



Thirsk Community Primary School



Sentence Level Approach

A strong grasp of sentence construction is fundamental to effective writing. Explicit sentence-level instruction is the foundation on which all successful composition is built. When pupils can confidently construct, expand, and manipulate sentences, they gain the control needed to express ideas clearly and purposefully.

Sentence-Level Teaching: Implementation and Progression

- **Secure and revisit foundations:** Regularly revisit previous years' sentence focuses to ensure fluency, accuracy, and confidence before introducing more complex constructions. Secure earlier learning is essential for progression.
- **Progressive sequence:** Move from simple, single-clause sentences (Reception/Year 1) to varied, multi-clause constructions (Years 5–6), ensuring each stage builds on the last.
- **Talk before writing:** Use oral and visual activities to explore and manipulate sentence parts before writing. Build understanding through modelling, discussion, and shared construction.
- **Gradual release model:** Sequence lessons from modelled examples to shared construction, then independent writing.
- **Oral rehearsal and sentence combining:** Incorporate oral rehearsal to reduce cognitive load and strengthen grammatical awareness. Use sentence-combining tasks to deepen understanding of structure.
- **Use of model texts:** Show how different sentence types serve distinct purposes—e.g. action, reflection, persuasion—and discuss how sentence choices affect clarity, cohesion, and reader effect.
- **Regular editing and reflection:** Embed sentence-level editing: pupils revisit their sentences, vary openings, add detail, and check cohesion. Encourage metacognitive reflection on how and why a sentence works.
- **Continuous reinforcement:** Revisit and practise earlier sentence skills—even in upper KS2—through activities such as identifying fragments, correcting sentence boundaries, and discussing punctuation choices.
- **Link to writing outcomes:** Ensure sentence-level teaching directly supports composition, clarity, and authorial intent.

Year Group	Grammar and Punctuation Focus	Example Sentences	Suggested Classroom Activities (from Appendix D approaches)
Reception	Early Learning Goal: Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others. Focus: • Understand a sentence has a <i>naming part</i> (subject) and a <i>doing part</i> (verb). • Use simple single-clause sentences.	• <i>Jack had magic beans.</i> • <i>Mum was sad.</i>	● Using Pictures: Use image cards showing a character and an action (e.g. Jack + climbing). Pupils describe what they see: "Jack climbs." ● Using Sentence Fragments: Give pupils subject and verb cards to join (e.g. <i>Jack / climbed the beanstalk</i>). ● Oral rehearsal: Pupils repeat full sentences aloud before writing.
Year 1	Sentences: • How words combine to make sentences. • Joining words/clauses with <i>and</i>. Punctuation: • Spaces between words. • Capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks. • Capitals for names and <i>I</i>.	• <i>Jack went to the market.</i> • <i>He saw a giant and a pot of gold.</i>	● Using Sentence Fragments: Match subjects and verbs to create complete sentences. ● Using Pictures: Sequence images to create simple story sentences. ● Correcting Sentence Structure: Give incomplete or unpunctuated examples (e.g. <i>he saw a giant</i>) and ask pupils to correct them. ● Sentence Type Practice: Identify and write statements, questions, and exclamations. ● Oral construction: build sentences aloud using <i>and</i>.
Year 2	Sentences: • Subordination (when, if, that, because) and coordination (or, and, but). • Expanded noun phrases for description/specification. • Sentence functions: statement, question, exclamation, command.	• <i>Jack's mother told him to sell the cow because they needed money.</i> • <i>Why did Jack climb the beanstalk?</i> • <i>Climb the beanstalk!</i>	● Extending Sentences Using Conjunctions: Start with <i>Jack climbed the beanstalk...</i> and complete using <i>because, but, so, when</i>. ● Correcting Sentence Structure: Edit examples missing punctuation or subjects/verbs.

	Punctuation: • Capitals, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks. • Commas in lists. • Apostrophes for contractions and singular possession.		● Sentence Combining: Join two short sentences using <i>and/because/but</i>. ● Sentence Type Sorting: Categorise sentences as statements, questions, exclamations, or commands. ● Noun-phrase expansion: describe “the cow” with adjectives.
Year 3	Sentence: • Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositions. Punctuation: • Introduce inverted commas for direct speech.	• <i>Jack climbed the beanstalk once his mother had gone to bed.</i> • <i>Finally, Jack arrived at the castle on top of the clouds.</i> • <i>Carefully, Jack climbed the beanstalk so that he could satisfy his curiosity.</i>	● Sentence Combining: Merge short ideas into complex ones using conjunctions (<i>when, while, because</i>). ● Adding Information Using Adverbials: Practise answering <i>when, where, how</i> questions: <i>When did Jack climb? How did he climb?</i> ● Using Pictures: Write sentences with adverbials of time and place based on a sequence of story images. ● Speech Reconstruction: Turn simple spoken phrases into punctuated direct speech.
Year 4	Sentence: • Expanded noun phrases (with adjectives, nouns, prepositional phrases). • Fronted adverbials. Punctuation: • Inverted commas for speech. • Apostrophes for plural possession. • Commas after fronted adverbials.	• <i>After saying farewell to his mother, Jack carefully climbed the gigantic beanstalk until he reached the magnificent castle in the clouds.</i> • <i>When he eventually reached the top of the gigantic beanstalk, Jack was exhausted.</i>	● Adding Information Using Adverbials: Create fronted adverbials for <i>when, where, and how</i> actions happen. Try different approaches. ● Sentence Combining: Join related clauses with a range of conjunctions. ● Correcting Sentence Structure: Spot and fix missing commas or incomplete clauses. ● Using Sentence Fragments: Expand fragments into full, detailed sentences using noun phrases and adverbials.

			● Sentence shuffle: rearrange clauses to explore comma use and emphasis.
Year 5	Sentence: • Relative clauses (who, which, where, when, whose, that, or omitted). • Degrees of possibility using adverbs/modal verbs. Punctuation: • Brackets, dashes, or commas for parenthesis. • Commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity.	• <i>Through the small crack in the castle door, Jack could see the enormous giant who was asleep in the kitchen.</i> • <i>A magnificent castle, which had a huge front door, stood on top of the clouds</i> • <i>Tiptoeing past the sleeping giant, Jack wondered whether he could make it out alive.</i>	● Sentence Combining: Merge shorter sentences using relative clauses to add detail. ● Extending with Conjunctions: Link ideas with <i>although, unless, until</i>. ● Adding Information Using Adverbials: Extend sentences to show time, place, and manner. ● Correcting Incorrect Sentence Structure: Edit sentences for punctuation and clarity. ● Using Sentence Fragments: Add relative clauses to complete meaning.
Year 6	Sentence: • Passive voice to alter focus. • Contrast formal/informal structures; use subjunctive form. Punctuation: • Semi-colons, colons, dashes between clauses. • Colons and semi-colons in lists. • Bullet-point punctuation. • Hyphens to avoid ambiguity.	• <i>Jack was chased down the gigantic beanstalk by the enraged giant.</i> • <i>The enraged giant chased Jack down the gigantic beanstalk.</i> • <i>If I were Jack, I would never climb the beanstalk again.</i>	● Using the Passive Voice: Rewrite active sentences as passive and discuss changes in focus. ● Sentence Combining: Use colons, semi-colons, and dashes to link ideas. ● Correcting Sentence Structure: Edit errors in tense, subject-verb agreement, or punctuation. ● Formality Transformation: Rewrite informal sentences formally (e.g. <i>He was super tired</i> → <i>He was extremely fatigued</i>). ● Adding Information Using Adverbials: Use multi-clause sentences to improve cohesion.