the winnings **between** the family.
3. The bicycle crashed **into** the Luas.
4. I received a letter **from** my uncle.
5. The people walked **over** the bridge.

**Put the following prepositions into sentences.**

[Please note: There are many sentences you could make with the words. These are just examples.]

1. I walked **around** the park.
2. Mary lives **beside** the shops.
3. We live **in** a very old cottage.
4. He works **near** the train station.
5. Please get **off** in the city centre.

# Answers

## Interjections [page 35]

Use the interjections to fill in the gaps.

1. Yum
2. Hurry
3. Oh my gosh
4. Humph
5. No

## Reading an article [page 37 and 38]

### Nouns - common

book	stress	electronic
weekend	clubs	devices
devices	format	interruption
brain	people	return
armchair	café	habits
time	drink	years
screen	mobile	smart phones
idea	phones	social media
pages	chairs	benefits
art form	silence	attention
game	hour	spans
claims	point	
town	literature	

### Nouns - proper

Notting Hill  
Wellington, New Zealand

### Adjectives

slow	dying	cozy
comfy	new	pinging
good	same	focused

### Verbs

unplug	reading	list
open	popping	improving
try	follow	concentrate
switch off	arrive	reducing
switch on	shut off	deepening
grab	sink	think
curl	isn't	listen
lose	talk	empathise
read	get away	did
is	promotes	leave
leafing	started	
benefits	eating	

## Adverbs

why	up	on
all over	off	many
not	without	

## Sentences [page 41]

Put a ✓ next to the lines that are sentences and X against those that are not.

1. John sent a picture to his friend. ✓
2. I went to the town and I bought X
3. Mary Jones X
4. Can I have the camera? ✓
5. I saw a picture in the paper. ✓
6. It's raining here because X

### Complete each sentence.

I went to America on my holidays **and I really enjoyed it.**

I have learned to use a computer so **I can now book my own tickets.**

I had a bad headache **so I left work early.**

I went to a film last night but **I did not enjoy it.**  
You always put a full stop **at the end of a sentence.**

### Finish the following sentences.

[Please note: There are many sentences you could make with the words. These are just examples.]

1. My camera is very **old.**
2. What time can you **pick me up tomorrow?**
3. Computers are **great when you know how to use them!**
4. How much is the **fare to town?**
5. I need to buy a digital camera because **I'm going on holiday and would love to take good pictures.**



## Using capital letters [page 42]

### GAA Senior Hurling Final 2014

Kilkenny and Tipperary played an incredible draw in this year's All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final at Croke Park. The score was Kilkenny 3-22 to Tipperary 1-28. Two weeks later Kilkenny beat Tipperary by 2-17 to 2-14 in a replay on Saturday 27 September at Croke Park.

### Cycling Capers

I never liked to cycle and Kate knew it. She asked me how I was going to get to school without a lift from Mr. Turner next door. "If I were you I would get on the bike", she sniggered. The last time I had cycled with my best friend, Tom, I had landed at the doorstep of Doctor Smith.

## Punctuation marks [page 43]

### Mark in the full stops, question marks, exclamation marks and capital letters.

The kitchen door opened. Tom strode into the room. He sat down on the chair and stretched his legs out in front of him.

"What's for tea?" he asked

Maggie turned to look at her twenty-year-old son. He was glancing through the paper, ignoring her. She stirred the pot on the hob.

"Curry," she said.

He looked up from the paper. "What sort?"

"Chicken curry."

"With fruit?"

"Yes."

"Good," said Tom in satisfaction. "I'm starving."

## Comma [page 44]

### Mark the punctuation.

John bought the paper and read all the ads for flats. As soon as he saw one that looked nice, he went there immediately, even though the ad said after six o'clock. He knew if the flat was a good one he would probably find a queue of people all down the street. Finding a good flat in Dublin at a good price was like finding a needle in a haystack.

## Inverted commas or quotation marks [page 44]

### Mark the inverted commas in the following sentences.

1. "Please open the window," she said. "It's very hot."
2. "Jake isn't available today," he explained. "Can you come back tomorrow?"
3. "Yes," said Maud. "I am free."
4. "Help!" she cried. "Stop that man!"
5. "Will we go to the film at 6 pm?" he asked.

## Apostrophe [page 45 and 46]

### Mark in the apostrophe.

1. Jane's hair is very dark.
2. He found Tom's book on the floor.
3. The babies' clothes were ...
4. I think my friend's writing is very neat.
5. She read Tony's work ...
6. Mr. Murphy's house is ...
7. Patrick washed the boys' football jerseys yesterday.
8. His mother's cooking is excellent.
9. The man's legs were tired after the marathon.
10. The ship's hooter sounded.

### Rewrite these sentences using an apostrophe.

1. Jess's husband died.
2. He listened to the choir's singing.
3. Tom had seven days' work.
4. The clock's hands moved.

### Rewrite these sentences using the apostrophe.

1. Don't go.
2. I can't drive.
3. He didn't do it.
4. We haven't got a new car.
5. They're in bed.

# Answers

## Colon [page 47]

### Insert the colon.

1. This is what she said: "Come on Ireland!"
2. Never forget: think before you speak.
3. This house has everything I need: two bedrooms, a backyard and a garage.
4. Here are three cities that begin with C: Copenhagen, Cairo and Cork.

## Semi-colon [page 47]

### Mark the semi-colon.

1. She got the train into the city after work; the shops were open late.
2. He got a bargain; it was in the sale.
3. Her car was old; the wipers don't work.
4. The rain lasted all day; the clothes didn't dry.
5. I have finished the main course; now I have to make dessert.
6. We made too many mistakes; we lost the game.
7. You should stop eating so much food; you'll burst.
8. Mary loves the sofa; it's very comfortable.

## Other symbols [page 48]

### Mark the brackets.

1. She got a nice bonus (€200).
2. James (Ann's boyfriend) bought the tickets.
3. He was an active member of the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association).

### Mark the brackets or dashes.

1. She painted the room yellow – everyone hates it.
2. He packed his lunch – sandwich, apple and drink.
3. The playground was cold and wet – it was deserted.

### Rewrite the following sentences with correct punctuation.

1. I hope you pass the driving test.
2. Are you both going away for your holidays?
3. She had one wish: to win the lotto.
4. "Please don't make a mess," said his mother.

# How to improve your literacy and numeracy



If you would like to brush up on your skills in reading, writing, numeracy or everyday communication technology, you can do that through:

- NALA's Distance Learning Service, and
- the Adult Literacy Services in your local Education and Training Board.

## NALA Distance Learning Service

You can study online by yourself or work with a tutor over the phone. Or you can do a combination of these to suit your lifestyle. We have designed the service so you can decide what, where and when you want to learn.

Call our friendly operators on our freephone support line at **1800 20 20 65** for further information. We are open Monday to Friday, from 9.30 am to 5 pm. We will talk you through all your learning options in complete confidence. We can put you in touch with one of our trained adult literacy tutors who will work with you over the telephone, through the post or on the internet. The distance learning service is free. We can also put you in contact with your local Adult Literacy Service.

## Adult Literacy Services

There are over 100 Adult Literacy Services throughout the country delivered through the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Adults can attend a local centre to work with trained tutors on a one to one basis or in small groups. You can attend classes for between two and six hours per week. The service is free and confidential. The local Adult Literacy Organiser will meet you and find a suitable tutor for you. There are currently about 55,000 adults learning in literacy centres around the country with 3,700 trained adult literacy tutors.

For information on Adult Literacy Services in or near your area contact the NALA freephone support line on **1800 20 20 65** or check out the **NALA website** at [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

## Awards

If you are learning with the NALA Distance Learning Service and or Adult Literacy Services, you can choose to work towards a certificate. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the national awarding body for further education and training in Ireland. They make awards at different levels.

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# NALA Membership Form



Please give your name address and contact details

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2. Address
3. Telephone number
4. Email address

## Where did you hear about NALA?

Event	<input type="checkbox"/>	Print	<input type="checkbox"/>
Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tick the box for type of membership

<b>Individual membership</b> €25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend one of our conferences free – worth €30.</li><li>• Access our online bookstore.</li><li>• Receive our monthly e-zine, annual report and 'Literacy Matters' magazine.</li><li>• Strengthen our organisation.</li><li>• Vote at our AGM.</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Free membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive our monthly e-zine by email.</li><li>• Vote at our AGM.</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## To apply for membership

1. Fill in the form.
2. Tick the box for type of membership.
3. If you applying for individual membership, tick how you will pay below.
4. Send the form to:  
Membership  
National Adult Literacy Agency  
Sandford Lodge  
Sandford Close  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6

## How to pay as individual member

1. I have included a cheque here with this form, for the amount of €\_\_\_\_\_ paid to “NALA Ltd”.
2. I have filled out this form and paid online at [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie) using a credit card.
3. I want NALA to send me an invoice before I pay.



National Adult Literacy Agency  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

**Thank you very much for your support.**





**National Adult Literacy Agency**  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

**National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)**

Sandford Lodge

Sandford Close

Ranelagh

Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 412 7900

Freephone support line: 1800 20 20 65

Email: [info@nala.ie](mailto:info@nala.ie)

Websites: [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

Literacy learning websites:

[www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie)

[www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie)

Plain English website: [www.simplyput.ie](http://www.simplyput.ie)

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