

What is Rainbow Grammar?

Rainbow Grammar is like Lego for sentences. Children learn how to build sentences from coloured sentence blocks that can be combined to write lots of different kinds of sentences. It is a fun, practical and colourful way of teaching children how to accurately build a wide range of sentences. By using Rainbow Grammar children learn:

- how the different building blocks of sentences work
- what the different types of words and parts of sentences are called
- how to join the sentence building blocks to create longer sentences
- how to manipulate sentences to create different patterns and effects
- how to punctuate their sentences accurately.

Why are they learning this?

Grammar is a big part of the national curriculum for English. Schools must teach children how sentences work in more detail than they did before. They also have to teach children the names of all the different words and parts of sentences. Children are also tested on their understanding of grammar and punctuation. The goal of Rainbow Grammar is to help children to improve their writing, but it helps them to do well in the tests too!

How does it work?

In Key stage 1 and 2, the children learn the 8 colours and how they help to improve sentences, starting with the simplest sentences: **traffic light sentences**. Children start by learning how very simple sentences work. They learn that a writer needs to communicate three things in a sentence:

- who or what the sentence is about
- what it did or what happened
- when to stop

So we might write this sentence.

The monster screamed.

Who or what is the sentence about? *The monster*

What did it do? *screamed*

How did the sentence stop? *.*

From this starting point, children then learn how to improve these parts. For example:

The cute, furry monster screamed angrily all night.

They also learn how to join other colours to the basic traffic light sentence. We might use a (dark blue) adverbial clause, for example.

The cute, furry monster screamed angrily all night because he wanted his teddy.

By Year 6, they should be able to build some very creative sentences by combining all of the colours in lots of ways.

All night long, the cute, furry monster, who desperately wanted his teddy, screamed angrily, waking up everyone in the house.

	Year	Examples	Description	Examples (in bold)
Noun	1	Person: doctor, girl, Sam, Mr. Smith Place: school, city, forest, London, Asia Thing: desk, coffee, tree, Mars Bar Idea: love, education, peace, time	A noun names a person, place or thing (or idea from Year 5). A proper noun begins with a capital letter	The monster chased the <u>children</u> .
Verb	1	run, sing, dance, jump, cry, think, whisper, hurry, play, consider, yell, dream, cook, slice, finish, create, open	A verb describes an action. Every sentence has at least one verb.	The monster chased the children.
Adjective	1	red, old, new, huge, tiny, angry, wise, cruel, wooden, local, bright, silky, rough, beautiful, hideous, courageous, icy, reflective, delicious	An adjective describes a noun.	The huge monster chased the frightened children.
Adverb	2	how: quietly, slowly, softly, safely, hurriedly, when: now, yesterday, tomorrow, then, soon where: here, there, inside, outside, near, far	An adverb describes a verb. In Year 2 they describe how and end in -ly. In Key Stage 2 they describe when and where too.	The monster quickly chased the children.
Preposition	3	in, on, under, inside, between, during, at, below, beneath, above, over, along, around, through	A preposition goes before a noun to describe where or when	The monster chased the children around the room.
Pronoun	3	me, we, you, him, her, it, they, us, them	A pronoun replaces a noun.	The children ran. They were terrified.
Conjunction	3	and, so, but, or, yet although, because, while, when, whenever, since, once, after, before, until	A conjunction is a joining word. It joins two ideas in a sentence	The children ran away because they were terrified, but the monster caught them.
Determiner	4	a, the, an, one, two, three, first, second, third, last my, your, his, her, our, their this, that, these, those,	A determiner introduces a noun.	Every monster has six fingers on each hand.

Subordinate Clause		Main Clause	
Relative Clause	5	The monster, who was afraid of the dark , screamed loudly in the attic. The children hid under the covers, where they trembled with fear .	A relative clause describes the noun that comes before it. It begins with a relative pronoun (<i>that, when, where, which, who or whose</i>).
Non-Finite Clause	3	Waking everyone up , the monster screamed loudly in the attic. The children cried all night, terrified by the strange noises .	A non-finite clause adds a second idea to a sentence. It begins with an -ed (<i>confused, followed</i>) or -ing (<i>smiling, dancing</i>) verb.
Adverbial Clause	2	The monster screamed loudly in the attic because he wanted his teddy . Whenever they heard a noise , the children cried.	An adverbial clause adds a second idea to a sentence. begins with a joining word called a subordinating conjunction such as <i>because, if and when</i>
Appositive	4	The monster, a terrifying beast with sharp teeth, screamed loudly.	An appositive is a phrase which expands upon or explains a noun that comes immediately before.
Speech	1	"I want my Teddy!" the monster screamed loudly in the attic. "The monster is coming to get us," the children wailed.	Speech tells us when someone is speaking. It is surrounded by speech marks, which are also called inverted commas
Linking Adverb	3	Soon , the monster would gobble them up. However , the children planned their escape.	A linking adverb links a sentence to the one that came before (e.g. <i>furthermore, however, meanwhile, nevertheless</i>) and are common in non-fiction writing.
Stop	1	The monster screamed loudly! The children cried all night.	A stop ends a sentence. The most common way of stopping is with a full stop, but question marks and exclamations are useful too.
Fronted Adverbial	2	Loudly , the monster screamed in the attic. In their beds , the children cried.	A fronted adverbial tells us <i>when, where or how</i> something happened and that has been moved from the predicate and placed at the start of the sentence.
Predicate	1	The monster screamed loudly in the attic . The children cried in their beds .	A predicate tells us what the subject did. It has a verb but might also have adverbials which tell us <i>when, where or how</i> things happened.
Subject	1	The monster screamed loudly in the attic. The children cried all night.	A subject tells us <i>who or what</i> the sentence is about.
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