

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

Full Stops as Finish Lines helps Year 1 children explore where a sentence ends. By talking about what the words mean, children can practise adding full stops to simple sentences. A short video and printable worksheet would offer a gentle way to try this together.

What is a full stop?

A full stop is the small dot that marks the end of a sentence such as “The dog runs.” A sentence can tell the reader something that makes sense on its own. Thinking about what it says helps children decide where it ends. The finish-line idea is a friendly way to introduce that ending.

Punctuation means the marks we use to organise written words, including full stops. A capital letter, such as T rather than t, marks the start of a sentence. This activity focuses on simple telling sentences. Questions have a different ending: a question mark.

The Department for Education’s English programme of study includes beginning to use sentence punctuation in Year 1.

What happens in the activity?

The proposed video would compare a run of words with clearly separated sentences. For example, an adult could read “the dog runs the cat sleeps” and ask, “What does this tell us about the dog? What does it tell us about the cat?” Together, you could turn it into “The dog runs. The cat sleeps.” These are examples created for this activity.

On the printable worksheet, children would choose where each simple telling sentence ends, add its full stop and check its starting capital letter. An adult could read the words aloud when needed.

You can then reread the sentences together and talk about their meaning. Keep the activity brief, with room to pause or try again.

What this means for your child

This activity gives your child a small, focused part of writing to explore: showing a reader where a sentence finishes. It can sit alongside the writing they do at school, but it does not need to become an extra task to complete every day.

The Department for Education’s Year 1 guidance includes saying a sentence before writing it and rereading writing to check its meaning. It also recognises that, at the beginning of Year 1, some children can say more than they can yet write.

Schools choose how to organise teaching across the year. Autumn practice is an option for this resource, rather than a national deadline. Ask your child’s teacher which examples and support would fit their current learning.

Gentle ways to help at home

Try making up a sentence about a toy, a pet or something you have done together. You might say, “The bear sits.” Write it down and invite your child to show where the full stop belongs. Ask, “What does our sentence tell us?” Then read it back together.

You could also spot a full stop in a shared book. Choose one short sentence and talk about what it means. There is no need to work through a whole page.

For a child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), you could offer pointing or let an adult do the writing. For a child learning English, explain unfamiliar words using pictures or objects. Ask the teacher which adaptations suit your child.

Questions parents often ask

Does every sentence end with a full stop? No. Year 1 teaching also introduces question marks and exclamation marks, which can mark an exclamation such as “What a big dog!” This activity concentrates on telling sentences that end with full stops.

Should my child add a dot whenever they pause? Help them consider what the whole sentence says. A pause while speaking does not always mean the sentence has ended.

What if my child cannot read the worksheet alone? You can read it aloud and discuss the words together.

What if they keep forgetting? Offer a gentle reminder and reread one sentence together. Ask their teacher what they are practising in class and how you can support that at home.

Sources

- Department for Education — National curriculum in England: English programmes of study, particularly the Year 1 sections on writing composition, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. [Official guidance on GOV.UK](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study>)