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KEY STAGE
2

YEARS
3–6

National curriculum assessments

Key stage 2 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 2 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 and the test specification for the key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests; it is not design to be used to guide teaching and learning or 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 tests. 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 secondary 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 national 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 and spelling are also detailed in the cognitive domain.

Also included in the test framework is a test specification by 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 the nature of the evidence collected it is not anticipated that any additional studies will be required in order to demonstrate that the tests are fit for purpose. 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 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test forms part of the statutory assessment arrangements for children at the end of key stage 2.

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 2, including those elements of content introduced at key stage 1 that are intended to be consolidated during key stage 2. The programmes of study are set out for Spoken language, and Reading and Writing. There are two statutory appendices (Appendix 1: Spelling and Appendix 2: Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation). Relevant content from the programme of study and the appendices will be assessed in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test.

The test will cover the aspects of spelling, grammar, punctuation and language strategies from across the key stage 2 English national curriculum that lend themselves to paper-based, externally-marked testing. Writing composition will be subject to teacher assessment.

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 2 will be required to take the key stage 2 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/ks2.

3.2 Test format

The English grammar, punctuation and spelling test is comprised of two components, which are presented to children as two separate test papers. The test is administered on paper, with the spelling paper administered aurally by a test administrator. The total testing time is approximately 1 hour, although the spelling test is not strictly timed.

Table 1: Format of the test

Component	Description	Number of papers	Number of marks	Timing of component
Paper 1: grammar and punctuation: questions	Short answer questions	1	50	45 minutes
Paper 2: spelling task	Spelling (20 words)	1	20	15 minutes (not strictly timed)
	Total	2	70	60 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 2 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.

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. This includes synonyms and antonyms, prefixes and suffixes, and word families.

4.1 Paper 1: short answer questions

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.

^S indicates content introduced at key stage 1 that is intended to be consolidated throughout key stage 2.

Table 2: Content domain for Paper 1

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G1: Grammatical terms / word classes	
G1.1: Nouns^S	Nouns ^T
G1.2: Verbs^S	Verbs ^T

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G1.2a: Present and past progressive continuous^S	Use of the progressive form of verbs in the present and past tense to mark actions in progress
G1.2b: Verbs in perfect form	Use of the present perfect form of verbs instead of the simple past Using the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause
G1.2c: Modal verbs	Modal verb ^T Indicating degrees of possibility using modal verbs
G1.3: Adjectives^S	Adjective ^T
G1.4: Conjunctions	Conjunction ^T Extending the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including <i>when, if, because, although</i> Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions [for example, <i>when, before, after, while, so, because</i>]
G1.5: Pronouns	Pronoun ^T Cohesion ^T Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun within and across sentences to aid cohesion and avoid repetition
G1.5a: Possessive pronouns	Possessive pronoun ^T
G1.5b: Relative pronouns	Relative pronoun ^T
G1.6: Adverbs	Adverb ^{TS} The use of <i>-ly</i> in Standard English to turn adjectives into adverbs ^S Expressing time, place and cause using adverbs, [for example, <i>then, next, soon, therefore</i>] Indicating degrees of possibility using adverbs [for example, <i>perhaps, surely</i>]
G1.6a: Adverbials	Adverbial ^T Using fronted adverbials
G1.7: Prepositions	Preposition ^T Expressing time, place and cause using prepositions, [for example, <i>before, after, during, in, because of</i>]
G1.8: Determiners	Determiner ^T Use of the forms <i>a</i> or <i>an</i> according to whether the next word begins with a consonant or a vowel

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G2: Functions of sentences	
G2.1: Statements^S	Statement ^T Learn how to use sentences with different forms: statement How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a statement
G2.2: Questions^S	Question ^T Learn how to use sentences with different forms: question How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a question
G2.3: Commands^S	Command ^T Learn how to use sentences with different forms: command How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a command
G2.4: Exclamations^S	Exclamation ^T Learn how to use sentences with different forms exclamation How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as (an) exclamation
G3: Combining words, phrases and clauses	
G3.1: Clauses	Clause ^T
G3.1a: Relative clauses	Relative clause ^T Relative clauses beginning with <i>who, which, where, when, whose, that</i> , or an omitted relative pronoun
G3.1b: Subordinate clauses	Subordinate clause ^T Learn how to use subordination (using <i>when, if, that, or because</i>) ^S
G3.2: Noun phrases	Noun phrase ^{TS} Expanded noun phrases for description and specification ^S Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases Expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
G3.3 Subordinating conjunctions^S	Subordination: <i>when, if, that</i> and <i>because</i>
G3.4 Co-ordinating conjunctions^S	Joining words and joining clauses Co-ordination: <i>or, and</i> and <i>but</i>

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G4: Features of written Standard English	
G4.1: Sentences^S	How words can combine to make sentences
G4.2: Tense agreement^S	Tense (past, present) ^T Correct choice and consistent use of present tense and past tense throughout writing
G4.3: Subject-verb agreement	Singular ^{TS} Plural ^{TS} Regular plural noun suffixes <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> , [for example, <i>dog, dogs; wish, wishes</i>], including the effects of these suffixes on the meaning of the noun ^S Ensuring correct subject and verb agreement when using singular and plural
G4.4: Subject and object	Subject ^T Object ^T
G5: Formal / informal	
G5.1: Subjunctive verb forms	Recognising subjunctive forms
G5.2: Question tags	The use of question tags as an informal speech structure
G5.3: Passive and active	Passive ^T Active ^T Use of the passive to affect the presentation of information in a sentence
G6: Punctuation	
G6.1: Capital letters^S	Capital letter ^T Using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I' Use of capital letters to demarcate sentences
G6.2: Full stops^S	Full stop ^T Use of full stops to demarcate sentences
G6.3: Question marks^S	Question mark ^T Use of question marks to demarcate sentences
G6.4: Exclamation marks^S	Exclamation mark ^T Use of exclamation marks to demarcate sentences

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G6.5: Commas in lists^S	Comma ^T Commas to separate items in a list
G6.6a: Commas to clarify meaning	Using commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity in writing Ambiguity ^T
G6.6b: Commas after fronted adverbials	Use of commas after fronted adverbials
G6.7: Inverted commas	Direct speech ^T , inverted commas ^T (or 'speech marks') ^T Use of inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech [for example a comma after the reporting clause and end punctuation within inverted commas]
G6.8: Apostrophes	Apostrophes ^{TS} Apostrophes to mark singular possession in nouns ^S Apostrophes to mark plural possession The grammatical difference between plural and possessive –s Apostrophes to mark contracted forms ^S
G6.9: Punctuation for parenthesis	Parenthesis ^T , bracket ^T , dash ^T Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis
G6.10: Colons	Colon ^T Use of the colon to mark the boundary between independent clauses Use of the colon to introduce a list
G6.11: Semi-colons	Semi-colon ^T Use of the semi-colon to mark the boundary between independent clauses Use of semi-colons within lists
G6.12: Single dashes	Dash ^T Use of the dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses
G6.13: Hyphens	Hyphen ^T How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity
G6.14: Bullet points	Punctuation of bullet points to list information

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
G8: Language strategies	
G8.1: Synonyms and antonyms	Synonym ^T Antonym ^T How words are related by meaning as synonyms and antonyms
G8.2: Prefixes	Prefix ^T How the prefix <i>un-</i> changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives ^S Formation of nouns using a range of prefixes [for example, <i>super-</i> , <i>anti-</i> , <i>auto-</i>] Verb prefixes [for example, <i>dis-</i> , <i>de-</i> , <i>mis-</i> , <i>over-</i> and <i>re-</i>]
G8.3: Suffixes	Suffix ST The suffixes <i>-ment</i> , <i>-ness</i> , <i>-ful</i> , <i>-less</i> and <i>-ly</i> ^S Formation of nouns using suffixes such as <i>-ness</i> , <i>-er</i> ST Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as <i>-ful</i> , <i>-less</i> ST Converting nouns or adjectives into verbs using suffixes [for example, <i>-ate</i> , <i>-ise</i> , <i>-ify</i>]
G8.4: Word families	Word family ^T Word families based on common words, showing how words are related in form and meaning

4.2 Paper 2: spelling task

This paper consists of 20 target words, presented within 20 distinct, contextualised sentences. The test administrator reads the words and sentences to children from a script.

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 2 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 this table.

There are two sections of the key stage 2 statutory spelling appendix that will only be assessed in Paper 1. They are:

- Possessive apostrophe with plural words
- Use of the hyphen.

Table 3: Content domain for Paper 2

Test reference code	Relevant coverage in the programme of study and statutory appendices
S39	Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words of more than one syllable
S40	The /i/ sound spelt <i>y</i> other than at the end of words
S41	The /ʌ/ sound spelt <i>ou</i>
S42	More prefixes
S43	The suffix <i>-ation</i>
S44	The suffix <i>-ly</i>
S45	Words with endings sounding like / ʒə / or / tʃə /
S46	Endings which sound like / ʒən /
S47	The suffix <i>-ous</i>
S48	Endings which sound like / fən /, spelt <i>-tion, -sion, -ssion, -cian</i>
S49	Words with the /k/ sound spelt <i>ch</i>
S50	Words with the /f/ sound spelt <i>ch</i>
S51	Words ending with the /g/ sound spelt <i>-gue</i> and the /k/ sound spelt <i>-que</i>
S52	Words with the /s/ sound spelt <i>sc</i>
S53	Words with the /eɪ/ sound spelt <i>ei, eigh, or ey</i>
S54	Endings which sound like / fəs / spelt <i>-cious</i> or <i>-tious</i>
S55	Endings which sound like / fəl /
S56	Words ending in <i>-ant, -ance, -ancy, -ent, -ence, -ency</i>
S57	Words ending in <i>-able</i> and <i>-ible</i> Words ending in <i>-ably</i> and <i>-ibly</i>
S58	Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words ending in <i>-fer</i>
S59	Words with the /i:/ sound spelt <i>ei</i> after <i>c</i>
S60	Words containing the letter-string <i>ough</i>
S61	Words with 'silent' letters (ie letters whose presence cannot be predicted from the pronunciation of the word)
S62	Homophones and near homophones (years 3 and 4) Homophones and other words that are often confused (years 5 and 6)

4.3 Elements of the curriculum that cannot be assessed in this format

The table below identifies areas that are difficult to fully assess in a paper-based format. Some of the points below may be partially assessed.

National Curriculum Reference	Explanation
<p>English Appendix 2, Year 3, text:</p> <p>Introduction to paragraphs as a way to group related material</p> <p>Headings and sub-headings to aid presentation</p>	<p>These statements are better suited to being assessed as part of teacher assessment of writing. This could be partially assessed in a test in terms of asking children how texts are organised (both in paragraphs and through headings); It would not show how well the children use this skill in their own writing, without a longer writing task.</p>
<p>English Appendix 2, Year 4, text:</p> <p>Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme</p>	<p>This statement is better suited to being assessed as part of teacher assessment of writing. This could be partially assessed in a test in terms of asking children how texts are organised (both in paragraphs and through headings); It would not show how well the children use this skill in their own writing, without a longer writing task.</p>
<p>English Appendix 2, Year 5, text:</p> <p>Devices to build cohesion within a paragraph</p> <p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time, place and number or tense choices</p>	<p>These statements are better suited to being assessed as part of teacher assessment of writing. This could be partially assessed in a test in terms of asking children what devices were working to ensure cohesion; It would not show how well the children use cohesive devices in their own writing, without a longer writing task.</p>
<p>English Appendix 2, Year 6, text:</p> <p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices: repetition of a word or phrase, grammatical connections, and ellipsis</p> <p>Layout devices</p>	<p>These statements are better suited to being assessed as part of teacher assessment of writing. This could be partially assessed in a test in terms of asking children what devices were working to ensure cohesion; It would not show how well the children use cohesive devices or manipulate their own writing for effect, without a longer writing task.</p>

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*.

In keeping with the British English convention, both single inverted commas and double quotation marks are considered creditworthy for punctuating speech, provided they are used consistently within any single response.

For the purposes of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test, a colon should always be followed by a lower case letter, unless the word is a proper noun or the pronoun *I*.

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 will be 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 Paper 1

Correct spelling is not required for the award of the mark for the majority of questions in Paper 1. 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 1:

- **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 (ie: 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 Punctuation of direct speech

As is consistent with the statutory appendix to the national curriculum, the punctuation of direct speech will only be deemed creditworthy if:

- closing punctuation is placed inside the final inverted commas
- a comma is used after a fronted reporting clause (if applicable).

4.5.4 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.

4.5.5 Accuracy in copied sentences in Paper 1

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.

4.5.6 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, rewrite 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 this case, a capital letter will be required for the award of the mark.

4.5.7 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 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test explicit. Each question will be rated against the four strands of the cognitive domain listed in Table 4 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 4.

Table 4: 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)

A detailed explanation of each of the four dimensions follows in Sections 5.1-5.4.

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 5: Cognitive level

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

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 6: 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 [which sentence is correctly punctuated]. Circle all the [nouns] in the sentence below.	Write the sentence below, changing it to [past] tense. Replace the underlined words with a [contraction].	Add an [adjective] to complete the sentence.	Rewrite a statement [to answer the question below]. Explain why a [pair of brackets] 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 7: 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	School-based situations Domestic and family scenarios Food, animals, items of clothing Colours Public transport Hobbies, eg: swimming	Topics covered in other primary national curriculum subjects, eg: science and nature, significant periods of history. Visits, eg: school trips, parks, libraries, transport, beaches.	Low frequency spellings / vocabulary Appropriate adult scenarios, eg: workplaces that children rarely encounter

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 8: 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.

6.1 Summary of test

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

Table 9: Format of the test

Component	Description	Number of papers	Number of marks	Timing of component
Paper 1: grammar and punctuation: questions	Short answer questions	1	50	45 minutes
Paper 2: spelling task	Spelling (20 words)	1	20	15 minutes (not strictly timed)
	Total	2	70	60 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. Consolidation of the key stage 1 material is assumed within the key stage 2 programme of study and therefore material from key stage 1 may appear within the key stage 2 test.

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 four elements: grammar, punctuation, language strategies and spelling.

Table 10: Profile of marks by content area

Paper	Content domain reference	Number of marks	Percentage of total mark
Paper 1: short answer questions	Grammar	25–35	36–50%
	Punctuation	10–20	14–28%
	Language strategies	3–7	4–10%
Paper 2: spelling task	Spelling	20	29%
	Total	70	

6.2.2 Profile of cognitive domain

The cognitive domain for the test is specified in section 5. Questions in Paper 1 of 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.

In Paper 1, any element of the content domain may be tested through any of the levels of cognitive demand. However, the majority of questions will be drawn from the 'knowledge and comprehension' or 'application and analysis' levels.

Any element of the content domain may be assessed through any of the sub-types of response strategy given in section 5.2. The majority of questions in any test will be selected response.

Table 11: Profile of marks by response strategy

Question type	Range of marks	Percentage of Paper 1 marks
Selected response	33–42	60–80%
Constructed response	8–17	20–40%

Questions from across the content range may provide children with strategy support at levels 1, 2, or 3, as defined in the table in section 5.4.

The contexts used for short answer questions will draw from abstraction levels 1 and 2 only.

In Paper 2, the majority of sentence contexts will also be drawn from abstraction levels 1 and 2. However, where low-frequency vocabulary is selected in order to test a particular spelling pattern, it may be necessary to introduce a surrounding context sentence that is less familiar to the test population; these infrequent examples will have an abstraction rating of '3'.

6.2.3 Question selection and organisation

Questions in Paper 1 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.

Pretesting is used to determine how each spelling 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 2 are able to demonstrate performance and standards are maintained.

6.3 Format of questions and responses

The short answer questions in Paper 1 of the test 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 their own within a specified format.

The proportion of each format that will appear in any single test is given in section 6.2.2. These formats are further categorised into the following sub-types:

Table 12: Question sub-types

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

In Paper 1, 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. As the questions become harder throughout the test, these questions are more likely to appear toward the end of the paper. This allows 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 13: Question stems in Paper 1

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 all the [nouns] in the sentence below. Which sentence [is punctuated] correctly?
Match	These questions require the pairing of two different elements printed on the page, so that the children indicate their response by drawing a line, and do not need to write.	Draw lines to match each sentence with [its type].
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. Rewrite the sentence below, changing it to [past tense]. Copy the sentence below. Add [commas] 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 statement [to answer the question below].
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 [the apostrophe]. Why is the [colon] used in the sentence below?

Paper 2 consists of 20 target words, presented within 20 distinct, contextualised sentences. The test administrator will read the words and sentences to children from a script.

6.4 Marking and mark schemes

The tests will be externally marked on-screen by trained markers.

The mark scheme will give the general principles for marking the test to ensure consistency of marking, together with 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 markers should award the marks. Where multiple correct answers are possible, examples of different types of correct answers will be given in the mark schemes.

Where applicable, additional guidance will indicate minimally acceptable responses and unacceptable responses.

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, the mark scheme will provide details of how full or 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 or 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.

6.5 Reporting

The raw score on the test (the total achieved marks out of the total 70 marks) will be converted into a scaled score. Translating raw scores onto scaled scores ensures performance can be reported on a consistent scale for all children. Scaled scores retain 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 pupils 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 2 tests is at the threshold of the expected standard. Children who achieve the expected standard in the tests have demonstrated sufficient knowledge to be regarded as 'secondary ready' having studied the full key stage 2 programme of study in English. This performance descriptor will be used by 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 paper-based test (see 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 synthesis and evaluation. 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 and vocabulary or 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 6 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 Grammar

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- demonstrate familiarity with a range of word classes and their use, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions and determiners;
- apply this terminology to identify familiar words within each word class when presented in a context;
- recognise and write different types of sentences, including statements, questions, commands and exclamations;

- demonstrate familiarity with terms relating to a sentence, including subject and object;
- distinguish between co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions and use them to link clauses appropriately;
- identify and use main clauses and subordinate clauses (including relative clauses) in a sentence identify and construct expanded noun phrases for description and concision;
- identify and construct fronted adverbial phrases to denote time and place (eg: *Later that day, I met Tina.*);
- select pronouns appropriately for clarity and cohesion (eg: **The children** will be visiting the **activity centre**. **They** will try all the activities **it** has to offer.);
- distinguish between formal and informal varieties of English (eg: active / passive, subjunctive) and Standard and non-Standard varieties of English (eg: use of *I* and *me*);
- use Standard English and formal or informal structures when appropriate;
- select and construct regular and irregular verb forms that express present and past time, including the progressive and perfect forms (eg: *We are hoping to win. I had swum across the lake.*);
- choose tenses accurately and mostly consistently;
- ensure that subject and verb agree when using singular and plural nouns in a sentence;
- identify the active and passive voice in terms of sentence structure; identify modal verbs to express future time and possibility (eg: *I might go to the park. They should be home soon.*);
- identify, form and expand contractions accurately;
- select appropriate synonyms and antonyms for a wide range of words;
- use prefixes and suffixes to change the meaning of words, for example, to change words into different word classes;
- recognise and use words from the same word families.

6.7.3 Punctuation

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- demarcate sentences accurately, using capital letters and full stops, question marks or exclamation marks as appropriate;
- use commas to mark clauses or phrases, including fronted adverbials, (eg: *The cottage, which had a blue door, looked warm and cosy. Despite these facts, people choose to eat unhealthy food.*) but they may not be able to use them consistently;
- use inverted commas to denote speech and place these correctly in relation to internal punctuation;
- use apostrophes correctly for omission and singular possession, and mostly accurately for plural possession;
- identify where punctuation is used to indicate parenthesis;

- identify colons, semi-colons, single dashes and hyphens but may not be able to use them consistently.

6.7.4 Spelling

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- spell accurately in general, including polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns and some common exceptions to these, and less common prefixes and suffixes, for example *ir-*, *il-*, *-cian*, *-ous*;
- spell or select the correct forms of common homophones; and
- draw on their phonological, morphological and lexical awareness to apply the common rules and patterns and spell correctly a wide range of words, including those set out in 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, STA's test development division will make provision to overcome barriers to fair assessment for individuals and groups wherever possible.

National curriculum tests 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 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test should:

- use appropriate means to allow all children to demonstrate their skills in grammar, punctuation, language strategies 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
- use materials that are familiar to children and for which they are adequately prepared
- 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, while 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 2 assessments as set out in the ARA will be available to eligible children as required.

7.2 Children with English as an additional language

Children with English as an additional language (EAL) 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 level 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 ARA, these will be based on the mean average scores that children achieved during live administration.

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>
component	<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 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test comprises of 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. 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 national curriculum of subject knowledge, skills and understanding for a key stage. The key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study are published online 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 that sets out the principles, rationale and key information about the test and contains 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 2 national curriculum test in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. It may also be of interest to schools with children in key stage 2 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/ks2 and www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum for all related information.

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