

The 'Magic 5' Literacy Basics

Capital Letters

Proper nouns: places, people's names, film or book titles, countries.

At the start of a new sentence, after a full stop.

Punctuation

Full stops: only at the end of a sentence.

Commas: in a list of single items; to section off extra information (like brackets would); to separate clauses in a sentence where the connective is at the start of the sentence e.g. 'Because he was tired and grumpy, James went to bed.'

Semi colons: to separate items in a more detailed list (see above!), in a sentence instead of the connectives 'because', 'and' or 'so'.

Colons: after a sentence that is a statement and you want to give more information e.g. 'Bananas: food for the brain.'

Apostrophes: to show belonging or to show that letters are missing. NOT on the end of any word ending in 's'!

Sentence structure

Start with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.

Simple sentences have a subject, a verb and an object e.g. 'Hannah sat on the chair.'

Compound/complex sentences are a simple sentence with added clauses joined by connectives e.g. 'Hannah sat on the chair because she was tired.'

The better writers will use a variety of sentence lengths for different effects, using the punctuation described below.

Spelling

Obviously too many to mention! Spelling errors common to all subjects are usually homophones - words that sound the same but mean different things and are spelt differently e.g.

There, their, they're

Weather, whether

Your, you're

Where, were, wear, we're

No, know

Discourse markers – please refer to your connectives map

Should be used in all pieces of extended writing. These connective phrases help to progress an argument, and act as markers for the reader to follow the writer's train of thought.