Recommended grammatical terminology (Spanish)

Utilising a standard set of terminology across Key Stage 2 and 3 will equip children with a clearly defined set of terms and definitions, which they can use to talk about their knowledge and learning. Being able to understand and apply such terminology in their learning can boost students' confidence and help them to make links between the languages they are learning, including English.

This list has been compiled based on a) the core terminology needed in language teaching at Key Stage 3 and b) the terminology taught and tested at Key Stage 2. Use of this terminology will enable teachers to build on students' existing knowledge and apply these concepts to their future language learning.

The National Curriculum Programme of study for English contains the full glossary of grammatical terminology. The terms listed below include those that students are expected to know by the end of KS2, along with any additional grammatical concepts that arise in the KS3 SoW.

Key:

* indicates a term that is not included in the KS2 English programme of study. However, students may have met these terms in their KS2 foreign language teaching.

[ ] indicates (non-cognate) target language terminology which is not explicitly taught in the KS3 SoW.

Rows highlighted in grey indicate grammatical concepts which are not explicitly taught in the KS3 SoW.

Core terminology

English term	Spanish term	Definition (with relevance to Spanish)	Examples
Noun	el nombre / [sustantivo]	A noun is a word that can be used after a determiner. They are words for a person, place, thing or idea. In Spanish they are classified as masculine or feminine, and singular or plural.	un **gato** (a **cat**) una **hermana** (a **sister**) unos **perros** (some **dogs**) unas **tías** (some **aunties**)
Noun phrase	[la frase nominal]	A noun phrase is a phrase with a noun as its head and which performs the function of a noun (e.g. subject or object of the verb)	tengo **un gato blanco** (I have **a white cat**)
Pronoun	el pronombre	A pronoun is a word that can be used instead of a noun. It is used like a noun.	lo/la (it), él (him or he), nos (to us)
Possessive adjective	el adjetivo posesivo	A possessive adjective is a type of determiner and shows ownership.	Es **mi** libro. (It's **my** book) **Su** perro es grande. (**his** dog is big)
Possessive pronoun	el pronombre posesivo	A possessive pronoun replaces a noun or noun phrase and shows ownership.	El libro es **mío**. (the book is **mine**) El perro es **tuyo**. (the dog is **yours**)
Reflexive pronoun*	el pronombre reflexivo	A reflexive pronoun shows when the subject and object of a verb are the same.	**Me** lavo. (I wash **myself**)
Subject	el sujeto	The subject of a verb is the person or thing that is doing (or being) the verb. The form of the verb depends on its subject.	yo (I), tú (you), él (he), ella (she)
Object Direct Indirect	el objeto	An object is used with a verb, and shows what the verb is acting on.	como **chocolate** (I eat **chocolate**) lee **un libro** (she reads **a book**)

Singular	singular	Singular means one.	**un** barco (a boat)
Plural	plural	Plural means 'more than one'.	**las** chica**s** (the girl**s**)
Determiner	el determinante	A determiner is a word that modifies a noun and provides more information about the noun. In Spanish, determiners are classified as masculine or feminine, and singular or plural.	(see examples below)
Article Definite Indefinite	el artículo	Definite and indefinite articles are types of determiners. Definite articles modify nouns which are known to both the person who is listening/reading and the person who is speaking/writing. Indefinite articles modify nouns that are unknown.	**el** libro (**the** book) **la** casa (**the** house) **un** libro (**a** book)**una** casa (**a** house)
Demonstrative	el demostrativo	Demonstratives are types of determiners. Demonstratives identify the noun that is referred to.	**este** libro (**this** book) **ese** libro (**that** book) **esta** casa (**this** house) **esa** casa (**that** house)
Quantifier	[el cuantificador]	Quantifiers are a type of determiner. Quantifiers give an indication of quantity.	**unos** libros (**some** books) **cada** casa (**every** house) **muchos** ríos (**many** rivers)
Gender* Masculine* Feminine*	[el género]	Gender refers to the grammatical gender of the noun (either masculine or feminine in Spanish). Gender specifies the form of other words (e.g. determiners, adjectives) which can appear with the noun.	*Masculine:* **el** diner**o** (the money) *Feminine:* **la** moned**a** (the coin)
Adjective	el adjetivo	An adjective is used to describe a noun, or after verbs like "be/become".	alto (tall) bajo (short) tranquilo (calm)
Adverb	el adverbio	An adverb is used to modify (add detail to) a verb, an adjective or another adverb.	rápidamente (quickly), bien (well), fácilmente (easily), sólo (only)
Word	[la palabra[	A word is a unit of language. The main function of a word is to convey meaning.	
Word family	[la familia de palabras]	The words in a word family are related to each other by grammar and/or meaning.	enseñanza (teaching / instruction) – enseñar (to teach)
Compound (word)	[la palabra compuesta]	A compound word is a word made up of at least two root words.	mediodía (midday)
Verb	el verbo	A verb has a subject, which is the noun that carries out (or is) the verb. Verbs have a non-finite form (infinitive) – the base form found in dictionaries. Verbs can also express tense (present/past/future). Verbs can express a wide range of meanings, like being, becoming, imagining, doing.	vivo (I **live**) bebe (he/she **drinks**) comen (they **eat**) pensamos (we **think**)
Infinitive*	el infinitivo	The 'dictionary form' of the verb, equivalent to "to …" in English (and sometimes "…ing"). There are 3 types of regular infinitive in Spanish: -AR, -ER, -IR. The infinitive does not express tense, aspect, person or number.	hablar (to speak) comer (to eat) vivir (to live)
Auxiliary verb*	el verbo auxiliar	A 'helping' verb that appears with certain forms of another verb (infinitive or participle). It can indicate tense and aspect (ongoing or completed) of the verb.	**He** terminado los deberes. (**I have** finished the homework.) ¿**Has** empezado? (**Have you** started?)
Modal verb	el verbo modal	A modal verb is used to change the meaning of other verbs. They can express certainty, ability, or obligation.	poder (to be able to, can) deber (must)

Last updated:

Conjugation*	la conjugación	Changing an infinitive verb into an inflected form to specify tense, aspect, person, and/or number.	hablar (to speak) → **hablo** (I speak) hablar (to speak) → **hablé** (I spoke)
Verb inflection*	[la flexion verbal]	Verb inflection (often at the end of a verb) refers to letter(s) added to the base form of the verb that can specify information like the tense, person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), and number (singular, plural) of the verb.	habl**o** (I speak) habl**as** (you speak) habl**a** (he/she speak**s**) habl**é** (I spoke)
Tense Future* Past Present - Continuous* Simple*	[el tiempo verbal]	Tense tells us when an event occurred (e.g. in the past, present, or future). It can be signalled by inflections on the verb.	hablaré (I **will** speak) voy a hablar (I **am going to speak**) hablé (I **spoke**) estaba hablando (I **was** speak**ing**) hablaba (I **used** to speak) hablo (I **speak**), estoy hablando (I **am speaking**)
Active	activo	In an active construction, the subject of the sentence is the subject (doer) of the verb.	el autor escribió el libro
Passive	pasivo	In a passive construction, the subject of the sentence is the object (receiver) of the verb. It is used to place emphasis on the action rather than the subject (doer) of the verb.	el libro fue escrito por el autor
Prefix	el prefijo	A prefix is added at the beginning of a word to turn it into another word.	**re**hacer (to **re**do)
Suffix	el sufijo	A suffix is added to the end of one word to turn it into another word. Suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word.	gato**s** (cat**s**) profesor**es** (teachers) director**a** (female director, headteacher)
Preposition	la preposición	A preposition links a following noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence.	a (to) con (with) de (of)
Sentence	[la frase]	A sentence is a group of words, which are grammatically connected to each other, but not to any words outside the sentence. A sentence may consist of one or more clauses, connected by subordination or co-ordination.	El mercado es barato. (The market is cheap)
Main clause	[la oración principal]	A main clause can stand alone as a complete sentence. It contains at least a subject and a verb.	El chico baila. (the boy dances)
Subordinate clause	[la oración subordinada]	A subordinate clause cannot stand alone and does not form a simple sentence by itself. It is connected to the main clause of the sentence by modifying the main clause or some part of it.	El chico baila **por la noche**. (the boy dances **at night**)
Relative clause	[la oración relativa]	A relative clause is a type of subordinate clause that modifies a noun.	La persona que conduce es responsable.
Relative pronoun	el pronombre relativo	A relative pronoun is used in a relative clause to refer back to the noun that is being modified.	que (that) quien (who, whom)
Conjunction	la conjunción	A conjunction links two words or phrases together.	y (and), pero (but), porque (because)
Statement	[la afirmación]	A statement expresses a fact, an idea, an opinion or an observation of something.	Hago deporte. (I do sport)
Question	[la pregunta]	A question is a sentence that asks information.	¿Quieres hacer un plan? (Do you want to make a plan?)

Definitions adapted from those provided in Appendix 2 of the Key Stage 2 Programme of Study for English (DfE, 2013)

Rowena Kasprowicz /
Rachel Hawkes (Cam Academy Trust) /
Nicholas Avery / Emma Marsden