In this section, you will find lots of useful information on the parts of speech, syntax and punctuation, and how we use them. You can use it for quick reference or work through the information and activities as a revision aid.

**Colour-coding parts of speech**

An easy way to understand syntax is to colour-code the different parts of speech. That will also help you understand how writers choose words and use language to achieve specific effects.

Use different colours to code nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

Here are some suggestions and ways to remember the colours:

**Nouns** in red. Everything we see, feel, taste, touch or hear is a noun.

**Verbs** in blue. Verbs "move" just like water, which is blue.

**Adjectives** in yellow. Adjectives describe, changing the way we see or understand things. Similarly, yellow paint changes other colours.

**Adverbs** in green. Adverbs describe (yellow) verbs (blue). Mixing yellow and blue paint makes green.

Now test out your colour-coding, as well as your knowledge of the parts of speech.

Copy this grid. Decide which word in each sentence is the noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Colour the words according to the colour code above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharp</th>
<th>knives</th>
<th>cul</th>
<th>smoothly.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Careful</td>
<td>students</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>neatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkeys</td>
<td>climb</td>
<td>trees</td>
<td>rapidly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>lessons</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>quickly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nouns**

Nouns are the words for people, places and things. Proper nouns name a particular person, place or thing and always start with a capital letter; for example:

- The Taj Mahal, Charing Cross, Cleopatra, Hercules and Peter Rabbit are red-letter names.

All other nouns are called common nouns, as in:

- A clown's nose is red. Fingernails and poppies are red.

We can see most of the things represented by nouns, but not all. The names of some things like emotions and qualities are called abstract nouns, such as:

- Love, hate and anger are red.

**Compound nouns**

When two nouns are used together, they form a compound noun. The first noun usually functions like an adjective (see Adjectives on page 284), for example:

- pop music, class teacher, reading book.

Some compound nouns are spelled as one word, for example:

- foot+ball, tea+pot, fire+man.

Some are hyphenated, for example:

- taxi-driver, can-opener, mouse-trap.

Some are two separate words, for example:

- jewel thief, door knob, horror film.

Forming the plural for compound nouns can be awkward. The plural of a common (single word) noun is usually made by adding an -s or -es; changing a y to an i and adding -es or changing an f to a v and adding -es, for example:

- toy – toys, box – boxes, baby – babies, hoof – hooves

**REMINDER – parts of speech**

Words in English fall into eight categories. Below are some examples. Be aware that some words can fall into more than one category depending on their use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Conjunction</th>
<th>Exclamation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>run</td>
<td>race</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>quick</td>
<td>quickly</td>
<td>against</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>Stop!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>walk</td>
<td>walk</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>slowly</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Hi!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>interestingly</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>Wow!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write one or two sentences about where you are now. Colour-code all the nouns red.

Start like this: I am sitting in a room with …

1. What are the plurals for the following?
   a. toy box
   b. baby-sitter
   c. rooftop

2. Make the following compound nouns into plurals.
   a. jewel thief
   b. book shelf
   c. bus driver
   d. film actress
   e. grand piano