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KEY STAGE 1 SATS

2017 KS1 Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling

Answers Explained

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How to beat each question type

Pick the right joining word (G3)

1. Read the sentence aloud, trying each word in the gap one at a time.
 2. Ask: does the sentence make sense? Does it explain why, or show a contrast?
 3. Tick the one word that fits best and makes the sentence logical.
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Capital letters and why we use them (G5)

1. Read the sentence and spot any names of people or places.
 2. Remind the child that names of people (proper nouns) always start with a capital letter.
 3. Ask the child to say in their own words why that word needs a capital letter.
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Comma in a list (G5)

1. Read the sentence aloud and count how many items are listed.
 2. Point to where the arrow sits and ask: is there a list of things here that needs separating?
 3. Choose the punctuation mark that separates items in a list.
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Spot the noun, verb, adjective or adverb (G1)

1. Read the sentence slowly and think about what each word is doing.
 2. Use a simple prompt: nouns are things, verbs are actions, adjectives describe things, adverbs describe actions.
 3. Circle or underline only the word that matches the word class asked for.
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Add the right punctuation mark (G5)

1. Read each sentence aloud and listen to how it sounds - is it a statement, a question, or an exclamation?
 2. Match the feeling: full stop for a statement, question mark for a question.
 3. Write the mark clearly in the box provided.
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Suffixes and word endings (G6)

1. Say each base word aloud and try adding each suffix: does it sound like a real word?
2. Check: '-ness' usually follows adjectives (kindness), '-ment' usually follows verbs (enjoyment).

3. Draw a line from each word to the suffix that makes a correct noun.

Verb tense: present and past (G4)

1. Look at the time word in the sentence - 'today' means now, 'yesterday' means before.
 2. For 'today, I am...', children need an '-ing' verb; for 'yesterday, I...', children need a past tense verb.
 3. Check the spelling carefully, as correct spelling is required for verb form answers.
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Question 1 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'because' - it is the word that best completes the sentence.

Before revealing the answer, ask your child to read the sentence carefully and think about what the missing word needs to do. Ask: "Why was Sasha running to school?"

The sentence 'Sasha was running to school ___ she was late' needs a **conjunction** that shows the reason for running. Children should ask themselves why Sasha was running - the second part of the sentence gives the reason. '**Because**' is the only option that introduces a reason or cause. 'If' introduces a condition, 'or' offers an alternative, and 'that' links differently - none of these show why she was running.

Watch out: A child might tick 'if' because it also links two parts of a sentence, but 'if' introduces a condition ('she was running if she was late'), which changes the meaning - it no longer gives the reason.

Question 2 (1 mark)

Answer: The answer children need to tick is 'but'.

Before looking at the options, ask the child to think about what kind of word links two opposite ideas in a sentence. Ask: "If I said 'Ice cream tastes nice... you shouldn't eat too much of it', what little word would you put in the middle?"

The two halves of the sentence set up a **contrast**: potatoes are good for you, yet chips should be avoided. Children need to spot that but is the conjunction that signals this contrast, joining two ideas that pull in opposite directions. That and when do not create contrast, and or suggests a choice rather than a contradiction.

Watch out: A child might be tempted by 'when' because it is a common joining word, but 'when' links ideas by time, not contrast, so it does not make sense in this sentence.

Question 3 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should write that 'Joe' starts with a capital letter because it is a name (a person's name).

Before sharing the answer, point the child to the underlined word in the sentence and ask: "What kind of word is 'Joe', and what do you know about how that type of word is written?"

The question tests whether children understand that **people's names always begin with a capital letter**. The word Joe is underlined in the sentence 'Dad cleaned the kitchen and Joe helped.' Children need to explain that Joe is a person's name, not simply that it is a noun or that it looks important. Saying 'it is a proper noun' also counts, but a general answer such as 'it is a noun' or 'it is in the middle of the sentence' does not score.

Watch out: A child might write 'because it is a noun' - this is too vague and does not score. The answer must make clear that it is a name specifically.

Question 4 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'a comma'. The arrow points to the gap between 'seeds' and 'nuts', where a comma is needed to separate items in a list.

Before looking at the options, ask the child to read the sentence aloud and think about what the hamster is eating. Ask: "What punctuation mark do we use when we write a list of things?"

The arrow in the question points to the space between **seeds** and **nuts** in the sentence 'Archie the hamster eats seeds nuts and dried peas every day.' Children should recognise that this is a list of foods, and commas are used to separate items in a list. The missing punctuation between 'seeds' and 'nuts' must therefore be **a comma**. The other options do not fit: there is no possession, no question, and the sentence is not ending at that point.

Watch out: A child might be tempted to tick 'a full stop' because the sentence feels long, but a full stop would end the sentence mid-way through the list, which is incorrect.

Question 5 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should circle the word 'shoes'.

Before looking at the answer, point to each word in the sentence in turn and ask: "Which word is the name of a thing?"

The sentence 'The shoes were shiny' contains four words: a determiner (the), a noun (shoes), a verb (were), and an adjective (shiny). Children should identify **shoes** as the noun because it names a thing. A common slip is circling shiny, which describes the shoes rather than naming something, making it an adjective, not a noun.

Watch out: A child might circle 'shiny' because it stands out as a describing word, but 'shiny' is an adjective, not a noun. Only 'shoes' names a thing.

Question 6 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should write a full stop after 'field', a question mark after 'swimming', and a question mark after 'gloves'. All three must be correct to score the mark.

Before your child writes anything, ask them to read each sentence aloud and decide whether it is telling us something or asking something. Ask: "Is this sentence asking a question or telling us something?"

Each of the three sentences needs the correct end punctuation. **'There is a pony in the field'** is a statement, so it needs a **full stop**. **'Are we going swimming'** begins with 'Are', making it a question, so it needs a **question mark**. **'Have you seen my hat and gloves'** also begins with 'Have you', making it a question needing a **question mark**. All three boxes must be filled correctly to score the single mark available.

Watch out: A child might put a question mark after 'There is a pony in the field' because it sounds uncertain, but it is a statement, not a question, so it needs a full stop.

Question 7 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should circle the word 'blue'.

Before looking at the answer, ask your child to point to the naming words and the doing words in the sentence, then think about which word is left that describes something. Ask: "Which word in the sentence tells you what the crayon looks like?"

The sentence 'Take a blue crayon from the box to colour in the sky' contains four word classes. Children need to identify the **adjective** - the describing word that tells us what kind of crayon it is. Blue describes the noun 'crayon', making it the adjective. A child might be drawn to 'sky' (a noun) or 'colour' (a verb here), so the key step is asking which word describes what the crayon looks like.

Watch out: A child might circle 'shiny' - but that word does not appear here. More likely they circle 'crayon' (a noun) or 'colour' (used as a verb). Neither of those is the adjective.

Question 8 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should place a full stop after the word 'mum' and another full stop after the word 'them', making two separate sentences.

Before looking at the answer, ask the child to read the words aloud slowly and think about where one idea finishes and a new idea starts. Ask: "Can you find the place where one sentence ends and a brand new sentence begins?"

The sentence contains **two complete thoughts** that need to be separated: 'Jamie walks to school with his mum' and 'Alex joins them'. Children need to recognise where one sentence ends and the next begins, placing a full stop after mum and a second full stop after them. Both full stops must be correct for the point to be awarded. A common error is adding extra full stops in the wrong places, such as after 'school' - the official answer does not accept any additional punctuation.

Watch out: A child might place a full stop after 'school' (making 'Jamie walks to school.!) but this creates a sentence fragment and is not accepted - the full stop must go after 'mum'.

Question 9 (1 mark)

Answer: kind should be matched to 'ness' (kindness), enjoy to 'ment' (enjoyment), and tired to 'ness' (tiredness).

Before drawing any lines, encourage the child to say each new word aloud for each possible combination. Ask: "Can you try saying each word with both endings and tell me which one sounds like a real word?"

Each word needs the suffix that makes a real noun. **Kind + ness = kindness** and **tired + ness = tiredness** both work because these root words are adjectives that take -ness. **Enjoy + ment = enjoyment** works because enjoy is a verb that takes -ment. All three matches must be correct to earn the one mark available. The official answer notes that any of the printed suffix boxes may be used, since each suffix appears more than once on the page.

Watch out: A child might match 'enjoy' to 'ness' (enjoyness), as both suffixes appear next to that word on the page, but 'enjoyness' is not a real word - the correct noun is 'enjoyment'.

Question 10 (1 mark)

Answer: Children need to write one adverb to fill the gap, such as 'carefully', 'slowly', 'happily', 'gently', 'badly', 'together', or 'today'.

Before revealing the answer, remind the child what an adverb does - it tells us more about how something happens. Ask: "Can you think of a word that tells us how the children cut out the shapes?"

Children need to identify that an **adverb** adds information about how the shapes were cut out. Most children will reach for a word ending in **-ly** (such as carefully or slowly), which is the clearest route. The official answer also accepts plausible adverbs that do not end in -ly, such as together or today.

Spelling does not need to be perfect here - the word simply needs to be a recognisable, plausible adverb that fits the sentence.

Watch out: A child might write an adjective such as 'careful' or 'slow' instead of the adverb form 'carefully' or 'slowly'. An adjective describes a noun, not an action, so 'careful' on its own does not work as an adverb in this sentence.

Question 11 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'What a beautiful picture you've drawn!' as this is the only sentence that uses an exclamation mark correctly.

Before looking at the options, ask your child to think about what an exclamation mark is for. Ask: "Which of these sentences sounds like a big, excited statement rather than a question?"

An exclamation mark is used correctly on a sentence that begins with 'What' or 'How' and makes an exclamation rather than asking a question. **'What a beautiful picture you've drawn!'** fits this pattern perfectly. The other three options are all questions beginning with 'Do', 'How did', and 'Can' - they ask something rather than exclaim, so they should end with question marks, not exclamation marks. Children should recognise that just adding an exclamation mark to any sentence does not make it correct.

Watch out: A child might tick 'How did you make the colour so bright!' because it starts with 'How', which can begin an exclamation - but this sentence is asking a genuine question, not making an exclamation, so it should end with a question mark.

Question 12 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'the tiny insect' as the noun phrase.

Before revealing the answer, ask the child to point to each option and say whether it names a thing, describes an action, or tells us how something is done. Ask: "Which group of words is naming something - a person, place, or thing?"

A **noun phrase** is a group of words built around a noun. Among the four options, only the tiny insect contains a noun ('insect') with a determiner ('the') and an adjective ('tiny') describing it. Children should rule out 'so quickly' (an adverbial phrase), 'had been eating' (a verb phrase), and 'very colourful' (an adjectival phrase with no noun). The key test is: does the group of words name a thing?

Watch out: A child might be tempted to tick 'very colourful' because it contains a describing word, but there is no noun in that phrase - it describes without naming anything.

Question 13 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should circle both 'washed' and 'shared' - these are the two verbs in the sentence.

Before revealing the answer, ask your child to read the sentence aloud and think about what actions are happening in it. Ask: "Can you find the words that tell us what Anna is doing or did?"

Both **washed** and **shared** are the action words (verbs) in the sentence 'Anna washed the grapes and shared them with her friends.' Children need to identify both to gain the mark. A common difficulty is spotting that there are two verbs joined by 'and'. Words like 'grapes' and 'friends' are nouns, not verbs, so circling those would not score. Both verbs must be correctly circled for the single mark to be awarded.

Watch out: A child might only circle 'washed' and miss 'shared' - both action words must be identified, as the question asks for all the verbs.

Question 14 (1 mark)

Answer: The apostrophe needs to go between the 'm' and the 's' in 'Jims', making it 'Jim's'.

Before looking at the answer, ask the child to think about who the books belong to. Ask: "Whose books are they, and where do you think the little mark needs to go in the word 'Jims'?"

The apostrophe for possession sits between the owner's name and the 's' that shows ownership. Children should recognise that Jim owns the books, so the word needs to become **Jim's**. The apostrophe replaces nothing here - it simply signals belonging. Placing it anywhere else (after the 's', or as a comma-like mark below the line) does not score. The spelling of 'Jim' and 'books' need not change.

Watch out: A child might add an apostrophe after the 's' in 'books', writing 'book's', but the apostrophe is only needed to show Jim's ownership, not on the word 'books'.

Question 15a (1 mark)

Answer: Children need to write a verb ending in '-ing' that fits 'Today, I am ___ a picture.' Good examples are 'drawing', 'painting' or 'making'.

Point the child to the word 'Today' and the gap in the sentence, and ask: "What is the girl in the picture doing right now?"

The word 'Today' and the structure '**I am ___ a picture**' signal the present progressive tense. Children need to supply a verb in its -ing form that slots neatly after 'am' and makes sense with 'a picture' - for example, drawing, painting, or making. The picture of a girl working at a craft table supports any plausible art-related verb. Correct spelling is required for this question, so a child should take care to write the -ing ending clearly.

Watch out: A child might write 'draw' or 'paint' without the '-ing' ending, but the sentence frame 'I am ___' requires the -ing form - a base verb alone does not fit the present progressive structure and would not score.

Question 15b (1 mark)

Answer: A simple past tense verb that makes sense with 'Yesterday, I ___ a picture.' Words such as drew, painted, made, held, took or did all work. The verb must be spelt correctly.

Point the child to the word at the start of the sentence and ask them to think about when the action happened. Ask: "The sentence says 'Yesterday' - does that mean the action is happening now, or did it happen in the past?"

The word **Yesterday** is the key clue - it signals that children need a **past tense** verb. The sentence structure 'Yesterday, I ___ a picture' requires the simple past form, so a child should think about what word describes a completed action. Answers such as drew, painted, made, held, took or did all score the mark. Crucially, the verb must be spelt correctly for this question - the official answer explicitly requires correct spelling.

Watch out: The word 'done' is not accepted, even though it is a past tense form - children must use the simple past form such as 'did' rather than 'done'. Also, the verb must be spelt correctly or the answer will not score.

Question 16 (2 marks)

Answer: Children should write one complete sentence about something they can see in the picture of the playground (swings and a slide). The sentence must start with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark to earn both marks.

Ask your child to look carefully at the picture and think about what they can see happening. Then say: "Can you tell me one thing that is happening in the picture, in a full sentence?"

Question 16 is the only 2-mark question in this paper, and the marks are split between **content and grammar** (mark one) and **correct punctuation** (mark two). Children should look at the picture showing children on swings and a slide, then write one sentence describing something they see. A sentence such as 'The children are playing on the swings.' earns both marks: it is grammatically correct and correctly punctuated with a capital letter and full stop. If a child writes a grammatically correct sentence but forgets the capital letter or end punctuation, only one mark is awarded. A phrase alone, such as 'children on swings', scores nothing even if punctuated.

Watch out: A phrase without a verb - such as 'two swings and a slide' - does not count as a sentence and scores no marks, even if a full stop is added.

Model answer: The children are playing on the swings and slide.

Question 17 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'Singular' for dress, 'Singular' for house, and 'Plural' for socks.

Before looking at the table together, ask the child to think carefully about how many things each word refers to. Ask: "Does each word mean one thing or more than one thing?"

Each word in the table must be sorted into **singular** (one thing) or **plural** (more than one thing). Dress means one dress, and house means one house, so both are singular. Socks ends in an 's' that signals more than one sock, making it plural. All three must be correct to score the mark.

Watch out: A child might mark 'dress' as plural because they associate clothing words with pairs, but 'dress' is a single item, not a pair like 'socks'.

Question 18 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'Mum makes Ella a hot drink.' as it is written in the present tense.

Before looking at the options, ask the child to think about what present tense means - is it happening now or in the past? Ask: "Can you tell me which of these sentences is happening right now, not in the past?"

Each of the four options uses a different verb: took, makes, gave, and told. Children need to spot that only '**Mum makes Ella a hot drink**' uses a present-tense verb form. The other three options all use simple past tense verbs, which describe something that has already happened. 'Makes' tells us the action is happening now, making it the only present-tense sentence.

Watch out: A child might be tempted to tick 'Mum took Ella breakfast in bed' as it sounds like something a caring mum does regularly, but 'took' is a past tense verb.

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