

Year 2 Punctuation:

A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to year 2 punctuation can help you support your child's learning at home. The subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing you with a simple guide to follow when learning about punctuation, either as part of homework, or if you decide to give your child some extra support. In this guide, you will find a step that matches your child's level of understanding as well as some ideas for where to go next.

Within **this area of the website**, you will find a selection of resources intended to help your child learn about each step of this guide. Each step also contains a keyword or phrase that you can use to search the Twinkl site for more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together.



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. The contents of this resource are for general, informational purposes only. This guide is intended to offer parents general guidance on what subject areas tend to be covered in their child's year group and where they could support their children at home. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. There are some subject areas that we have intentionally not covered due to the nature of how they are taught or because a trained professional needs to teach these areas. We try to ensure that the information in our resources is correct but every school teaches the national curriculum in its own way. If you would like further guidance or are unsure in any way, we recommend that you speak to your child's teacher or another suitably qualified professional.

Punctuation

What Punctuation Is Taught in Year 2?

In year 2, your child will continue to practise the rules for grammar and punctuation taught in year 1, which includes:

- the use of **capital letters** for the start of sentences, proper nouns and the pronoun 'I';
- the correct use of **full stops**, **question marks** and **exclamation marks** at the end of sentences.

In addition to this, children in year 2 are taught to:

- use **commas** in lists;
- use **apostrophes** for contracted words (e.g. I will = I'll);
- and **apostrophes** for possession (e.g. Will's money).

This guide will help you support your child with understanding apostrophes and commas at home.

Commas in Lists

Commas are used to separate items in a list and are also used to mark divisions between clauses and phrases within a sentence. They are a short pause in the sentence when reading but aren't as long as a full stop. In year 2, children are taught to use commas to separate items in a list and to avoid using and repeatedly. For example:

The superhero wore a cape and gloves and a mask and boots.

The superhero wore a cape, gloves, a mask and boots.

In the second example, commas have replaced the word and in the list. Between the last two items in a list, the word and is always used.

Apostrophes for Contraction

In English, an apostrophe (') can be used to show possession or for contraction. A contraction is when two words have been shortened and one or more letters have been removed. For example:

they've is the contraction of **they have**

In this example, **they have** has been contracted to make one word. The apostrophe demonstrates where letters have been removed.

Here are some further examples of words that have been contracted to make one word:

shouldn't = should not

they're = they are

aren't = are not

they'll = they will

wouldn't = would not

they've = they have

couldn't = could not

that's = that is

doesn't = does not

can't = cannot

haven't = have not

we're = we are

Apostrophes for Possession

In English, apostrophes are used to show possession – when one thing belongs to another. For example:

The queen's shoes.

However, the position of the apostrophe (and an additional s) can vary depending on whether the noun is singular or plural and whether the noun ends in an s. In year 2, children are taught to use apostrophes for possession with singular nouns.

Apostrophes with Singular Nouns

To show possession, an apostrophe is usually placed after the final letter of a word followed by an s to show ownership. For example:

The pencil belonging to Sarah was on the table.

Is written:

Sarah's pencil was on the table.

Nouns Ending in 's'

If the singular noun ends in s (e.g. James), the apostrophe is placed after the s but another s isn't added. For example:

The book belonging to James = James' book

Or

The coat belonging to Agnes = Agnes' coat

As well as using the resources in this category and the keyword searches to help your child with commas and apostrophes, a few ideas for games and activities to help your child learn how to use year 2 punctuation at home, both in their spoken language and in their writing, are outlined below.

Read, Read, Read!

Sharing books together is the most powerful way for children to learn about language, spelling, grammar and punctuation. As you read together, identify examples of where commas have been used in lists and discuss this with your child. Also, look for examples of apostrophes being used and what they are used for (contraction or possession).

Play a Memory Game

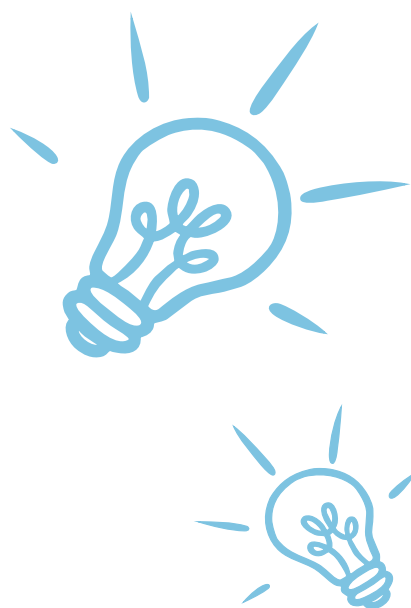
Play a shopping memory game to help practise using commas. Start by saying aloud, 'I went to the shop and bought ...' Then say an item. As you and your child take it in turns, add another item that was bought from the shop each time while saying the previous items. As you say it, say 'comma' between each item in the list to identify where it should be placed. For example, 'I went to the shop and bought a cake comma a pie comma a doll comma a drum and a bike.'

Matching Contractions

Play this **matching cards game** which involves matching contracted words to their expanded forms. For example, 'I'll would be matched to I will or he's would be matched to he is.

Contraction Quiz

Play a contraction quiz. Take it in turns to say a contraction. The other player has to guess which words have been contracted to make the contraction. You could also play this game the opposite way – say the two words that make a contraction and the other player has to say the contracted form.



Steps to Using Commas in Lists

Step 1

Identifying Commas and Using Them in Lists

At school, teachers will first show children what a comma looks like and demonstrate where it goes when writing (i.e. on the line, between words). They will also explain that this indicates to the reader to take a short pause when reading (but not as long as a full stop). At home, check your child knows what a comma is and discuss what is used for. Begin by showing an example sentence with a list of items, all linked with the word and. For example:

I would like a book and a bike and a doll and a pencil case and a dog for Christmas.

In the sentence above, you begin to get a little out of breath as there aren't any pauses for you to take a breath. By replacing 'and' with a comma, this sentence will allow the reader to take a little breath and will make the sentences sound better. However, 'and' must always be placed between the last two items in a list. For example:

I would like a book, a bike, a doll, a pencil case and a dog for Christmas.

To help your child practise using commas in lists at home, you could try these challenge cards.

Step 2

Using Commas Independently for Lists

Once children have grasped the concept of using commas in lists, they are encouraged to think of their own sentences which contain commas in their descriptive writing. They will also be shown how to use commas to separate phrases such as:

The giant had menacing eyes, a crooked nose and sharp teeth.

Try this activity booklet to help your child with writing their own sentences with commas.



Steps to Using Apostrophes for Contractions

Step 1

Identifying and Writing Contracted Words

In year 2, children are introduced to an apostrophe (') and where it is positioned in writing (i.e. high above the line, between letters – but never above a letter). When beginning to use apostrophes for contraction, children are usually taught common contractions and the words which have been contracted to make the contraction. These are usually shown side-by-side so children can see both the examples. Try displaying these posters at home to help your child recognise which words make common contractions.

Writing Contracted Words

Once children have become familiar with how apostrophes are used for contraction and have learnt some contracted words, they will be taught how to contract words themselves. At school, teachers will demonstrate two words and show how they can be contracted, for example, I am becomes I'm. These worksheets can help you support your child to practise this process at home.

Step 2



Apostrophes for Possession

Step 1

Knowing When to Use an Apostrophe for Possession

In addition to learning that an apostrophe can be used for contraction, children in year 2 will also learn that apostrophes can be used to show possession. At home, you could complete a possessive apostrophe hunt with your child. Look through some of their favourite books and work together to find examples of possessive apostrophes being used.

Once children have seen and experienced examples of apostrophes being used for possession, the next stage is to start writing their own examples of apostrophes used for possession. At school, teachers will model doing this by writing examples and explaining that you place an apostrophe and s at the end of a noun to show possession ('s). They will use examples where they swap the sentence around to show possession, for example:

the hat belonging to Sid = Sid's hat

the car belonging to the police officer = the police officer's car

This PowerPoint contains a wide selection of interactive games and fun activities to help children feel confident and excited about this area of their grammar learning.

Step 2

Using Apostrophes to Show Possession with Nouns Ending in 's'

After practising using apostrophes for possession, children will explore what to do with nouns that end in s. For example:

the cat belonging to James = James' cat

When using apostrophes for possession with nouns ending in s, you simply place the apostrophe after the s.



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