words for talking about grammar

active and passive: I see, she heard are active verbs; I am seen, she was heard are passive verbs.

adjectives: for example big, old, yellow, unhappy.

adverbs: for example quickly, completely, now, there.

affirmative sentences or statements are not questions or negatives – for example I arrived.

articles: a/an ('indefinite article'); the ('definite article').

auxiliary verbs are used before other verbs to make questions, tenses etc – for example do you think; I have finished, she is working. See also modal auxiliary verbs.

comparatives: for example older, better, more beautiful, more slowly.

conjunctions: for example and, but, because, while.

consonants: see vowels.

contractions: short forms like I'm, you're, he'll, don't.

conversational: see formal.

countable nouns: the names of things we can count – for example one chair, three cars; uncountable (or ‘mass’) nouns: the names of things we can’t count, like oil, rice.

determiners: words like the, some, many, my, which go before (adjective +) noun.

double letters: pp, tt, ee etc.

formal, Informal, conversational: We use formal language with strangers, in business letters etc: for example ‘Good afternoon, Mr Parker. May I help you?’ We use informal or conversational language with family and friends: for example ‘Hi, John. Want some help?’

future verbs: for example I will go, Ann is going to write to us.

imperatives: forms like Go home, Come and sit down, Don’t worry, which we use when we tell or ask people (not) to do things.

Indirect speech: the grammar that we use to say what people say or think: for example John said that he was tired.

infinitives: (to) go, (to) sleep etc.

informal: see formal.

-ing forms: going, sleeping etc.

irregular: see regular.

leave out: If we say Seen John?, we are leaving out Have you.

modal verbs or modal auxiliary verbs: must, can, could, may, might, shall, should, will and would.

negative sentences are made with not: for example I have not seen her.

nouns: for example chair, oil, idea, sentence.

object: see subject.

opposite: hot is the opposite of cold; up is the opposite of down.

passive: see active.

past perfect tense: see perfect tenses.

past progressive tense: see past tenses.

past tenses: for example went, saw, stopped (simple past); was going, were eating (past progressive).

past participles: for example gone, seen, stopped.

perfect tenses: forms with have/has/had + past participle: for example I have forgotten (present perfect); It has been raining (present perfect progressive); They had stopped (past perfect).

plural: see singular.

possessives: for example my, your, mine, yours; John's, my brothers'.

prepositions: for example at, in, on, between.

present participles: for example going, sleeping etc (also called -ing forms).

present perfect tenses: see perfect tenses.

present tenses: for example He goes (simple present); She is walking (present progressive).
progressive (or 'continuous'): for example I am thinking (present progressive); They were talking (past progressive).

pronouns: for example I, you, anybody, themselves.

question tags: for example isn't it?, doesn't she?

reflexive pronouns: myself, yourself etc.

regular: plurals like cats, buses; past tenses like started, stopped; irregular: plurals like teeth, men, children; past tenses like broke, went, saw.

relative pronouns: who, which and that when they join sentences to nouns: for example The man who bought my car.

sentence: A sentence begins with a capital letter (A, B etc) and ends with a full stop (.), like this one.

simple past tense: see past tenses.

simple present tense: see present tenses.

singular: for example chair, cat, man; plural: for example chairs, cats, men.

spelling: writing words correctly: for example, we spell necessary with one c and double s.

subject and object: In She took the money, everybody saw him, the subjects are she and everybody; the objects are the money and him.

superlatives: for example oldest, best, most beautiful, most easily.

tense: She goes, she is going, she went, she was going, she has gone are different tenses.

third person: words for other people, not I or you: for example she, them, himself, John, has, goes.

uncountable nouns: see countable nouns.

verbs: for example sit, give, hold, think, write.

vowels: a, e, i, o, u and their usual sounds; consonants: b, c, d, f, g etc and their usual sounds.