

2026 national curriculum tests

Key stage 1

English grammar, punctuation and spelling test mark schemes

Paper 1: spelling

Paper 2: questions



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1. Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) is responsible for the development and delivery of key stage 1 and 2 statutory and optional tests. STA is an executive agency of the Department for Education.

The 2026 optional tests assess the national curriculum. This test has been developed to meet the specification set out in the [test framework](#)¹ for English grammar, punctuation and spelling at key stage 1.

This key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test is not statutory. The key stage 1 tests can be marked internally within schools to inform teacher assessment. The evidence from the test can be used to help inform this teacher assessment.

A new test and new mark schemes are produced each year.

Scaled score conversion tables are not included in this document. Conversion tables are produced as part of the standards maintenance process. [Scaled score conversion tables](#)² for the 2026 tests will be published in June 2026.

The mark schemes should be used to mark pupils' responses. The pupil examples are based on responses gathered from the test trialling process. It is important when marking to refer to the general marking principles, the additional guidance and the exemplars section to ensure marking is accurate and consistent.

2. Structure of the test

The optional key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test materials comprise:

- Paper 1: spelling (20 marks)
- Paper 2: questions (20 marks)

3. Content domain coverage

The 2026 test meets the specification in the test framework. Tables 1 and 2 set out the areas of the content domain that are assessed in Papers 1 and 2.

4. Internal moderation procedures

We recommend those who are involved in marking the key stage 1 tests undertake moderation activity to ensure marking is consistent across their school.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-english-grammar-punctuation-and-spelling-test-framework

² www.gov.uk/guidance/scaled-scores-at-key-stage-1

5. Paper 1: spelling

5.1 Content domain coverage for Paper 1: spelling

This information is provided in the mark schemes in Table 1.

5.2 General marking guidance for Paper 1: spelling

The following guidance applies to all questions in Paper 1. Please read this carefully before applying the individual mark schemes.

- If a pupil makes more than one attempt, it must be clear which answer the pupil wishes to be marked.
- If a pupil makes two or more attempts and it is not clear which answer should be considered, the mark is not awarded.
- Pupils can answer in upper or lower case, or a mixture of the two. The exception to this is for days of the week, which must be written with an initial capital letter for the mark to be awarded.
- If a pupil has answered with the correct sequence of letters but has incorrectly inserted an apostrophe or a hyphen, the mark is not awarded.
- If a pupil has answered with the correct sequence of letters but these have been separated into clearly divided components, with or without a hyphen, the mark is not awarded.
- If a pupil uses a reversed letter, it must be unambiguous for the award of the mark. Markers may refer to the pupil's handwriting in the rest of the paper to decide whether or not the letter is ambiguous.
- Crossed-out answers that have not been replaced by a further attempt should not be awarded the mark.

5.3 Pupil version of Paper 1: spelling

Spelling	
P. The _____ covered the branches.	<input type="radio"/>
1. The _____ rings at the end of playtime.	<input type="radio"/>
2. My auntie works in a _____.	<input type="radio"/>
3. The _____ lived on the mountain.	<input type="radio"/>
4. There are lots of fish in the _____.	<input type="radio"/>
5. The path is _____ here.	<input type="radio"/>
6. I can _____ across the playground.	<input type="radio"/>
7. There are lots of buildings in the _____.	<input type="radio"/>
8. The _____ of the tree are under the ground.	<input type="radio"/>
9. The _____ sat at the front of the bus.	<input type="radio"/>
10. Please find your _____ and sit down.	<input type="radio"/>
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11. I am going to the park on _____.	<input type="radio"/>
12. My best friend is _____ Orla.	<input type="radio"/>
13. Bats are _____ at night.	<input type="radio"/>
14. Dan has the _____ hair in his class.	<input type="radio"/>
15. I would like _____ pen please.	<input type="radio"/>
16. I use a _____ and fork to eat my lunch.	<input type="radio"/>
17. Ethan _____ an excellent poem.	<input type="radio"/>
18. We will _____ some eggs for breakfast.	<input type="radio"/>
19. Max _____ to get to school on time.	<input type="radio"/>
20. There was a _____ in the museum.	<input type="radio"/>
End of spelling test	
Page 3 of 4	

6. Mark schemes for Paper 1: spelling

Information relating to the content domain reference codes can be found in the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test framework.

Table 1: Mark schemes and content domain references for Paper 1

Qu.	Spelling	M.	Primary content domain reference	Secondary content domain reference
1	bell	1	S1 – the sounds /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/, /k/ spelt <i>ff</i> , <i>ll</i> , <i>ss</i> , <i>zz</i> and <i>ck</i>	
2	bank	1	S2 – the <i>ŋ</i> sound spelt <i>n</i> before <i>k</i>	
3	goat	1	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs	
4	lake	1	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs	S11 – using <i>k</i> for the /k/ sound
5	wider	1	S25 – adding the endings <i>-ing</i> , <i>-ed</i> , <i>-er</i> , <i>-est</i> and <i>-y</i> to words ending in <i>-e</i> with a consonant before it	
6	skip	1	S11 – using <i>k</i> for the /k/ sound	
7	city	1	S15 – the /s/ sound spelt <i>c</i> before <i>e</i> , <i>i</i> and <i>y</i>	S9 – words ending in <i>-y</i> (/i:/ or /ɪ/)
8	roots	1	S5 – adding <i>-s</i> and <i>-es</i> to words (plural of nouns and the third-person singular of verbs)	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs
9	lady	1	S9 – words ending in <i>-y</i> (/i:/ or /ɪ/)	
10	place	1	S15 – the /s/ sound spelt <i>c</i> before <i>e</i> , <i>i</i> and <i>y</i>	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs
11	Monday	1	S13 – the days of the week	S28 – the /ʌ/ sound spelt <i>o</i>
12	called	1	S27 – the /ɔ:/ sound spelt <i>a</i> before <i>l</i> and <i>ll</i>	S6 – adding the endings <i>-ing</i> , <i>-ed</i> and <i>-er</i> to verbs where no change is needed in the root word
13	active	1	S4 – the /v/ sound at the end of words	
14	shortest	1	S7 – adding <i>-er</i> and <i>-est</i> to adjectives where no change is needed in the root word	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs
15	another	1	S28 – the /ʌ/ sound spelt <i>o</i>	
16	knife	1	S16 – the /n/ sound spelt <i>kn-</i> and (less often) <i>gn-</i> at the beginning of words	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs
17	wrote	1	S17 – the /r/ sound spelt <i>wr-</i> at the beginning of words	S8 – vowel digraphs and trigraphs
18	fry	1	S22 – the /aɪ/ sound spelt <i>-y</i> at the end of words	
19	hurries	1	S23 – adding <i>-es</i> to nouns and verbs ending in <i>-y</i>	
20	fossil	1	S21 – words ending in <i>-il</i>	
Total marks		20		

7. Paper 2: questions

7.1 Content domain coverage for Paper 2: questions

Table 2 sets out the content domain coverage for Paper 2. Information relating to these codes can be found in the key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test framework.

Table 2: Content domain coverage for Paper 2

	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6
Qu.	Grammatical terms or word classes	Functions of sentences	Combining words, phrases and clauses	Verb tenses and consistency	Punctuation	Vocabulary
1			1			
2					1	
3						1
4				1		
5			1			
6					1	
7	1					
8					1	
9	1					
10					1	
11				1		
12					1	
13	1					
14		1				
15					1	
16		1			1	
17					1	
18	1					
19						1

7.2 General marking guidance for Paper 2: questions

To ensure consistency of marking, the most frequent procedural queries are listed in Table 3, along with the action you should take. The following guidance applies to all questions in Paper 2. Please read this carefully before applying the individual mark schemes.

Table 3: General marking principles for Paper 2

Question type	Accept	Do not accept
Tick boxes and tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any unambiguous indication of the correct answer, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the box is crossed rather than ticked the correct answer is circled rather than ticked correct answers that replace a crossed-out attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers in which more than the required number of boxes have been ticked
Circling of the answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any unambiguous indication of the correct answer, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the answer is underlined the answer is enclosed within a box the answer is circled together with part of a surrounding word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers in which more than the required number of words have been circled answers in which the correct answer is circled, together with the whole of any surrounding words
Drawing lines to 'match' boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lines that do not touch the boxes, provided the intention is clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> multiple lines drawn to or from the same box (unless this is a question requirement)
Writing or inserting punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> correctly formed punctuation that is clear, unambiguous and recognisable as the required punctuation mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> punctuation that is ambiguous, for example, it is unclear whether the mark is a comma or full stop

Question type	Accept	Do not accept
Additional punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers that are punctuated correctly according to the mark scheme, even if additional punctuation has been attempted incorrectly <p>Pupils may try to use inverted commas around spoken words. This is beyond the key stage 1 programme of study and should not be taken into account when considering whether the answer is correct according to the mark scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers that do not meet the mark scheme criteria
Spelling (in Paper 2 only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorrect spellings of the correct answer, unless specific mark scheme guidance is given to require a correct spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorrect spellings of answers for which the mark scheme requires correct spelling <p>For questions assessing contracted forms, verb forms, plurals, prefixes and suffixes, correct spelling is generally required.</p>
Answers outside the expected space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a correct answer given somewhere other than the answer space, provided it is not contradicted by another answer written elsewhere correct answers that are written in the 'blank' within a question, rather than in the expected space below it correct answers in which the pupil has written out a word or sentence that is already provided <p>For answers in both the expected space (e.g. the tick box) and elsewhere, the intended answer space takes precedence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers that are given outside the expected space and are contradicted by another answer written elsewhere

Question type	Accept	Do not accept
More than one answer given	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> multiple answers that are all correct according to the mark scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> both correct and incorrect responses given
Handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers that are clear, unambiguous and recognisable, including letters that have been reversed, but which are still clearly identifiable to the marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers that are unclear or ambiguous
Capital letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital letters that are clear and unambiguous <p>Where letters do not have unique capital letter forms, the height of the capital letter will be the same as, or greater than, that of letters with ascenders.</p> <p>Markers may refer to the pupil's handwriting in the rest of the paper to distinguish between upper and lower case letters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answers in which capital letters are omitted or placed inappropriately in a sentence, or where an entire word is capitalised <p>Where a pupil needs to write, rewrite or complete a sentence, the correct use of capital letters is required.</p>
Crossed-out answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> correct answers that replace a crossed-out attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> crossed-out answers

7.3 Explanation of the mark schemes for Paper 2: questions

Those marking the tests should familiarise themselves with the marking guidance in section 7.2 of this document before applying the mark schemes.

The practice questions are not marked as they are completed by the pupils together with the test administrator as an introduction to the test.

The mark schemes contain the following information for each question:

- the question number
- the question from the test paper
- what is required to answer each question – either a correct answer or examples of different types of creditworthy response
- how many marks are available for this question
- any additional guidance that may be relevant.

8. Mark schemes for Paper 2: questions

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
1	<p>Tick the correct word to complete the sentence below.</p> <p><i>I wanted to buy an apple _____ I forgot my money.</i></p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct box ticked.</p> <p>because <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>or <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>if <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>but <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	1m
2	<p>Circle the punctuation mark that is needed at the end of the sentence below.</p> <p><i>How far did you throw the ball</i></p> <p>Award 1 mark for the question mark correctly identified.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> ? . , ! </div> <p>Also award the mark for inserting a question mark after <i>ball</i>, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How far did you throw the ball?</i> 	1m
3	<p>Which word can have the letters <u>un</u> in front of it to make another word?</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct box ticked.</p> <p>fold <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>soft <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>dive <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>slow <input type="checkbox"/></p>	1m
4	<p>Write the past tense of <u>help</u> in the box.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct verb inserted.</p> <p><i>We <u>help</u> our teacher tidy up.</i></p> <div style="margin-left: 40px;"> ↓ <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px;">helped</div> </div> <p>Also accept other correct past tense forms inserted, i.e. <i>were helping, had helped, have helped, have been helping</i> and <i>had been helping</i>.</p> <p>Do not accept misspellings of the verb or the verb form.</p> <p>Additional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answers can be in upper or lower case, or a mixture of the two. 	1m

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
5	<p>Tick the correct word that completes the sentence below.</p> <p>_____ we have finished eating, we will go outside.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct box ticked.</p> <p>That <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>But <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>When <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Or <input type="checkbox"/></p>	1m
6	<p>Add two exclamation marks to make two sentences below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for an exclamation mark after <i>careful</i> and an exclamation mark after <i>road</i>.</p> <p><i>Be careful! Do not play near the road!</i></p> <p>Do not accept the insertion of additional punctuation.</p>	1m
7	<p>Tick the sentence that contains an adverb.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct box ticked.</p> <p>Can you hear Luka practising? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Luka is practising a new song. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Luka is practising his song quietly. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I like the song Luka is practising. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	1m
8	<p>Circle the three words that should start with a capital letter in the sentence below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the three correct words identified.</p> <p>(my) friend and (i) play netball every (thursday).</p>	1m
9	<p>Circle the two adjectives in the sentence below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the two correct words identified.</p> <p>Usma used her (new) crayons to colour in a picture of a (red) flower.</p>	1m
10	<p>Add a full stop and a capital letter in the correct places below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for a full stop after <i>library</i> and a capital letter on, above or below the word <i>we</i>.</p> <p><i>Our class went to the library. We all chose a book to read.</i></p>	1m

Qu.	Requirement	Mark												
11	<p>Rewrite the underlined verb to complete the sentence below in the past tense.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct verb inserted.</p> <p>Chris <u>is</u> listening to his teacher.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">↓</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">was</div> <p>Do not accept misspellings of the verb.</p> <p>Additional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answers can be in upper or lower case, or a mixture of the two. 	1m												
12	<p>Add an apostrophe in the correct place in the sentence below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for inserting an apostrophe correctly in <i>Jack's</i>.</p> <p><i>The pencils are on Jack's desk.</i></p> <p>Additional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark positively in relation to the size and position of the apostrophe as some pupils at this age may have uneven handwriting. 	1m												
13	<p>Circle the two verbs in the sentence below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the two correct words identified.</p> <p>We <u>walked</u> to the pond yesterday and <u>fed</u> the ducks.</p>	1m												
14	<p>Tick to show whether each sentence is a statement or a command.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for all three correct.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 40%;">Sentence</th><th style="width: 30%;">Statement</th><th style="width: 30%;">Command</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Take two slices of bread and some filling.</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">✓</td></tr> <tr> <td>Put the filling between the slices of bread.</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">✓</td></tr> <tr> <td>You have made a sandwich.</td><td style="text-align: center;">✓</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Sentence	Statement	Command	Take two slices of bread and some filling.		✓	Put the filling between the slices of bread.		✓	You have made a sandwich.	✓		1m
Sentence	Statement	Command												
Take two slices of bread and some filling.		✓												
Put the filling between the slices of bread.		✓												
You have made a sandwich.	✓													
15	<p>Add one comma in the correct place in the sentence below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for a comma after <i>costumes</i>.</p> <p><i>The girls packed swimming costumes, towels and goggles into their bags.</i></p> <p>Do not accept the insertion of additional punctuation.</p>	1m												

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
16	<p>James wants to learn about frogs.</p> <p>Write a question that he could ask about frogs.</p> <p>Remember to use correct punctuation.</p> <p>Award 2 marks for an appropriate, grammatically correct question with correct punctuation (see additional guidance), e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is a frog?</i> • <i>Why are frogs slimey?</i> • <i>How are frogs difrent to toads?</i> • <i>Do frogs jump?</i> • <i>What are tadpoles?</i> • <i>Are frogs green?</i> <p>Also award 2 marks for a plausible response that uses a question tag and is correctly punctuated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frogs live in water, don't they?</i> <p>Award 1 mark for an appropriate, grammatically correct question with incorrect punctuation (see additional guidance), e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What do frogs do</i> • <i>Why do Frogs jump high?</i> • <i>do frogs lay eggs</i> • <i>how do frogs grow?</i> • <i>Where do they live.</i> <p>Do not accept other sentence types, a question that is grammatically incorrect or written with non-Standard English verb forms or adverbs, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The frog is green!</i> • <i>I like learning about frogs.</i> • <i>What a pretty frog we found?</i> • <i>Can frog lives in water?</i> • <i>Where do frog comes from?</i> • <i>Can frog jump well?</i> • <i>Can frogs jump quick?</i> <p>Additional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct punctuation refers to correct capitalisation throughout the sentence and a correctly placed question mark – other incorrect or omitted punctuation should not be penalised. • Incorrect spelling should not be penalised. • Attempts to punctuate the whole sentence as direct speech should not be penalised. • Markers are encouraged to credit imaginative interpretations of the context. 	Up to 2m

Qu.	Requirement	Mark								
17	<p>Write the words <u>did not</u> as one word, using an apostrophe.</p> <p><i>Jakub <u>did not</u> go to the school concert.</i></p> <p>Award 1 mark for <i>didn't</i> spelt correctly.</p> <table><tr><th>Accept</th><th>Do not accept</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Additional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark positively in relation to the size and position of the apostrophe as some pupils at this age may have uneven handwriting.• The response can be written in upper or lower case or a mixture of the two.	Accept	Do not accept							1m
Accept	Do not accept									
18	<p>Circle the two nouns in the sentence below.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the two correct words identified.</p> <p><i>We will need to plant some (seeds) in the (soil).</i></p>	1m								

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
19	<p>How does the suffix change the meaning of the second word?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chair chairs <p>Award 1 mark for a response that uses the terms plural and/or singular, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The first word is singular and the second (word) is plural.</i> <i>Adding an s to the singular first word makes it plural</i> <i>Adding an s changes the word into a plural</i> <i>It changes it to a plural.</i> <i>without the s it is singular</i> <i>Chair is singular but chairs isn't.</i> <p>Or for a response that references the number of chairs, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Chairs is with a s because there is more than one.</i> <i>It shows there is more than one chair</i> <i>There is more than one</i> <i>The first (word) is only one (chair) and the second (word) is more than one (chair)</i> <i>there are lots of chairs.</i> <i>There are several/many chairs.</i> <p>Do not accept a generic response or one that references the addition of an s without explaining how this changes the meaning, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It has an s at the end</i> <i>Chairs has an extra letter</i> <i>There is no s in the first word</i> <i>The suffix changes the meaning.</i> <p>Or a response that uses only the term singular without reference to the suffix and/or the second word, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>chair is singular</i> <i>the (first) word is singular</i> <p>Additional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no spelling, punctuation or capitalisation requirements for this question. 	1m

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