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| **Grammar for Writing Fiction Glossary** | |
| **Narrative viewpoint** | Narrative viewpoint refers to the perspective from which the story is told. This might change as the narrative develops, for example in a dual narrative where the storytelling switches between different characters. Better writers will be able to manipulate viewpoint deliberately, e.g. choosing a first person narrative for immediacy. |
| **Narrative voice** | The distinctive tone and style of the narrative. Better writers will be able to establish this through choice of vocabulary and sentence patterns e.g. using a succession of short, simple (one-clause) sentences to quicken narrative pace and heighten tension. |
| **Narrative structure and sequencing** | The way the narrative is organised and unfolds. In the scheme, students are encouraged to plan a complete short story, for example by using a narrative structure chart to plot its main stages, then to choose one section to write in detail. This need not be the opening. Better writers are able to experiment with narrative structure and chronological sequence, e.g. by starting in mid-action and using flashback to fill in details. |
| **First/third person** | In first-person narrative, the story is told from the point of view of the main character who is directly involved in the action, using ‘I’ and ‘we’. In third person narrative, the story is told from the point of view of someone who is not immediately involved but who is observing the action, using ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘they’. Second person (‘you’) is a possible, if unnatural-sounding, choice for narrative. Better writers will make deliberate choices and keep pronoun choices consistent. |
| **Present/past tense** | A story in present tense is told as though it is happening now *e.g.* *A crowd of onlookers gathers on the platform. The lost child sobs loudly.* A story in past tense (the most common choice) is told as though it has already happened *e.g. A crowd of onlookers gathered on the platform while the lost child sobbed loudly.* Better writers will choose verb tense deliberately and be consistent. |
| **Noun phrase** | A noun phrase consists of the ‘head’ noun or pronoun and all the other words which relate to it and which form a unit of meaning within a sentence, e.g.  **Fire** spread quickly. (**It** spread quickly.)  *The* **fire** spread quickly.  *Wild and uncontrolled, the raging* **fire**spread quickly.  The head noun can be pre-modified (additional words in front of the noun) or post-modified (additional words after the noun). Thus a noun phrase can be very short or very long:  *Wild and uncontrolled, the raging* **fire**, *which had started in the depths of the forest early that morning*, spread quickly.  Better writers use noun phrases to add precision and detail to descriptions and to vary sentence length and structure.  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_nouns_advanced.php> |
| **Prepositional phrase** | A phrase that begins with a preposition e.g. **in** the depths of the forest; **at** the end of the road; **above** us; **near** the window. Prepositional phrases are useful in fiction writing for adding detail about a setting or a character. For example they can post-modify a noun: the man **with** a limp, or be placed at the front of a sentence for rhetorical effect: **Down** the alleyway we ran…  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_prepositions.php> |
| **Adverbials** | This is a generic term to cover adverbs, and phrases or clauses which perform the same function as adverbs within a sentence, which is to modify a verb by giving information about time, place or manner (when, where, why, how).  Better writers use more place-related adverbials (e.g. *beneath the leaves*; *behind the wardrobe*) than time-related adverbials (e.g. *later; yesterday; meanwhile*) in order to create specific narrative detail. While adverbs often end in –ly, many don’t (e.g. ***late*** *that night*; *we* ***soon*** *reached the shore*). Better writers use a wide range and also vary the position of adverbials within the sentence, including fronting them: ***Cautiously****, she crept forward*. ***Suddenly afraid,*** *she cried out.*  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_adverbs_teach.php> |
| **Main clause** | A main or independent clause contains a subject and a finite verb, which is a verb that inflects - changes its ending – according to person, number and tense e.g*: I walk; she walks; they walked*. A main clause is a complete unit of meaning (see simple sentence below).  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_verbs.php> |

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| **Subordinate clause** | A subordinate or dependent clause does not make sense on its own but depends for its meaning on the main clause it is placed with. It is formed in three different ways:  A subordinating conjunction + finite verb: ***Because*** *she* ***was*** *guilty, (she ran away).*  A relative pronoun + finite verb: (*Louise),* ***who*** *clearly* ***felt*** *guilty, (ran away).*  A non-finite verb is one that does not change its form but stays the same in a clause, regardless of changes alongside it. It can be a present or past participle or the infinitive:  ***Running*** *away*, (Louise felt guilty). ***Locked*** *out of the house*, (she was in despair).  (She ran) *to get help*.  Better writers know how to vary the form of subordinate clauses and their position within the sentence to emphasise meaning and achieve pleasing rhythm. |
| **Simple sentence** | A simple sentence consists of one main clause. Better writers know how to choose an expressive verb to form the sentence e.g. *He* ***shoved*** *to the front of the queue* rather than *He* ***went*** *to the front of the queue.* A simple sentence can also be short: e.g. *He* ***shoved*** *forward*. *He* ***was*** *in a hurry.* *Others* ***could*** *wait*.  In fiction writing, a series of short simple sentences can create pace and drama and a distinctively ‘spare’ style that focuses on action. However, ‘simple’ refers to structure, not length. This long sentence is still ‘simple’, having just one finite verb, with adverbials adding descriptive detail:  *Evidently in a hurry, rudely, almost angrily, he* ***shoved*** *the others in the queue out of the way with his elbows.eHe* |
| **Compound sentence** | A sentence containing two or more main clauses of equal weight joined by a co-ordinating conjunction: *and, or, but, so:*  *The headlights of cars swept past him* ***and*** *his desperation grew.*  Better writers think about the balance of ideas in the ‘two halves’ and the relationship between them e.g.  *She looked at her son and was startled.*  *She was startled and looked at her son.* |
| **Complex sentence** | A sentence made up of one or more main clauses and one or more subordinate clauses. A complex sentence can be any length:  *Feeling exhausted, John collapsed.*  *Because he hadn’t trained hard enough for the race, John collapsed, feeling exhausted, well before he reached the finishing line.*  Better writers think about the relationship between ideas in the main clause and subordinate clause and achieve subtle emphasis of meaning by changing the position of the subclause within the sentence. |
| **Punctuation range** | The range referred to in the scheme of work is:  full stop, comma, question and exclamation marks, speech marks, brackets and dashes, semi-colon; colon and ellipsis.  Better writers avoid comma splicing (use of a comma to mark the boundary between two main clauses), for example by using a semi-colon or colon between main clauses, where the second has a close connection to the first. They also use punctuation for rhetorical effect, e.g. to create rhythm and to signal tone:  *I listened* ***-*** *and at last I heard it****:*** *a tiny squeaking sound****,*** *far off****,*** *like it was coming from another world…* |
| **Word classes** | **Noun:**  The scheme emphasises precision in choice of nouns to create character and setting, e.g. *detective* rather than *man*; *furnace* rather than *fire*. Better writers avoid overloading a sentence with adjectives e.g. by replacing ‘*the big fierce brown dog*’ with ‘*Rottweiler*’ and use nouns to create a more flexible syntax, for example by choosing an abstract noun rather than an adjective (*fear* rather than *frightened*), an adverb (*with haste* rather than *quickly*), or a verb (*death claimed him* rather than *he died*).  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_nouns.php>  **Verb:**  The verb is often the grammatical driving force in a sentence. All sentences, except minor sentences, contain a verb. The verb is also the most versatile and complex word class, appearing in many guises. Simplifications such as ‘*a verb is a doing word’* can be misleading (students may not notice verbs such as *are/was/were*). Teaching the difference between a finite verb and a non-finite verb is very helpful if students are to understand how to write different sentence structures and use boundary punctuation accurately.  **Adjective:**  Perhaps the commonest definition of an adjective used in school is that it is *'a describing word'*. This is not always a helpful definition as many other words can describe, often more obviously than an adjective. Consider the use of adjectives, verbs and adverbs in the following sentences and note which words are most effective in conveying descriptive detail. *Two dogs hurled themselves at the intruder. The smallest girl stormed furiously into the kitchen.*  The definition of an adjective as a describing word tends to create a misconception amongst young writers that description is exclusively about using adjectives liberally. Instead, teaching could usefully explore how verbs, adverbs and abstract nouns, as well as adjectives, are used effectively to create detail and description in texts being studied  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_adjectives_teach.php>  **Adverb:**  The adverb is possibly the most versatile and flexible word class in English and can be positioned almost anywhere in a sentence except directly preceding a noun:  The adverb modifies a verb (*walked* ***quickly***), or an adjective (***deliciously*** *soft*), or a pronoun (***almost*** *everyone*) or another adverb (*He moved* ***ridiculously*** *slowly*).  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_adverbs.php>  **Determiner:**  This is a relatively new grammar term, used to describe words which go before a  noun to define it e.g. by number or possession. Common determiners are:  a; an; the; each; every; no; some; one; most; all; both; many; few; several; another... They are useful in fiction writing for creating precision and subtle emphasis e.g. the difference between: *a great adventure; my great adventure; another great adventure.*  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_determiners.php>  **Preposition:**  A small but significant word class which expresses the relationship between two words or two units within a sentence, often between a noun and other elements of the sentence e.g. ***against*** *the fence;* ***between*** *meals;* ***on*** *the horizon*  For its usefulness in fiction writing, see the section on prepositional phrases.  **Coordinating and subordinating conjunctions:**  Conjunctions are words which join clauses or smaller units in a sentence together. Coordinating conjunctions (principally *and, but, or, so*) link clauses or units of equal importance:  *noughts* ***and*** *crosses*; *I like coffee* ***but*** *not tea*; *he arrived* ***so*** *I left*  See also the section on compound sentences.  Subordinating conjunctions join units of unequal importance, in which one unit is subordinate to the other:  *I like coffee* ***unless*** *it has sugar in it; we were asleep* ***when*** *the earthquake struck*  There is a considerable variety of subordinating conjunctions, including:  *because, when, unless, since, although, where, that, when, while, as, before, after.*  Better writers use an appropriate range of conjunctions and use more subordination than coordination, thinking about the relationship between clauses rather than simply chaining ideas together.  See also the section on complex sentences.  <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/word_classes_conjunctions_advanced.php> |