

Full Stops as Finish Lines: Where Does a Sentence End? — Year 1

Key points

- A sentence expresses a complete idea, and a full stop (.) marks its end when it tells us something, as in ‘The dog runs.’
- Think about what the sentence says before choosing its finish line: a full stop belongs where the sentence ends.
- The Department for Education’s English programme for Year 1 includes beginning to use capital letters and full stops, alongside question marks and exclamation marks.
- The same programme includes saying a sentence aloud before writing it and reading it back to check that it makes sense.
- Schools can introduce learning at different times, so ask your child’s teacher which examples and support would suit them.

Things to try at home

- Use a toy to make up one short sentence together, such as ‘The bear sits.’, then write it for your child and let them point to its finish line.
- Read ‘the cat sleeps the dog runs’ aloud together and ask what each animal does, then compare it with ‘The cat sleeps. The dog runs.’
- Write ‘The duck swims’ and invite your child to draw or point to a full stop after the complete idea, then read the sentence together.
- During a shared story, spot a full stop and read the sentence it finishes, talking briefly about what it says.
- Keep it short and stop when your child has had enough; they can point, speak or use their usual way of communicating, and you can talk through ideas in a familiar home language before modelling the English sentence.

Find out more

- Department for Education: [National curriculum in England: English programmes of study — see Year 1 writing](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study>).
- Your child’s teacher: ask how the school teaches sentence endings and how to adapt these games for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or for a child learning English.