Understanding Sentence Types: Statements, Commands, Questions and Exclamations

Key points

- Children in Year 1 (the first year of primary school) learn that sentences do different jobs, such as giving information or asking a question.
- A statement tells us something, while a question asks something and usually starts with words like 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', or 'why'.
- A command tells someone to do something and often starts with an action word, like 'sit' or 'stop'.
- An exclamation shows strong feeling or surprise and often begins with 'What' or 'How'.
- Children learn to spot these types by looking at the word order and the punctuation mark at the end, such as a question mark or exclamation mark.
- Because every school teaches slightly differently, you can ask your child's teacher how they introduce these ideas in class.

Things to try at home

- Play a guessing game where you say a sentence and ask your child if it is a question or a statement.
- Give a gentle, playful command during tidy-up time, such as 'Put the blocks in the box!', and talk about why it is a command.
- Spot 'wh' words (like who, what, where) in a favourite storybook together to see if they start a question.
- Practice making 'surprised' voices together to feel the difference between a plain statement and an exclamation.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher
- The GOV.UK website for National Curriculum guidance
- Your school's parent handbook or newsletter