

SATs revision: your KS2 SATs English helper



Boost your child's confidence before the Y6 English assessments with these handy tips and literacy activities that you and your child can work on together.

KS2 English SATs: understanding the test

At the end of Year 6 children sit a KS2 English SATs exam, which is made up of three papers:

Grammar, punctuation and spelling paper 1: this consists of about 49 questions that test grammar and punctuation, and takes 45 minutes.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling paper 2: this is a spelling test. The teacher will read 20 complete sentences out loud. Children have these sentences on a printed sheet with one word missing, and they need to fill in the missing word, spelling it correctly. This takes about 15 minutes.

Reading: children are given a booklet containing three texts in different styles (e.g. a story, a non-fiction piece and a poem), and an answer book with approximately 36 questions about the three texts. Children have an hour in which to answer the questions in any order they choose.

Previously, children sat a writing test as part of KS2 SATs, however teachers now assess writing levels by looking at a child's writing throughout the whole year.

SATs have been revamped for 2016 and beyond. The government has produced one set of papers ([link is external](#)) that your child can practise with. You can also download all of the old-style official past papers for KS2 English SATs to help familiarise your child with taking exams, and read our guide to using past papers for at-home practice). If your child is revising for KS2 SATs the following tips and activities will help them prepare.

Reading and KS2 English SATs: tips and advice

Read outside the book

Children need to get used to reading non-fiction texts as well as stories. Try to encourage children to read texts associated with events or interests that are meaningful to them; for example, if they like football, read through a match programme or a newspaper report with them. If you're planning a holiday this summer, get your child to read up on your destination of choice.

Give them goals

A time limit and a reward can be really motivational, so why not set your child a challenge to read

one book a week? At the end of each week, encourage them to tell you about the story and then give them a (small!) reward of their choice. Having said that, make sure you never force them to read something they are not interested in; this is counter-productive, and could put them off reading for good!

Reading together

Bring back the 'bedtime story' for your eleven year old! Take turns to read out loud with your child, guaranteed to improve their reading and their listening skills, as well as a brilliant way to spend time together. When you are listening to your child encourage them to read with expression and to do different voices for different characters. You can also ask them comprehension questions (they can test you when it's your turn to read out loud!); look at KS2 SATs Reading tests for ideas on kinds of questions to ask.

Read between the lines

When asking your child questions about what they have been reading, think about inference (reading between the lines) and deduction (reading beyond the lines). An example of an inference question is: 'Pick out two phrases that tell us the bear is angry with Goldilocks.' An example of a deduction question is: 'How do you think Goldilocks might have felt as she ran away?' Encourage your child to consider conflicting emotions that characters might be experiencing, for example: 'Maybe she feels happy to have got away from the bears, but a bit guilty about all the trouble she has caused. She might be worried that people will find out and she will get told off.'

Download the sample test

Practising a sample SATs paper will help your child enormously. You may want to go through it with them, getting them to read the text aloud to you and then talking through the questions, or you may want to let them do it unaided so that you can see what they are capable of. If you do let them get on with it alone, make sure you go through their answers with them. Maybe just deal with one text at a time, and do it over two days, to avoid pressurising your child.

Grammar and punctuation and KS2 English SATs: tips and advice

In the new grammar and punctuation test, children are likely to be tested on the following:

Use of full stops, capitals, commas, brackets, question marks, exclamation marks, speech marks, apostrophes.

Understanding what nouns, pronouns, prepositions, contractions, connectives, adjectives, verbs and adverbs are and how to use them.

Knowing how to add suffixes and prefixes to words.

In sentences, being able to make subjects and verbs agree, putting verbs in the correct tense, inserting words with the correct plural and recognising a subordinate clause.

Knowing the difference between direct and indirect speech

The Year 6 English curriculum includes plenty of grammar work to prepare them, but you can also read up about the 'SPAG' test and find grammar practice activities to work through at home on

TheSchoolRun. If you are unsure about grammatical vocabulary, look up the terms above in our primary-school literacy glossary to get you up to speed.

Spelling and KS2 English SATs: tips and advice

The following spellings are covered in Years 5 and 6, and are likely to feature in the spelling paper:

Words ending	cious/tious cial/tial ant/ance/ancy ent/ence/ency able/ably ible/ibly ferred/ferral/ferance
Words beginning	co- re-
Words containing	ei/ie ough silent letters b, s, n, t, k
Homophones	Ending ce/se plus other homophones

Of course, it's also important to deal with the spellings that your child is struggling with. One way to do this is to encourage them to write a story or information text for you and then look at the words they are struggling with. Alternatively, ask their teacher if you can look at their literacy book and go through, making a list of types of words that they are getting wrong (for example: words ending -ing or words with ie/ei in them). Encourage them to learn these words and other similar words. Get them to make and decorate their own flashcards, then test them by holding up the card, then putting it face down and asking them to write the word from memory.