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KEY STAGE
1

YEARS
1-2

National curriculum assessments

Key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test framework (draft)

National curriculum tests from 2016

For test developers



Standards
& Testing
Agency

2016

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2016 Key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling framework:
national curriculum tests from 2016

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1. Overview

This test framework is based on the national curriculum programme of study (2014) for English, introduced for teaching in schools from September 2014 and first assessed in summer term 2016. The framework specifies the purpose, format, content and cognitive demand of the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests; it is not designed to be used to guide teaching and learning or to inform statutory teacher assessment.

This document has been produced to aid the test development process and is therefore draft at this stage. Although any changes are expected to be minor, the document will be updated as required following evidence from trialling the test. The document will be finalised and published on the Department for Education's (DfE's) website in advance of full sample test materials being released for schools in summer 2015.

1.1 Purposes of statutory assessment

The main purpose of statutory assessment is to:

- ascertain what children have achieved in relation to the areas of the national curriculum (2014) describing grammar, punctuation and spelling.

The main intended uses of the outcomes as set out in the Bew Report¹ and the Government's consultation document on primary assessment and accountability are to:

- hold schools accountable for the attainment and progress made by their children
- inform parents and schools about the performance of individual children
- enable benchmarking between schools, as well as monitor performance locally and nationally.

1 'Independent review of key stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability' (2011), Lord Bew. <https://media.education.gov.uk/MediaFiles/C/C/0/%7BCC021195-3870-40B7-AC0B-66004C329F1F%7DIndependent%20review%20of%20KS2%20testing,%20final%20report.pdf>

2. What is a test framework?

The purpose of the test framework is to provide the documentation to guide the development of the tests. The framework is written primarily for those who write test materials and to guide subsequent development and test construction. It is being made available to a wider audience for reasons of openness and transparency; it is not designed to be used to guide teaching and learning or to inform statutory teacher assessment.

Some elements of the statutory curriculum are not possible to assess using the current form of testing; they will need to be assessed by teachers as part of their statutory assessment of the complete national curriculum.

The framework includes those parts of the programme of study as outlined in the national curriculum (2014) that will be covered in the test (the 'content domain'). The cognitive processes associated with the measurement of the construct of grammar, punctuation, language strategies, handwriting and spelling are also detailed in the cognitive domain.

Also included in the test framework is a test specification from which valid, reliable and comparable tests can be constructed each year. This includes specifics about test format, question types, response types and marking as well as a clear test-level reporting strategy.

By providing all of this information in a single document, the test framework answers questions about what the test will cover, and how, in a clear and concise manner. The framework does not provide information on how teachers should teach the national curriculum.

The test development process used by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) embeds within it the generation of validity and reliability evidence through expert review and trialling. Given that the tests will be internally marked by teachers, an additional study to consider the reliability of marking will be undertaken as part of the 'technical pre-test' trial. The test framework does not provide detail of the validity and reliability of individual tests; this will be provided in the test handbook which will be published on the DfE's website following the administration of the test.

The test framework should be used in conjunction with the national curriculum (2014) and the annual 'Assessment and reporting arrangements' (ARA) document.

3. Nature of the test

The key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test forms part of the statutory assessment arrangements for children at the end of key stage 1.

The test contributes to the assessment of children in English and is based on the relevant sections of the national curriculum (2014) statutory programme of study for English at key stage 1. The programmes of study are set out for Spoken language, Reading and Writing. There are two statutory appendices (Appendix 1: Spelling and Appendix 2: Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation). Although the majority of the test content is drawn from the statutory appendices, some areas of content are sampled from across the programme of study for English.

The test will cover the aspects of grammar, punctuation, language strategies, handwriting and spelling from across the key stage 1 English national curriculum that lend themselves to paper-based testing.

The key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test will be internally marked by teachers.

3.1 Population to be assessed

All eligible children who are registered at maintained schools, special schools or academies (including free schools) in England and are at the end of key stage 1 will be required to take the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test, unless they have taken it in the past. Independent schools may choose to participate in the statutory assessment arrangements on a year by year basis.

Some children are exempt from the tests. Further details are in the ARA which can be downloaded from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

3.2 Test format

The English grammar, punctuation and spelling test is comprised of three components, which are presented to children as three separate test papers. The test is administered on paper. The tests are designed to enable children to demonstrate their attainment and as a result are not strictly timed since the ability to work at pace is not part of the assessment. Guidance will be provided to schools to ensure that children are given sufficient time to demonstrate what they understand, know and can do without prolonging the test inappropriately. The table below provides an indication of suggested timings for each component. The total testing time is approximately 55 minutes.

Table 1: Format of the test

Component	Description	Number of papers	Number of marks	Approximate timing of paper
Paper 1: grammar and punctuation: short task	Written task	1	15	20 minutes
Paper 2: grammar, punctuation and vocabulary: questions	2a) Contextualised short answer questions	1	10	Two 10 minute sections, between which a break may be given at the teacher's discretion. Total time = 20 minutes
	2b) Short answer questions		10	
Paper 3: spelling task	Spelling (20 words)	1	10	15 minutes (not strictly timed)
	Total	3	45	Recommended 55 minutes

4. Content domain

The content domain sets out the relevant elements from the national curriculum (2014) programme of study for English at key stage 1 that are assessed in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. The tests will, over time, sample from each area of the content domain.

Although the majority of the test content is drawn from the statutory appendices, some areas of content are sampled from across the programme of study for English. As the English grammar, punctuation and spelling paper assesses across the entire English programme of study, this framework does not list the elements of the programme of study that are not assessed in this test.

The following tables detail content from the national curriculum (2014) that are assessed in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. These are derived from the English programmes of study for Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation; Appendix 1: Spelling and Appendix 2: Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Elements from the curriculum are grouped into content areas (eg: 1 - Grammatical terms / word classes), each of which is made up of subdomains (eg: 1.1 - Nouns, 1.2: Verbs). The elements are also assigned to a numerical referencing system.

For the purposes of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test, the term 'language strategies' refers to those parts of the content domain that relate to words and word-building, such as the use of prefixes and suffixes.

4.1 Paper 1: short task

Explanatory notes

The 'Relevant coverage' column in Table 2 below is quoted directly from the national curriculum (2014) for the English programme of study and statutory appendices.

^T indicates that the statutory appendix to the national curriculum (2014) requires the terminology to be taught, as well as the application of the feature, which may appear elsewhere in the programme of study. The terminology will therefore form part of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test content domain.

The following elements from the key stage 1 programme of study will be assessed through the marks available in the short task (Paper 1).

Table 2: Content domain for Paper 1

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
S1 Sentence structure and sentence grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how words can combine to make sentences • sentences with different forms • expanded noun phrases for description and specification • subordination: <i>when, if, that, because</i> • co-ordination: <i>or, and, but</i> • correct choice and consistent use of present tense and past tense throughout writing • use of the progressive form of verbs in the present and past tense to mark actions in progress
S2 Punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital letters for names, places and days of the week, and for the personal pronoun <i>I</i> • use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences • commas to separate items in a list • apostrophes to mark where letters are missing in spelling and to mark singular possession in nouns
S3 Appropriacy of purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing for different purposes

Table 3: Content domain for handwriting

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
H1 Letter formation	
H1.1 lower-case letters and letter families	begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place [year 1]
H1.2 upper-case letters	form capital letters [year 1]
H1.3 digits	form digits 0–9 [year 1]
H2 Consistency and style	
H2.1 size	form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
H2.2 joined writing	start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters
H2.4 word spacing	use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

4.2 Paper 2: grammar, punctuation and vocabulary questions

Table 4: Content domain for Paper 2

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G1 Grammatical terms / word classes	
G1.1 Nouns	Noun ^T
G1.2 Verbs	Verb ^T
G1.2a Present and past progressive	Use of the progressive form of verbs in present and past tense to mark actions in progress
G1.3 Adjectives	Adjective ^T
G1.6 Adverbs	Adverb ^T Use of <i>-ly</i> in Standard English to turn adjectives into adverbs
G2 Functions of sentences	
G2.1 Statements	Sentences with different forms: statement ^T How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a statement
G2.2 Questions	Sentences with different forms: question ^T How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a question
G2.3 Commands	Sentences with different forms: command ^T How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a command
G2.4 Exclamations	Sentences with different forms: exclamation ^T How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as [an] exclamation

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G3 Combining words, phrases and clauses	
G3.2 Noun phrases for description and specification	Noun phrase ^T Expanded noun phrases for description and specification
G3.3 Subordinating conjunctions	Subordination: <i>when, if, that</i> and <i>because</i>
G3.4 Co-ordinating conjunctions	Joining words and joining clauses Co-ordination: <i>or, and</i> and <i>but</i>
G4 Features of written Standard English	
G4.1 Sentences	How words can combine to make sentences
G4.2 Tense agreement	Tense (past, present) ^T Correct choice and consistent use of present tense ^T and past tense ^T
G4.3 Subject-verb agreement	Singular ^T Plural ^T
G6 Punctuation	
G6.1 Capital letters	Capital letter ^T Capital letters for names, places and days of the week, and for the personal pronoun <i>I</i> Capital letters to demarcate sentences
G6.2 Full stops	Full stop ^T Full stops to demarcate sentences
G6.3 Question marks	Question mark ^T Question marks to demarcate sentences
G6.4 Exclamation marks	Exclamation mark ^T Exclamation marks to demarcate sentences
G6.5 Commas in lists	Comma ^T Commas to separate items in a list
G6.8 Apostrophes	Apostrophes ^T Apostrophes to mark singular possession in nouns Apostrophes to mark contracted forms

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G8 Vocabulary and language strategies	
G8.2 Prefixes	How the prefix <i>un-</i> changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives (negation or undoing)
G8.3 Suffixes	<p>Suffix^T</p> <p>Regular plural noun suffixes: <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> including the effects of these suffixes on the meaning of the noun</p> <p>Suffixes that can be added to verbs where no change is needed to the spelling of the root word</p> <p>Formation of nouns using suffixes such as <i>-ness</i>, <i>-er</i> and by compounding</p> <p>Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as <i>-ful</i>, <i>-less</i></p>

4.3 Paper 3: spelling task

This paper consists of 20 target words. The range of strategies and morphological awareness tested is drawn from the statutory spelling appendix to the national curriculum (2014) programme of study. The test may include the example words and words drawn from the key stage 1 word lists provided as appendices to the national curriculum (2014), but will not be limited to these and is likely to draw on other words that assess the content described below. The appendix to the national curriculum (2014) programme of study should be consulted for definitions of the terms used in Table 5 below.

There is one section of the statutory spelling appendix that will only be assessed in Paper 2: the possessive apostrophe (singular nouns).

Table 5: Content domain for Paper 3

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
S1	The sounds /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/ and /k/ spelt <i>ff</i> , <i>ll</i> , <i>ss</i> , <i>zz</i> and <i>ck</i>
S2	The <i>ŋ</i> sound spelt <i>n</i> before <i>k</i>
S3	<i>-tch</i>
S4	The /v/ sound at the end of words
S5	Adding <i>s</i> and <i>es</i> to words (plural of nouns and the third person singular of verbs)
S6	Adding the endings <i>-ing</i> , <i>-ed</i> and <i>-er</i> to verbs where no change is needed to the root word

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
S7	Adding <i>-er</i> and <i>-est</i> to adjectives where no change is needed to the root word
S8	Vowel digraphs and trigraphs: <i>ai, oi, ay, oy, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e, ar, ee, ea (/i:/), ea (/ɛ/), er (/ɜ:/), er (/ə/), ir, ur, oo (/u:/), oo (/ʊ/), oa, oe, ou, ow (/aʊ/), ow (/əʊ/), ue, ew, ie (/aɪ/), ie (/i:/), igh, or, ore, aw, au, air, ear, ear (/ɛə/), are (/ɛə/)</i>
S9	Words ending in <i>-y (/i:/ or /ɪ/)</i>
S10	New consonant spellings <i>ph</i> and <i>wh</i>
S11	Using <i>k</i> for the <i>/k/</i> sound
S12	Compound words
S13	The days of the week
S14	The <i>/dʒ/</i> sound spelt as <i>ge</i> and <i>dge</i> at the end of words, and sometimes spelt as <i>g</i> elsewhere in words before <i>e, i</i> and <i>y</i>
S15	The <i>/s/</i> sound spelt <i>c</i> before <i>e, i</i> and <i>y</i>
S16	The <i>/n/</i> sound spelt <i>kn</i> and (less often) <i>gn</i> at the beginning of words
S17	The <i>/r/</i> sound spelt <i>wr</i> at the beginning of words
S18	The <i>/l/</i> or <i>/əll/</i> sound spelt <i>-le</i> at the end of words
S19	The <i>/l/</i> or <i>/əll/</i> sound spelt <i>-el</i> at the end of words
S20	The <i>/l/</i> or <i>/əll/</i> sound spelt <i>-al</i> at the end of words
S21	Words ending in <i>-il</i>
S22	The <i>/aɪ/</i> sound spelt <i>-y</i> at the end of words
S23	Adding <i>-es</i> to nouns and verbs ending in <i>-y</i>
S24	Adding <i>-ed, -ing, -er,</i> and <i>-est</i> to a root word ending in <i>-y</i> with a consonant before it
S25	Adding the endings <i>-ing, -ed, -er, -est</i> and <i>-y</i> to words ending in <i>-e</i> with a consonant before it
S26	Adding <i>-ing, -ed, -er, -est</i> and <i>-y</i> to words of one syllable ending in a single consonant letter after a single vowel letter
S27	The <i>/ɔ:/</i> sound spelt <i>a</i> before <i>l</i> and <i>ll</i>

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
S28	The /ʌ/ sound spelt <i>o</i>
S29	The /i:/ sound spelt <i>-ey</i>
S30	The /ɒ/ sound spelt <i>a</i> after <i>w</i> and <i>qu</i>
S31	The /ɜ:/ sound spelt <i>or</i> after <i>w</i>
S32	The /ɔ:/ sound spelt <i>ar</i> after <i>w</i>
S33	The /ɜ/ sound spelt <i>s</i>
S34	The suffixes <i>-ment</i> , <i>-ness</i> , <i>-ful</i> , <i>-less</i> and <i>-ly</i>
S35	Contractions
S36	Words ending in <i>-tion</i>
S37	Homophones and near-homophones
S38	Common exception words

4.4 British English conventions

In spelling, punctuation and grammar, variations exist between British English and conventions used in other English-speaking countries. The test will only credit children for using British English conventions, which will relate in particular to the aspects detailed below.

4.4.1 Grammar and punctuation

Some irregular past tense forms are favoured in British English; in particular, the past participle of 'to get' will be considered creditworthy in the test when formed as *got* rather than *gotten*.

4.4.2 Spelling

Where there is a difference between British English spellings and those found in other varieties of English, it is the British English spelling that is creditworthy. This applies to words such as *colour*, *catalogue* or *theatre*, for which no alternative spellings are given in a standard dictionary of British English, unless these are clearly marked as being an American variant.

There are other words for which alternative spellings are acceptable within British English (eg *organise* / *organize*). These are shown as equal alternatives in a standard dictionary of British English, and are not marked as a variant from any other country. Either spelling of such words is considered creditworthy in the test.

4.4.3 Vocabulary

In order to be creditworthy, vocabulary used in children's responses must be in a standard dictionary of British English. Where there is any difference in meaning between the dictionary definition and that used in other varieties of English or in slang, the dictionary definition will be favoured.

4.5 Further definitions and guidance

4.5.1 Sentences with different forms: questions

For the purposes of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test, a question is required to include one of the following syntactical forms:

- An initial interrogative pronoun (eg *Which is your favourite?*)
- Subject – verb inversion (eg *Is this your favourite?*), or the use of *do/does* if there is no modal or auxiliary verb (eg *Do you like this one?*)
- A correctly-punctuated question tag (eg *This is your favourite, isn't it?*)

A sentence which has the syntax of a statement, but to which a question mark has been added, is not considered to be a creditworthy question form (eg *This is your favourite?*), although it is recognised that these may be used in spoken language.

4.5.2 Spelling of responses within Papers 1 and 2

Spelling is not marked on Paper 1. Correct spelling is not required for the award of the mark for the majority of questions in Paper 2. Any phonetically plausible response that meets the criteria set out in the mark scheme will be considered creditworthy. However, there are some areas of the domain for which correct spelling is required in Paper 2:

- **Contractions** - The full contraction must be correctly spelt and the apostrophe correctly placed for the award of the mark.
- **Prefixes and suffixes** - The whole word (i.e. the root and the prefix and / or suffix) must be spelt correctly for the award of the mark.
- **Plurals** - The full word must be correctly spelt in responses to questions assessing plurals for the award of the mark. The use of an apostrophe in the formation of a plural will prohibit the award of the mark, unless this is a legitimate use to indicate a possessive plural.

4.5.3 The use of the serial comma

The mark will not be awarded if a serial comma is used in a list of simple items, eg

We bought apples, cheese, and milk.

The serial comma is acceptable if it used for the avoidance of ambiguity, eg

My favourite sandwiches are ham, beef and mustard, and tuna.

4.5.4 Accuracy in copied sentences in Paper 2

Where children are required to copy (or 'rewrite') a given sentence, the meaning and key words of the sentence must be preserved. Minor copying errors, such as a change of article, are tolerated. Misspellings are not penalised, unless in plurals, contractions, or words requiring a prefix and / or suffix, where this is the assessment focus of the question.

4.5.5 Capital letters

Where they are required, capital letters must be clear and unambiguous for the award of the mark. Where letters do not have unique capital letter forms, this means that the height of the capital letter will be similar to, or greater than, that of letters with ascenders, and will be clearly greater than the height of letters that do not have ascenders. For example, in the word 'What', the height of the capital letter 'W' should be a similar height to, or taller than, the 'h'.

Where children need to write, re-write or complete a sentence, capital letters within a sentence will be marked as incorrect, unless used to start a proper noun or the pronoun 'I'. This includes where an entire word is capitalised, for example for emphasis. Incorrect use of capital letters negates an otherwise correct response and will be marked as incorrect.

Where children are asked to write a short response that is not part of a sentence (for example, if they are asked to write a word or phrase in a box or table), the use of capital letters will not be taken into account when deciding whether the mark should be awarded. The only exception to this is if the word is a proper noun; in which case, a capital letter will be required for the award of the mark.

4.5.6 Marking of children's responses

Punctuation must be clear and unambiguous for the award of the mark. This means that the punctuation mark should be visible to the marker, its formation should be recognisable as the intended punctuation mark and its position in relation to text or other punctuation must be correct and clear.

If a child has written a correct response in a place other than in the intended answer space and is clear as to which question is being answered, and this is not contradicted by an alternative answer, the response will be considered creditworthy. Where a child has written a response in the intended answer space and an alternative response elsewhere (such as in the margin), the response provided in the answer space will be marked. Where a child has written several responses in, or near, the answer space, and it is not clear which is to be marked, the responses will be marked as incorrect. To avoid ambiguity, children should be advised to cross out all attempts that are not intended to be marked.

5. Cognitive domain

The cognitive domain seeks to make the thinking skills and intellectual processes required for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test explicit. Each question will be rated against the four strands of the cognitive domain listed in Table 6 below.

The cognitive domain will be used during test development to ensure comparability of demand as well as difficulty for tests of successive years.

The cognitive domain for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test is derived from sources including the work of Bloom *et al* (1956)² and Hughes *et al* (1998)³ because these could be adapted to align closely with the types of questions used in the test. Furthermore, the former is widely used and understood in the classroom, and so is familiar to teachers, and the work of Hughes *et al* is widely used in considering the cognitive demand of examination questions.

Questions within the test are rated across four classifications to inform a judgement of their cognitive demand according to Table 6.

Table 6: Cognitive classifications

Classification	Description	Ratings scale
Cognitive level	A three-point scale indicating the degree of cognitive complexity associated with the operation required by the question.	1 (low) – 3 (high)
Response complexity	A four-point scale, sub-categorising the selected and constructed question formats used for the test according to their respective levels of demand.	1 (low) – 4 (high)
Abstraction rating	An indication of the familiarity of the question's vocabulary and context for the test population.	1 (low) – 3 (high)
Strategy support rating	An indication of the support offered within the question and the extent to which children need to organise and strategise their own responses.	1 (low) – 3 (high)

2 Bloom B.S., Engelhart M.D., Furst E.J., Hill W.H., and Krathwohl D.R. (1956) 'Taxonomy of educational objectives: the classification of educational goals; Handbook I: Cognitive Domain' New York, Longmans, Green, 1956

3 Hughes S., Pollitt A. and Ahmed A. (1998) 'The development of a tool for gauging the demands of GCSE and A-level exam questions' presented and published at BERA meeting August 27–30.

The square brackets [] in the following tables are used to identify examples of content in questions. These could be substituted for a range of features.

5.1 Cognitive level

The cognitive level is classified within a three-point taxonomy, derived from Bloom et al's cognitive domain.

Table 7: Cognitive level

Question dimension	Knowledge and comprehension (low)	Application and analysis	Synthesis and evaluation (high)
Explanation	<p>Remembers learnt information and demonstrates an understanding of the facts.</p> <p>Identifies linguistic features and understands their use.</p>	<p>Applies knowledge to given linguistic contexts.</p> <p>Can categorise and analyse examples of language.</p>	<p>Compiles component ideas or proposes alternative solutions.</p> <p>Makes comparisons and judgements about the uses of language and punctuation.</p>
Example question stems	<p>What is the name of the punctuation mark below?</p> <p>Circle two [verbs] in this sentence.</p>	<p>Complete the sentence below with an [adverb] that makes sense.</p> <p>Categorise these [types of pronoun].</p> <p>Re-write the sentence below [using Standard English].</p>	<p>What would be the effect of replacing this [full stop] with a [semi-colon]?</p>

5.2 Response strategy

The response complexity is considered within a scale that ranges from closed to extended response formats, sub-categorised into a number of types.

Table 8: Response strategy

Response format	Selected response	Constructed response: data transformation	Constructed response: prompted	Constructed response: independent
Explanation	Selecting the correct response or identifying a feature from a given field of data.	Transforming a given word, phrase or sentence.	Inserting a word or phrase within a given target sentence, following a specific prompt.	Open response, without a prompt or frame within which to write.
Example item stems	Put a tick to show... Circle all the [verbs] in the sentence below.	Re-write the sentence below, changing it to [past] tense. Replace the underlined words with a [contraction].	Add an [adjective] to complete the sentence.	Write a statement about... Explain why a [comma] is needed in the sentence below.

5.3 Abstraction rating

The abstraction rating is an indicator of the familiarity of the question for the test population. It takes into account the concreteness or abstractness of the concepts involved and the likely familiarity of the vocabulary and context for the test population.

Table 9: Abstraction rating

Abstraction rating	1	2	3
Description	The vocabulary and context can reasonably be assumed to be highly familiar to the majority of children taking the test.	The vocabulary and context may fall outside the child's immediate personal experience, but are nonetheless familiar through coverage in the primary national curriculum, children's literature or the media.	The vocabulary and context will be the least familiar and are likely to be outside the direct experience of those sitting the tests.
Examples of contexts or vocabulary	<p>School-based situations</p> <p>Domestic and family scenarios, including high-frequency vocabulary for family members</p> <p>High-frequency vocabulary for food items, weather, the human body or clothing</p> <p>Colours</p> <p>Public transport</p> <p>Hobbies, eg swimming</p>	<p>Topics covered in other primary curriculum subjects, eg science and nature, animals</p> <p>Visits, eg school trips, parks, shopping or beaches</p>	<p>Low frequency spellings / vocabulary</p> <p>Appropriate adult scenarios, eg workplaces that children rarely encounter</p>

5.4 Strategy support rating

The strategy support rating indicates the extent to which the child must arrive independently at an understanding of the question requirements, response method and answer format.

Table 10: Strategy support rating

Strategy support rating	1	2	3
Description	Indicates questions that provide the child with a high level of support. This may be an exemplar response that fully models the process and answer format required and that can effectively be transposed to the child's own response.	Indicates questions including a partial level of support. This may be an explanation of some technical terminology included in the question, or an example to follow which partially shows the method or expected result, but is not fully transferrable to the child's own response.	Indicates questions that do not include any support, and in which the child is therefore required to interpret the vocabulary, method and expected answer format independently.

6. Test specification

This section provides details of each test paper. The test is administered on paper and internally marked by teachers.

6.1 Summary of test

The table below summarises key information about each paper in the test.

Table 11: Format of the test

Component	Description	Number of papers	Number of marks	Approximate timing of paper
Paper 1: grammar and punctuation: short task	Written task	1	15	20 minutes
Paper 2: grammar, punctuation and vocabulary: questions	2a) Contextualised short answer questions	1	10	Two 10 minute sections, between which a break may be given at the teacher's discretion. Total time = 20 minutes.
	2b) Short answer questions		10	
Paper 3: spelling task	Spelling (20 words)	1	10	15 minutes (not strictly timed)
	Total	3	45	Recommended 55 minutes

6.2 Breadth and emphasis

The content and cognitive domains for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests are specified in sections 4 and 5. The test will sample from the content domain in any given year. Although each element may not be included within each test, the full range of content detailed in this document will be assessed over time.

The following sections show the proportion of marks attributed to each of the areas of the content and cognitive domains in a test.

6.2.1 Profile of content domain

The table below shows the proportion of marks allocated to each element of the content domain. This allocation will allow coverage of the relevant areas of the national curriculum (2014) over time. The content domain is subdivided into five elements: grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling and handwriting. There are a further two marks available in Paper 1 for appropriacy of purpose.

Table 12: Profile of marks by content area

Paper	Element of content domain	Number of marks	Percentage of total mark
Paper 1: grammar and punctuation: short task	Grammar and sentence structure	6	13%
	Punctuation	5	11%
	Appropriacy of purpose	2	4%
	Handwriting	2	4%
Paper 2: grammar, punctuation and vocabulary: questions	Grammar	10–15	22–33%
	Punctuation	5–10	11–22%
	Vocabulary	1–3	2–7%
Paper 3: spelling task	Spelling	10	22%
	Total	45	

Table 13: Profile of marks by content domain (test papers combined)

Element of content domain	Number of marks	Percentage of total mark
Grammar	16–21	36–47%
Punctuation	10–15	22–33%
Vocabulary	1–3	2–7%
Spelling	10	22%
Handwriting	2	4%

6.2.2 Profile of cognitive domain

The cognitive domain for the test is specified in section 5. Questions in the test are rated in terms of demand against each of the four strands of the cognitive domain. The content domain may be tested through questions across any combination of the four cognitive dimensions, according to the explanations given in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Profile of cognitive domain by component

Component	Cognitive level	Response complexity	Abstraction rating	Strategy support rating
Paper 1: grammar and punctuation: short task	3 Synthesis and Evaluation	4 Constructed response: independent	Drawn from levels 1–2	2–3 Minimal support offered. Ideas will be given in the prompt.
Paper 2: grammar, punctuation and vocabulary: questions	Drawn from levels 1–2	Drawn from levels 1–4, within limits for selected and constructed formats defined below.*	Drawn from levels 1–2	Drawn from across levels 1–3 In the introduction to the paper, example formats of common item types will be provided.
Paper 3: spelling task	2 Application and analysis	3 Constructed response: prompted	Drawn from levels 1–2	2 an example showing the expected answer format / method will be provided for the child

*In Paper 2, the majority of questions in any test are selected responses, as detailed in Table 15.

Table 15: Profile of marks by response category in paper 2

Question type	Range of marks	Percentage of Paper 2 marks
Selected response	13–17	65–85%
Constructed response	3–7	15–35%

6.2.3 Question selection and organisation

Questions in Paper 2 are, as far as possible, placed in order of difficulty. The difficulty of individual questions is determined quantitatively from trialling data.

The words for the spelling task are selected from a large bank of pre-tested content. The words are selected to take account of children's developing ability to spell a wide range of words accurately and to apply the strategies specified in the content domain. The words are presented in order of spelling difficulty.

Pre-testing is used to determine how each word functions statistically. Words included in the task are selected to ensure an appropriate range of difficulty so that children at the end of key stage 1 are able to demonstrate performance and standards are maintained.

6.3 Format of questions and responses

6.3.1 Paper 1: short task

Paper 1 will provide children with a prompt and stimulus for a short piece of writing. The prompt will identify a clear text type, audience and purpose for writing. The stimulus may include picture prompts or an illustrated poster or leaflet featuring key vocabulary. Both the prompt and stimulus will be introduced to children by their test administrator and read aloud before the start of the test time. A prompt for teacher-led discussion may also be provided.

Children will be asked to produce a short piece of writing or a series of short written responses, which are expected to be approximately one paragraph in length. The writing will be marked for features of grammatical, syntactical and punctuation accuracy, as set out in the content domain for Paper 1.

Each task will focus on an area of the content domain and the focus will vary over time. Children will not be required to demonstrate all aspects of the content domain in a single task.

Children's responses will also be marked against the relevant elements of the content domain for handwriting.

Teachers will be allowed to provide children with alternative paper types (eg handwriting lines) on which to write their responses, in order to reflect familiar classroom practice for this skill area.

6.3.2 Paper 2: grammar and punctuation

Paper 2 comprises two sub-components as shown below:

Table 16: Sub-components of Paper 2

Sub-component	Description
2a	A series of short-answer questions, worth a total of 10 marks, linked to a contextual passage.
2b	A series of short-answer questions, worth a total of 10 marks.

Teachers / test administrators may choose to give children a short break between the two sections of paper 2.

Teachers / test administrators may choose to read the text passage and / or questions aloud with a child, small group of children or the whole class for paper 2a.

Questions in papers 2a and 2b are categorised into two broad formats:

- Selected response, requiring selection of the correct answer.
- Constructed response, requiring the child to write a short answer of his or her own within a specified format.

The proportions of each format that will appear in any year's test are given in 6.2.2 (page 24).

These formats are further categorised into the following sub-types:

Table 17: Question sub-types used in Paper 2

Question type	Rubric sub-type
Selected response	'Identify...'
	'Match...'
Constructed response	'Complete / correct / rewrite...'
	'Write...'
	'Explain...'

In Paper 2, most responses will require only a tick, circle, line or very short written response. Some test questions do require a full sentence to be written but these will usually be placed towards the end of the paper in order to allow children every opportunity to gain more straightforward marks easily.

The stems in the table below are indicative of the rubric used in live test questions for each sub-type, although actual questions may differ from, and are not limited to, the examples given. The question types below can be asked using selected or constructed response types.

Table 18: Question stems in paper 2

Question stem type	Definition	Common examples
Identify	These questions test children's knowledge of particular terminology, language or punctuation features by requiring them to identify the correct response from a given selection. In most cases, they will have to tick, underline or circle the response.	Tick one word to complete the sentence below. Circle the word / words that... Which sentence uses the [verb] correctly?
Complete / correct / rewrite	These questions usually require children to insert or generate a specified type of response within a given structure, either to complete the target sentence or to replace an error within it.	An error is underlined in the sentence below. Write the correction in the box. Copy the sentence below. Add [punctuation] where necessary.
Write	These questions require children to generate their own examples of specified language, or to label given language with a technical term.	Write a command including the words ['watch' and 'running']

Question stem type	Definition	Common examples
Explain	These questions require children to express their understanding of particular terminology and language features by requiring them to analyse and explain, in their own words, how or why that element is used.	The sentence below has [an apostrophe] missing. Explain why it needs [an apostrophe] Why is the [adverb] used in the sentence below?

6.3.3 Paper 3: spelling

Paper 3 consists of 20 target words. Two different options for the delivery of this test will be trialled:

- Spellings will be presented within distinct, contextualised sentences. The test administrator will read the words and sentences aloud to children from a script.
- An illustrated format (as used in the current key stage 1 tests) will be used to elicit the target spellings from the child.

6.4 Marking and mark schemes

The key stage 1 tests will be internally marked by teachers.

A full mark scheme will be provided for all aspects of the test, with particular detailed focus on marking principles and exemplification for Paper 1 (short task), and any constructed response items within Paper 2, in order to maximise the reliability of marking.

The mark scheme will give the general principles for marking the test to ensure consistency of marking together with the specific guidance for the marking of each question.

The mark scheme will provide the total number of marks available for each question and the criteria by which teachers should award the marks to children's responses. Where multiple correct answers are possible, examples of different types of correct answers will be given in the mark schemes. Additional guidance will indicate minimally acceptable responses and unacceptable responses, where applicable.

For all questions, the mark schemes will be developed during the test development process and will combine the expectations of experts with examples of children's responses that have been obtained during trialling.

For multi-mark questions, if the correct answer is not reached and, therefore, full marks cannot be awarded, the mark scheme will provide details of how partial credit can be awarded.

The mark schemes will contain the following information:

- a content domain reference
- the mark allocation
- square bullets indicating the required responses / acceptable points

- round bullets exemplifying children’s responses from the trials
- for 2 mark questions, the examples awarded higher marks will usually be placed before the examples awarded lower marks.

There will be a system of sampling and moderation of marking organised by the STA to ensure consistency between schools. Full details will be available in the ARA.

6.5 Reporting

The raw score on the test (the total achieved marks out of the total 45 marks) will be converted into a scaled score using a conversion table. The purpose of translating raw scores onto scaled scores is that performance can be reported on a consistent scale for all children, which retains the same meaning from one year to the next so a particular scaled score reflects the same level of attainment in one year as in the previous year, having adjusted for any differences in difficulty of the test.

Additionally, each child will receive an overall result indicating whether or not he or she has achieved the required standard on the test. A standard setting exercise will be conducted on the first live test in 2016 in order to determine the scaled score needed for a child to be considered to have met the standard. This process will be facilitated by the performance descriptor in section 6.7 which defines the performance level required to meet the standard. In subsequent years the standard will be maintained using appropriate statistical methods to translate raw scores on a new test into scaled scores with an additional judgemental exercise at the expected standard. The scaled score required to achieve the expected level on the test will always remain the same.

The exact scale for the scaled scores will be determined following further analysis of trialling data. This will include a full review of the reporting of confidence intervals for scaled scores.

6.6 Desired psychometric properties

While the focus of the outcome of the test will be whether a child has achieved the expected standard, the test must measure children’s ability across the spectrum of attainment. As a result, the test must aim to minimise the standard error of measurement at every point on the reporting scale, particularly around the expected standard threshold.

The provision of a scaled score will aid in the interpretation of children’s performance over time as the scaled score which represents the expected standard will be the same year on year. However, at the extremes of the scaled score distribution, as is standard practice, the scores will be truncated such that above or below a certain point all children will be awarded the same scaled score in order to minimise the effect for children at the ends of the distribution where the test is not measuring optimally.

6.7 Performance descriptor

This performance descriptor describes the typical characteristics of children whose performance in the key stage 1 tests is at the threshold of the expected standard. Children who achieve the expected standard in the tests have demonstrated sufficient knowledge to be well placed to succeed in the next phase of their education having studied the

aspects of the key stage 1 programme of study in English assessed by this test. This performance descriptor will be used by panels of teachers to set the standards on the new tests following their first administration in May 2016. It is not intended to be used to support teacher assessment, since it only reflects the elements of the programme of study that can be assessed in a pen-and-paper test of grammar, punctuation and spelling (see content domain in section 4).

6.7.1 Overview

Children working at the expected standard will be able to engage with all questions within the test. However, they will not always achieve full marks on each question, particularly if working at the threshold of the expected standard.

Questions will range from those requiring recall of facts to those requiring application and analysis. There will be a variety of question formats, including selected response, short answer and constructed response where no strategy is provided within the question.

Question difficulty will be affected by the strands of the cognitive domain such as the abstractness of the task and the extent to which support is given in the question to help children organise their response. This should be borne in mind when considering the remainder of this performance descriptor, since children working at the threshold of the expected standard may not give correct responses to questions where there are low-frequency spellings or vocabulary, or where they are required to develop their own strategy for answering the question. This will be true even when the performance descriptor determines that a skill should be within the child's capacity if working at the expected standard.

The following sections describe the typical characteristics of children in Year 2 working at the threshold of the expected standard. It is recognised that different children will exhibit different strengths, so this is intended as a general guide rather than a prescriptive list.

6.7.2 Short task

Children use some variety of sentence types as is appropriate to the given task, eg commands to instruct the reader; statements to give information. They are able to introduce additional detail in their writing through the use of, for example, adjectives (including comparatives), adverbs, or simple expanded noun phrases (eg *the small cottage / the small cottage with the red door*).

Clauses are mostly joined with co-ordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or*), with some use of subordination (eg to indicate cause or time). Tense is appropriate and mostly consistent in simple and progressive past and present forms.

Sentences are usually demarcated with capital letters and full stops, or with appropriate use of question and exclamation marks. Capital letters are used to mark some proper nouns and always for the personal pronoun 'I'. There is some use of internal sentence punctuation, including commas to separate items in a list and apostrophes to mark contracted forms.

Children's handwriting is legible. Capital and lower-case letters are accurately and consistently formed with appropriate spacing and consistent size.

6.7.3 Grammar and vocabulary

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- demonstrate familiarity with some word classes and their use, including nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs
- apply this terminology to identify familiar words within each word class when presented in a context
- recognise different types of sentences, including statements, questions, commands and exclamations
- write different types of sentences including statements, questions, commands and exclamations when prompted
- understand that the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *or*, *but* link words and clauses and use them to construct and extend sentences
- add a subordinate clause to a main clause using a simple subordinating conjunction (eg *when*, *if*, *because*, *that*) when prompted
- combine or expand given words to make noun phrases, clauses or sentences
- identify the present or past tense forms of familiar, regular verbs and some high-frequency irregular verbs (eg *has* / *had*)
- apply correct endings to regular verb forms to indicate present and past tense, including the progressive form to mark actions in progress (eg *the lion is running* / *Ellie was shouting*)
- demonstrate Standard English subject-verb agreement (eg *we were* as opposed to *we was*)
- identify and select some appropriate language for the context such as formal, informal or Standard English as appropriate
- understand that the prefix *un-* can change the meaning of some words
- use some straightforward suffixes to form nouns and adjectives, including the suffixes *-er* and *-est* to form comparative adjectives.

6.7.4 Punctuation

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- identify and use appropriate end punctuation for demarcating different sentence types (full stop, question mark and exclamation mark)
- identify and use a capital letter to start a sentence, for names and for the personal pronoun *I*
- identify and insert commas in a list of single words
- use apostrophes to construct simple contracted verb forms from given full forms, using correct spelling
- identify the correct use of the apostrophe to denote singular possession and sometimes use the apostrophe correctly for this purpose.

6.7.5 Spelling

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- usually accurately spell simple monosyllabic and polysyllabic words, including high-frequency homophones and near-homophones in context
- draw on their developing phonological, morphological and lexical awareness to apply the rules and patterns set out in the statutory Appendix 1 of the 2014 national curriculum.

7. Diversity and inclusion

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the principles by which national curriculum assessments and associated development activities are conducted. During the development of the tests, the test development division will make provision to overcome barriers to fair assessment for individuals and groups wherever possible.

National curriculum assessments will also meet Ofqual's core regulatory criteria. One of the criteria refers to the need for assessment procedures to minimise bias: 'The assessment should minimise bias, differentiating only on the basis of each learner's ability to meet national curriculum requirements' (Ofqual, www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2011-regulatory-framework-for-national-assessments.pdf).

The end of key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test should:

- use appropriate means to allow all children to demonstrate their skills in grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling
- provide a suitable challenge for all children and give every child the opportunity to achieve as high a standard as possible
- provide opportunities for all children to achieve, irrespective of gender, including children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, and children from all social and cultural backgrounds
- not be detrimental to children's self-esteem or confidence
- be free from stereotyping and discrimination in any form.

The test development process uses the principles of universal design, as described in the 'Guidance on the principles of language accessibility in national curriculum assessments' (Ofqual, 2012; www.ofqual.gov.uk/news/new-language-accessibility-guidance-published/).

In order to improve general accessibility for all children, where possible, questions will be placed in order of difficulty. Accordingly, to be consistent with all national curriculum tests, attempts have been made to make the question rubric as accessible as possible for all children, including those who experience reading and processing difficulties, and those for whom English is an additional language, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of demand to adequately assess the content. This includes applying the principles of plain English and universal design wherever possible, conducting interviews with children, and taking into account feedback from expert reviewers.

For each test in development, expert opinions on specific questions are gathered, for example, at inclusion panel meetings, which are attended by experts and practitioners from across the fields of disabilities and special educational needs. This provides an opportunity for some questions to be amended or removed in response to concerns raised.

Issues likely to be encountered by children with specific learning difficulties have been considered in detail. Where possible, features of questions that lead to construct irrelevant variance (for example, question formats and presentational features) have been considered and questions have been presented in line with best practice for dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

7.1 Access arrangements

The full range of access arrangements applicable to key stage 1 assessments as set out in the ARA will be available to eligible children as required.

7.2 Children with English as an additional language (EAL)

Children with English as an additional language should be registered for the national curriculum tests. If a child's limited ability to communicate in English means that he or she is unable to access the test, then they will be working below the standard of the English tests and should not take them, as set out in the ARA.

7.3 Compensatory marks

Compensatory marks for spelling will be available for eligible children. Consistent with the 'Assessment and reporting arrangements', these will be based on the mean average scores that children achieved during the technical pre-test.

Appendix: Glossary of terminology used in the test framework

cognitive domain	<p>Cognitive processes refer to the thinking skills and intellectual processes that occur in response to a stimulus. The cognitive domain makes explicit the thinking skills associated with an assessment.</p> <p>The cognitive domain, as shown in this framework, also identifies other factors that may influence the difficulty of the questions.</p>
constructed response	<p>A section of a test, presented to children as a test paper or test booklet. Some tests may have two or more components which each child needs to sit in order to complete the test. The English grammar, punctuation and spelling test comprises two components.</p>
content domain	<p>The body of subject knowledge to be assessed by the test.</p>
construct irrelevant variance	<p>Construct irrelevant variance is the variation in children's test scores that does not come from their knowledge of the ideas being tested. It can result in children gaining fewer marks than their knowledge would suggest or lead to the award of more marks than their knowledge alone would deserve.</p> <p>The former can occur, for example, when questions in a mathematics test also unintentionally measure reading ability. The latter often occurs when unintended clues within questions allow children to answer correctly without having the required subject knowledge.</p>
distribution	<p>The range of possible scaled scores.</p>
domain	<p>The codified definition of a body of skills and knowledge.</p>
mark scheme	<p>The document explaining the creditworthy responses or the criteria that must be applied to award the mark for a question in the test.</p>
national curriculum	<p>For each subject and key stage, the national curriculum outlines the content and skills that should be taught in schools.</p>
performance descriptor	<p>Description of the typical characteristics of children working at a particular standard. For these tests, the performance descriptor will characterise the minimum performance required to be working at the appropriate standard for the end of the key stage.</p>
programme of study	<p>The statutory curriculum of subject knowledge, skills and understanding for a key stage. The key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study are published online at at: www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum.</p>

raw score	<p>The unmodified score achieved on a test, following marking. In the case of these tests it is the total marks achieved.</p> <p>For example, if a child scores 27 out of 60 possible marks, the raw score is 27. Raw scores are often then converted to other measures such as percentile ranks, standardised scores or grades.</p>
scaled score	<p>A score which has been translated from a raw score onto a score on a fixed, defined scale. This allows performance to be reported on a consistent scale for all children, which retains the same meaning from one year to the next. Therefore, a particular scaled score reflects the same level of attainment in one year as in the previous year, having adjusted for any differences in difficulty of the specific tests.</p>
standard	<p>The required level of attainment in order to be classified into a particular performance category.</p>
standard error of measurement	<p>A reliability estimate that allows the user to determine a confidence interval around a test score. It is a measure of the distribution of scores that would be attained by a child had that child taken the test repeatedly under the same conditions.</p>
standard setting	<p>The process of applying the standard onto a particular test in order to determine the score required for a child to be classified within a particular performance category.</p>
test framework	<p>A document to set out the principles, rationale and key information about the test, and containing a test specification.</p>
test specification	<p>A detailed specification of what is to be included in a test in any single cycle of development.</p>
truncate	<p>To shorten by removing ends.</p>



About this publication

Who is it for?

This document is primarily aimed at those responsible for developing the key stage 1 national curriculum test in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. It may also be of interest to schools with children in key stage 1 and other education professionals.

What does it cover?

Detailed information to ensure an appropriate test is developed, including the:

- content domain
- cognitive domain
- test specification.

Related information

Visit the Department for Education's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1 and www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum for all related information.

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