Bringing Grammar and Language to Life Through Evidence-Based Practices

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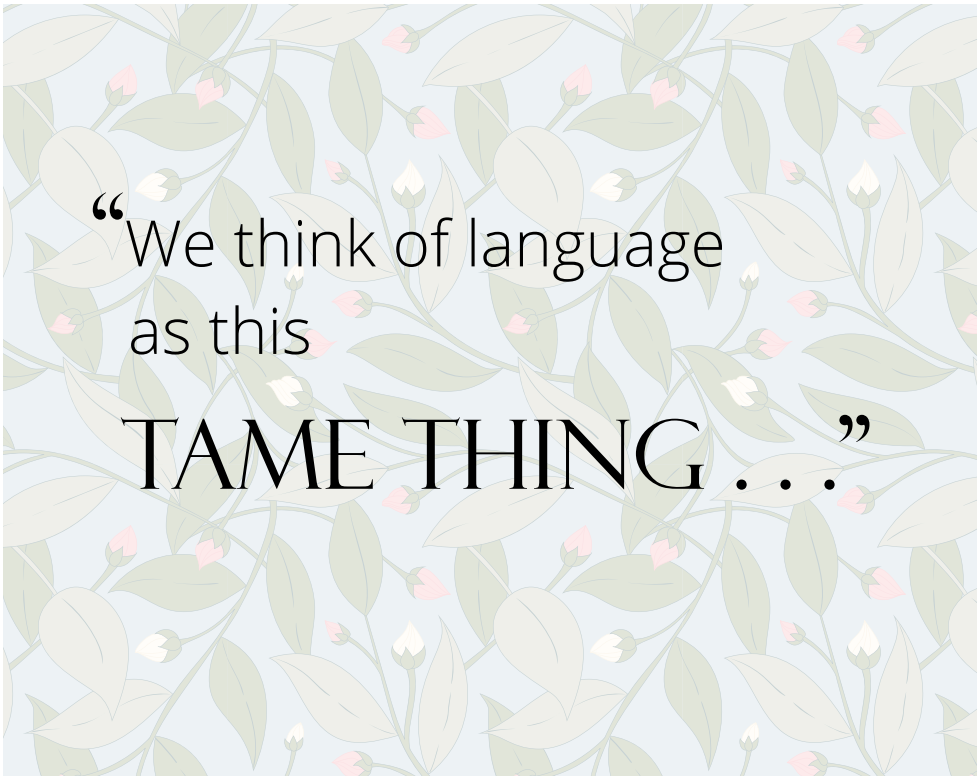
“We think of language
as this
TAME THING . . .”

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Deborah Dean is a former secondary teacher who learned very quickly that she did not know what she was doing when it came time to help her students learn grammar. At least in a way that made a difference to them as readers and writers! She essentially learned grammar just a day ahead of her students from the grammar textbooks that lined the bookshelves in the junior high portable she taught in. But she had to do more to learn about *teaching* it effectively. She read books and attended conferences and took classes. And she found that she loved what she learned and loved sharing it with her students, even when she moved to teaching high school and then to teaching pre-service teachers at Brigham Young University. She has presented at many conferences and to teachers across the country and is the author of many articles and books on the topic, including *Grammar Alive!* (IRA), *What Works in Grammar Instruction?: (*NCTE) and *Teaching Grammar in the Secondary Classroom*—QRG (NCTE).

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Introduction and Overview

"We think of language as this tame thing that lives in neat garden beds, bound by rules and fences. Then someone shows it to you growing wild and beautiful, flowering vines consuming cities, erasing pavement and lines. Breaking through any fence that would try to contain it. Reclaiming. Reshaping. Reforming. In my life, I've never known anything else that felt so full of infinite possibility. Words make me feel strong. They make me feel powerful and alive. They make me feel like I can open doors."

(Zentner, 2021, *In the Wild Light*)

Utah ELA Standards

The recent revision of Utah's ELA standards eliminated language standards as a separate category. For some teachers, this might suggest that language isn't something that needs to be taught. However, instead of being gone, we see language and grammar knowledge embedded in standards for speaking, reading, and writing. In these new standards, we see references to using appropriate language and grammar for a purpose and audience, for formal or informal contexts. We see standards that ask students to analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, to consider the influence of Greek and Latin affixes on word meaning, and to use appropriate conventions and styles for audience, purposes, and tasks in writing. Teachers will find such embedded references to language knowledge and skills in the standards for the grade levels they teach.

An important implication when language standards are integrated with reading, writing, and speaking standards is that the students now need to know more rather than less. This isn't about *identifying* adjectives or adverbs, about *identifying* anything really. Instead, "Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and evidence" (standard 6.W.1b), asks students to work at a deeper level where worksheets aren't as useful. The guidance provided in this document—using examples from texts the students are reading or the mentor texts they using for their writing to analyze and theorize about language, noticing and talking and applying—are especially effective for helping to meet these more complex standards.

What do we mean by "teaching grammar"?

Teaching grammar and language often raises images of diagrams or identifying parts of speech, rules and right-wrong, even anxiety or fear. But it is not these things. It is much more and should be interesting to both the teacher and the student. After all, grammar is a part of the study of language, something we all use and should be interested in. Teaching grammar/language is incredibly important and challenging. It is also something that is never really finished, never just a unit and then done. Because we use language in our classes, teaching it can be embedded in everything we say and do in our classes. And student learning is enhanced by this embedded, continual approach.

What Grammar Instruction Should Be	What Grammar Instruction Should **NOT** Be
■ Part of every class period ■ An essential component of making meaning during reading and writing ■ Part of the talk woven through the class ■ Meaningful study about how we use language effectively in a variety of situations	■ Something we do only on Mondays (or Fridays or any other single day of the week) ■ Something we squeeze in just before high-stakes assessment ■ Worksheets or diagrams ■ Only for editing or correcting writing

What do educators need to teach grammar effectively?

Key needs are listed below—and note that they don't start with extensive grammar knowledge.

1. **A Love of Language**

   Teachers who love language bring a different kind of energy to the classroom, one where interest in language—in all its varieties—is woven throughout the curriculum. That energy can build interest in language that will stay with students throughout their lives. Teachers who love language collect examples of interesting uses, wonder about them, and share them with students. They play with words and enjoy the wide range of ways English can create meaning. Their love for language permeates their lives and their talk. Teachers who love language create language adventures as a part of regular classroom activity. A few sample adventures include the following:

   - View comedic takes on the English language.
     - Example
   - Make puns or other word play public for students to enjoy.
     - Example: A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.

- Share language jokes with students.
  - Example: Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.
- Notice (and share) t-shirts, billboards, or bumper stickers that use a play on words.
  - Example: Give peas a chance.
- Write haiku to tell stories.
  - Example: see *Zombie Haiku* or *DogKu* for inspiration.
- Visit websites that suggests a range of other websites that encourage language interest
  - Example (especially the columns and resources tab)
- Learn about and share interesting ways we can play with words.
  - Example

In the end, success with our students isn't only about pedagogy, although that is important. Success also involves our attitudes about the topic, about language. It is, after all, our passion, our interest, and our energy that make the biggest difference in our instruction.

2. Student Classroom Talk—Lots of It!

Classroom talk is essential to grammar instruction. We may think an ideal classroom is a quiet one. And while a classroom filled with constant noise is not ideal, talk is an important part of grammar instruction, not only during minilessons on grammar topics, but also woven through all classroom activities. When we talk, students begin to see how language shapes thought. They see how others use words and syntax to explain and persuade. Discussions—and the quality of classroom talk within them—are essential to language learning, partly because they encourage talk about the very substance of our study—language—and because they show language in practice. Students are employing the very substance of inquiry: language.

Some suggestions for incorporating student talk:

- Teachers can use small groups or think/pair/share techniques to encourage more student talk in the classroom and to enable more students to have opportunities to share thinking orally, especially their thinking about language.
- During sentence combining and sentence imitation practices (detailed in the daily practices section of this document), students should hear

sentences—lots of them! Directing students' attention to the ways different combinations create different effects is another way to use language to discuss language.

- Additional suggestions for classroom talk are found in other sections of this guide.

When teachers draw students' attention to language (*not* to correct it) in meaningful connection to the other work of the classroom, students' sensitivity to language—e.g., how language changes between writing and speech and from one situation to another—develops organically. And student interest in language in all its forms increases as a result.

3. Meaningful learning intentions

Thinking about the purposes of our grammar instruction makes a difference in how we teach it. Focusing on short-term or limited goals means teachers use a different kind of instruction than they do with long-term goals. But teachers can combine these important long-term goals with short-term learning intentions for better overall effectiveness.

For example, if a short-term learning intention is to for students to be able to "use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break," some teachers might be inclined to give students a worksheet where students place punctuation in carefully structured sentences for correctness. This practice, used briefly, might help students with short-term application, like preparing for a test. However, if we broaden this learning intention to something like "understand how different types of punctuation create different kinds of pauses in literature and writing," we would be more likely to share mentor sentences that show how punctuation choices indicate breaks, and then discuss the different

Tense matters

to readers and writers.

effects created by choosing one over another and practice using them in independent writing to communicate different tones. Students will be able to think deeply about punctuation breaks—*and* be ready to take a test, or another type of formative or summative assessment on the learning intention.

If a curriculum or assessment requires students to identify verbs or choose a correct verb tense, instead of simply underlining verbs or choosing one from multiple options on a handout, we could combine teaching the short-term learning intention with achieving the long-term goal of helping students learn how verb tenses influence tone by having them study and use verbs in authentic texts they are reading and writing. As they do so, they both learn to identify verbs and consider how tense matters to readers and writers.

4. **Authentic reading and writing to provide context**

   Students need to study language from authentic contexts so that they not only learn grammar but also see how it works in real life. Sentences on worksheets or in textbooks are most often constructed specifically to teach a certain grammatical concept and might not clearly reflect context or situation. Sometimes they oversimplify; sometimes they complicate. Authentic contexts, on the other hand, improve students' ability to understand, apply, and retain grammar principles. Studying language in real texts—in all genres and across a variety of situations—encourages motivation for and interest in language study. This is grammar as it is used. By people. Doing real things with language. So when teachers are reading a piece of writing—literature, mentor text, informative background, whatever—if a grammar concept contributes to the meaning, interpretation, or effectiveness of the text, it should become the subject of a short discussion or minilesson. Teachers may use the following questions to support this discussion:

   - What grammatical concept is at work in this text?
   - Why and how does it work?
   - How can we make it work for us in our understanding or our writing?

   Grammar lessons grow best in a soil rich with reading and writing discussions, even brief ones.

Daily Practices

While conversations about language should be part of the reading and writing we do in our classes, we can set the stage for those discussions by incorporating daily practices that raise the level of awareness about our work with language.

Although Daily Oral Language (DOL) has been a popular program for daily practice with grammar for decades, no research supports its effectiveness. In fact, research suggests that the practice is either too difficult or too easy for students and that seeing incorrectly written sentences might actually reinforce students' misunderstandings.

Two practices which can be used daily have research to support their value in helping students develop as readers and writers:

- Sentence imitation is a time-honored method of improving writing, practiced for thousands of years.
- Sentence combining was popular in the 1980s and then went out of favor—mostly because it wasn't implemented correctly. When used as designed, research shows its benefits to improve writing.

When teaching language, both practices focus students' attention on the ways words work together to make meaning—how order, word choice, phrases and clauses, and punctuation can matter. And raising awareness is important to learning language!

Use either sentence combining or sentence imitation at the beginning of each lesson. Either should take five minutes or so, and both are easily paired with writer's notebooks so that students can immediately apply something they learned to their notebook writing.

What is a Writer's Notebook?

A writer's notebook is filled with daily informal writing that is unrelated to the class content for the day. Teachers share an image, a short video clip, a poem or an excerpt from a longer piece of literature—even a picture book. After that brief sharing, students are invited to write whatever they want in response for several minutes.

Some resources:

"Informal and Shared: Writing to Create Community" from National Writing Project

"How to Cultivate Confident Writers Through Daily Practice" from Edutopia

"100 Quickwrites" from Scholastic

Sentence Combining

Sentence combining helps students develop sentence sense at the same time they learn about grammar and syntax. Teachers select sentences from texts that students are currently reading or will read in the future to model a grammar concept that students need to practice or are ready to learn and embed into their writing and speaking.

From that sentence, the teacher creates sentence sets, a set of *complete* sentences that represent the embedded ideas in the mentor sentence. It is important that these sentence sets contain *complete* sentences so that the concept of a sentence is reinforced multiple times in a day. As sentence sets expose students to several complete sentences, they begin to develop their "sentence sense."

HOW TO CREATE SENTENCE SETS

1. **Find a mentor sentence.** Choose a sentence from a text students are reading or will encounter that does something interesting that you hope will give students some challenge (not too much) and also give the possibility of learning something new about syntax. Right-branching sentences are easier to break apart, but left- and center-branching sentences can also be of interest.

   Example: Students need support in considering ways they can combine or extend their ideas in their writing, so the teacher selects a sentence that contains an adjectival phrase after the main clause, followed by a participial phrase: "He lay in his bed that night, wide awake, watching the clock on the bedside table." (Ness, 28)

2. **Find the basic sentences contained in the mentor sentence.** In the example, the first idea is that Conor is in his bed. This is the basic idea of the whole sentence, so the first sentence would be: Connor lay in his bed. Then, locate the other ideas in the sentence: that night. But it needs to be a whole sentence, so the next sentence in the set could be this: It was that night. The adjectival phrase is easy: He was wide awake. The participial phrase has two basic ideas—first that Conor was watching the clock; the second is where the clock is located. The sentence set would look like this:

   - Conor lay in his bed.
   - It was that night.
   - He was wide awake.
   - He was watching the clock.
   - The clock was on the bedside table.

3. **Teachers can choose to rearrange the sentences, but they are usually left in an order like the original sentence.**

HOW TO USE SENTENCE SETS WITH STUDENTS

1. Students are encouraged to combine all the short sentences into one sentence, *more than one way*, which helps them develop a heightened awareness of how ideas can be woven together in a variety of ways to create different effects. It is essential that students don't just combine one way and stop, as they will default to what is easy. If they must combine a second or third time, they will be pushed to experiment and see what else they might do.

2. Teachers should model combining the sentences in multiple ways for students before asking them to do it —usually with a different sentence set and accompanied by a talk-aloud. It can be effective to have students collaboratively work together in the beginning as well. Teachers can model for students options for combining that also apply to larger concepts of revision: Delete, Rearrange, Add, Form new verb endings, Talk (DRAFT—Anderson and Dean).

3. When students are combining, ask them to put a star by the combination they like the most, their rationale for choosing, and be prepared to share it. Choosing one encourages students to think about the effects of different choices.

4. When students share their combinations, teachers can set up a protocol of clapping or snapping fingers to thank the person for being willing to share.

5. The first question teachers can ask after students share is "Why did you star that one? Why did you think that one was better than the other sentences you wrote?" These can be challenging questions for many students, especially at first, as they are not used to thinking about writing in this way. If they have a hard time, teachers might say something like this: "I noticed that you moved [some word or idea] to the beginning of the sentence. Why did you choose to do that? Or "Why did you decide to put that idea in a prepositional phrase?" In this discussion, students need teacher support to see that by putting certain words in certain places, they emphasize an idea or create a feeling that is different than other options. Sometimes they say they like the sentence because it is shorter. That is okay, too.

6. After completing the sharing and discussion, share the mentor sentence. This is *not* to see how close they came to the original or to correct. The point of this talk is to discuss why, especially after they have heard half a dozen other possible options, the author chose the arrangement they did. In this way, educators keep the focus on choice and effects: writers make choices for reasons, and students gain better understanding about what reasons they might have had: What came before? What is coming up after? These are some questions to discuss here, helping students understand that sentences don't live in isolation

Eventually educators might introduce students to the "three E's," which are common reasons writers revise sentences: Emphasis, Economy, Effect. (See side bar.) Essentially, students need to consider why they make the choices they do. Sometimes they don't know. They just like it or they couldn't think of another way. Teachers can acknowledge that and then talk about the effects of the choices they made. Students need reminding that the way we choose to arrange words in a sequence is a choice—and one with consequences in terms of meaning for an audience. Over time, this is something students take away from this sharing of combinations. And they start to notice that most of the time, no one has the same sentence. There are so many possibilities.

The Three E's

EMPHASIS: We can move words and phrases around, and combined with a variety of punctuation options, creatively put an emphasis on a word or an idea.

ECONOMY: We can move words and phrases around and delete repetitive ideas and words to create efficient expressions.

EFFECT: We can shift words and phrases around, add words, or change verbs and punctuation to create an effect or tone that we want. Some arrangements create suspense, while others calm, for example.

The discussion that follows this play with sentence combining can lead naturally to talk about punctuation and grammar concepts. As students share their sentences with the whole class, teachers might ask what kind of punctuation they used when hearing a pause in the reading (or when we know a reader, might expect some kind of punctuation). Even if the students didn't include any punctuation, it's a good chance to suggest what could possibly go in that place—and the different effects of a comma, a dash, colon, semi-colon, or a parenthesis might have on readers. This talk, repeated over time, bears fruit. Playful practice is

how students learn best, so they should be encouraged to take risks and try out new ways of writing without fear of grading or correction.

REVIEW: BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTING SENTENCE COMBINING

1. Sentence sets should come from texts students have or will read.
2. Students should combine sentence sets in more than one way, starring the combination they like best.
3. Students should share sentences orally, either in small groups or with the whole class, so they can hear how their combinations flow.
4. After sharing, students should discuss the effects of different syntactical options they just heard. There is no right or wrong: The talk is about effectiveness and what the author is trying to achieve toward that end.
5. After combining and discussing their own sentences, students should read the mentor sentence and discuss why the author might have made the choices he or she did. Looking at the mentor sentence is NEVER about correcting their own combinations.
6. Students should eventually apply their understanding of sentence structure to their polished writing.

Mentor sentence example:
"Today I moved to a twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd, and surrounded by water."

Al Capone Does My Shirts, p. 3

Sentence Set	Possible Combinations
Today, I moved. The place is a rock. The rock is twelve acres. It is covered with cement. It is topped with bird turd. It is surrounded by water.	■ I moved to a place today, a twelve-acre rock covered with cement and bird turd and surrounded by water. ■ I moved today to an island, twelve acres of rock covered with cement and bird turd. ■ A twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd and surrounded by water: as of today, that is my new home.

Sentence Imitation

With sentence combining, students tend to stay within patterns they already understand or have seen. Imitation exposes them to options for sentence constructions that they might not otherwise have in their repertoire. Teachers should model the process before asking students to practice it by doing an imitation in front of them—talking aloud about their thinking as they do so.

Example of Teacher Modeling Sentence Imitation

> ***Mentor Sentence***: "Conor stood breathing for a second, thinking about the broken clock, about the scratches on the hardwood, about the poisonous berries dropping from the monster onto his grandma's clean floor." (*A Monster Calls*, p.98)

Teacher Talk-Aloud Modeling: *This sentence interests me because it draws out an important moment by adding details that might be significant to the moment. So, when I want to imitate it, I can think of a moment I might want to write about. A time I was in trouble (like Conor)? But it could also be that moment just before I have to give a speech in class or the moment I am excited about meeting my old friend at the airport. Some moment that does a thing with lots of ideas combined. This sentence lets me create that feeling by piling ideas together.*

So I start with the person (me, I guess) in that moment. Hmm. I don't have to use the same words as the sentence, just the same kind of pattern. So. . . I waited at the welcoming area of the airport*. . . what am I thinking about? My friend who will be coming through the doors at any moment. I haven't see her for a long time. . . . thinking about Candi... I know the original doesn't say more than this, but I kind of want to explain something more, like how long it has been since we've seen each other? So I'll add that in.* I waited at the welcoming area of the airport, thinking about Candi and how long it has been since we've seen each other. . .

Now, the mentor sentence has a pattern here—two "about" phrases of things he's thinking about. I can do as many as I want, but I should have at least two. So, what am I thinking about—my memories of our friendship over the years? These "about" phrases are pretty specific, so I will need to be specific, too: about how she seemed so serious the first time we met, about how we bonded over the first-of-the-year dances every night the first week of school, about her wedding, about . . . I have lots of memories over the years, but I notice in the mentor sentence that the last one has the tree doing something with that -ing word, so that makes me think of a specific memory about her last visit and staying up half the night talking through the joys and challenges of parenting. So, my final sentence could be something like this: I waited at the welcoming area of the airport, thinking about Candi and how long it has been since we've seen each other, about how she didn't smile when

we first met, about how we bonded over the first-of-the-year dances at BYU, and about how, on her last visit, we stayed up talking half the night.

Let's look back at the mentor sentence. Hmm. How is mine the same? How is it different? What did the mentor sentence help me to do as a writer? When might I be able to use that?

REVIEW: HOW TO MAKE SENTENCE IMITATION VALUABLE TO TEACHING ABOUT SENTENCES

1. Choose (or have students find) interesting sentences in the world or in the texts they are reading to use as mentors.
2. Have students imitate the structures of those sentences with their own content.
3. Share imitations aloud to hear the flow and effect of their constructions.
4. Apply some of the practiced structures to polished or informal writing.

Example:

Mentor Sentence	"The toddler goes backward, hanging on the handrail and cautiously moving his squat legs down plank by plank." *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, p. 26
Possible Imitation	■ Minutes tick by, bringing more concern and steadily raising my anxiety moment by moment. Sentence imitation helps students greatly, building on known patterns and gradually introducing new ones sentence by sentence.

Tips for Daily Implementation

At the beginning of the year, these practices take some time to establish, but once students know how the two practices work, teachers can use them as beginning-of-class activities (like bellringers). When students know how the practices work and what to expect, the sentences can be shown on a screen and students can start right away while teachers deal with the usual tasks to start class. It's important to know that sentences we use don't require teachers to go looking online or elsewhere. They also should not come from a prepackaged program; teachers should collect them from the books and stories students are reading.

When the sentences come from the readings in class or the mentor texts students are studying for their writing, the daily practices have a clear connection to the reading and writing that occurs in class. Students are more aware of the sentences and their contribution to the rest of the class. A tight connection between the start of class and what follows helps to create an intentional aspect to the learning in class.

Grammar and Reading

Principles

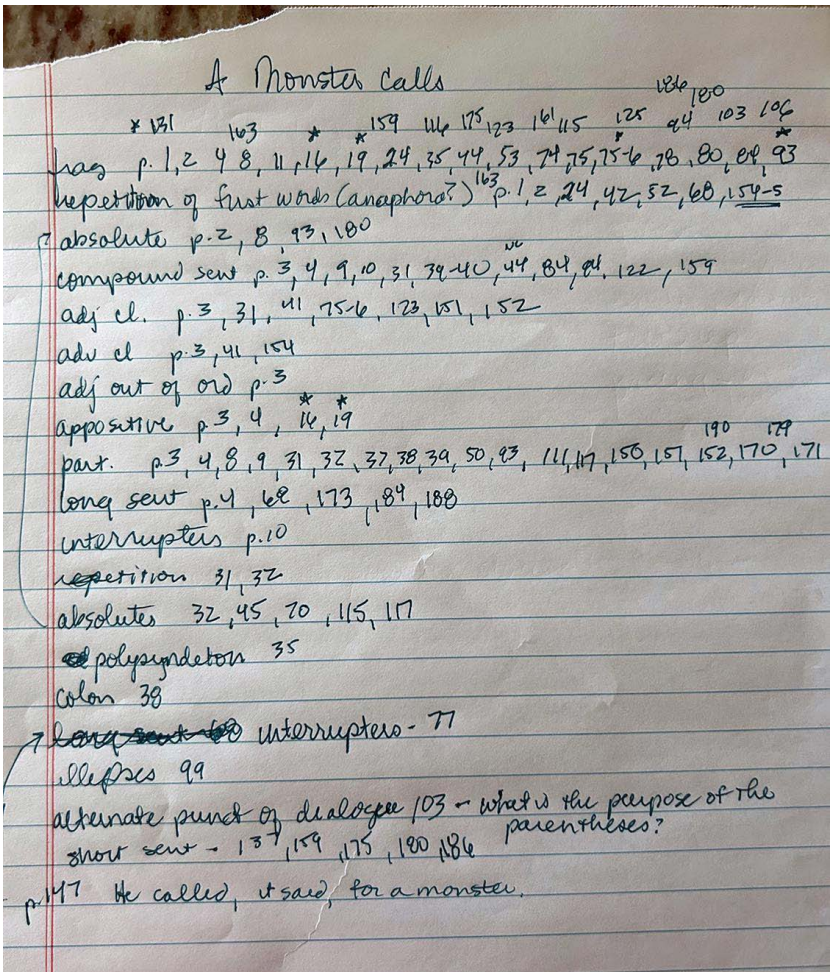
1. Match grammar lessons to the characteristics of language found in the text.
2. Consider elements of punctuation, dialect, and language change as elements of grammar that can affect meaning in texts—and therefore could be subjects of discussions or mini-lessons.
3. Discuss the grammar and connect it to the meaning it enhances in the text.

In-Class Practice

When planning, teachers should notice when a quick focus on an aspect of grammar—a part of speech, syntax, punctuation, dialect, etc.—might help students understand their reading at a deeper level. For example, in Atticus's closing argument in *To Kill a Mockingbird,* a short discussion of pronouns might help students see how Atticus chose to humanize Tom Robinson by using his name and dehumanize the Ewells by referring to them only with pronouns to create a more persuasive speech. Students have knowledge of pronouns reinforced while they see more deeply into a key part of the novel.

To prepare for grammar teaching with a text, teachers should make note of the kinds of language elements that are found in a book, short story, play, or poem.

The image to the right shows an example of how to prepare for teaching language with *A Monster Calls* (Ness). →



TIPS FOR PREPARING TO TEACH GRAMMAR WITH A TEXT

- After reading the text at least once, read it again, noting the various grammar and language elements and their page numbers.
- Then, decide which language elements would be most helpful to students—either in their overall language understanding or for understanding the text better.
- This note making can be messy. It is also not exhaustive; teachers might find other examples from the same text and that's okay. Being perfect isn't the point. Making a list as complete as possible is the important thing.
- These notes can now provide ready-made sentences for any minilesson. But teachers shouldn't expect to teach everything on this list. The choice of teaching certain items may depend on: 1) the grade and skill level of the students reading the book, 2) what will most help students better comprehend and appreciate the text, or 3) what may be useful for writing lessons later in the year. For example, take a look at the following sentence from the notes: "He called, it said, for a **monster**." The syntax of this sentence is so effective. What are other ways it could have been written?
    - It said he called for a monster.
    - He called for a monster, it said.
    - A monster is what he called for, it said.

  There might be more options, but looking at those possibilities compared to the one Ness chose, it's clear that he wanted that pause before he put *monster* at the end of the sentence (a place that already has an emphasis). Additionally, he put it in bold font. Ness wanted readers to focus on that word, on the idea of that word. Using this example, students can use it as a model when they are doing their own writing now or later in the year.

Minilesson Example

Looking at the notes example, it is evident that fragments are found from the first page to the last. Fragments could be taught at any time throughout the reading of the text, but teachers will want to consider when a lesson on fragments might best help their students read the story with more insight.

With that in mind, teachers may want to teach this minilesson right after reading the first chapter of the book. It seems that fragments often reflect the main character's mindset, so helping students see that right at the beginning of the book would be useful to them.

Place these sentences fragments in groups on a screen and ask students to identify what makes column one different from column two.

Examples	Non-examples
The nightmare.	Someone was calling his name.
The one he'd been having a lot lately.	Conor was awake when it came.

Examples	Non-examples
The one with the wind and the screaming.	He'd had a nightmare.
The one with the hands slipping from his grasp, no matter how hard he tried to hold on.	He glanced over at the clock his mum had put on his bedside table.
Seven minutes past midnight.	He'd told no one about the nightmare.
Which was late for a school night, late for a Sunday, certainly.	He felt a rush of panic, his guts twisting.
Not his mum, obviously, but no one else either, not his dad in their fort-nightly (or so) phone call, *definitely* not his grandma, and no one at school.	And he was.

Try to make sure that students don't see length as an option for how the two sets differ, but hopefully they will notice some of the following:

- Examples aren't complete ideas, even if they are long.
- Non-examples are complete ideas, even if they are short.
- Examples have parts of ideas—like an additional thought or a part of a sentence broken off.

After they identify these elements, ask if they have heard a name for the examples. Usually, they have, so talk about why the examples are called "fragments." Then ask, "Why does that name make sense?" After this short discussion, if students all have copies of the book, ask them to work in partners to find more examples of fragments in the first part of the book and share them with the class. This helps know that students understand the concept or what misconceptions still need to be addressed.

Usually, students ask why there are so many fragments in this book when they have been told that they are not supposed to use them in their writing. Ask them to consider the effect of the fragments in this first part of the book: What is the main character, Conor, feeling? How do we know? When we first wake up from a nightmare, what are some words that might describe our emotions? Usually students come to see that fragments are a good way to reflect uncertainty, fear, a kind of frantic feeling. Ask students to think of other emotions they could have that might also be well represented by fragments. They usually say anger or frustration. Ask them to watch for when Ness uses fragments through the novel to help us understand what Conor is feeling and not just tell us or leave us to wonder.

OTHER METHODS

Teachers can use a variety of methods to help students notice grammatical elements in their reading:

- Ask students to take two sticky notes and put them on two parts of the chapter/section that they think are the strongest or most powerful. As they share, conduct a discussion about the grammatical elements that contribute to making the selected passages so powerful. Students may not know the names of what they see, but they are usually able to know what they feel, and we can help them see what writers do to create those feelings in readers.
- When teachers want to introduce a new grammatical concept to students, read aloud a sentence or short passage that contains this grammatical element (e.g., punctuation, syntax, word choice, etc.) used to create a specific effect in the reading. Then, after talking about the effect on readers, pose questions to help students explore how grammar creates the power or effect.

  Example: Compare these two groups of sentences, adapted from *Where the Red Fern Grows)*.

He fought his way through the pack and backed up under the low branches of a hedge. They formed a halfmoon circle around him.	*Twisting and slashing, he fought his way through the pack and backed up under the low branches of a hedge. Growling and snarling, they formed a halfmoon around him.*

- Create an alternate passage of a piece of writing by taking out a grammatical element that contributes to the meaning (participial phrases or adjectives, for example). Have students read it and discuss their reactions. Then ask them to read the original passage and contrast it with the altered passage: What is the difference? Have them reflect: What difference can _____ make in our understanding of this portion of the text?

Students need to have
lots of talk
about grammar sprinkled through their day.

Beyond the planned moments noted already, here are some examples of opportunities that could allow for more spontaneous exploration of language in our classes.

Ways to Incorporate Student Talk About Language in Texts

Situation	Possible Avenues for Language Talk
A character's use of dialect in a piece of literature	Talk about language variation from one region to another and why an author would choose to have a character speak in dialect. What attitudes are attached to different dialects? How might those attitudes influence students' reading?
A particularly powerful sentence noticed in a mentor text during writing study	Consider what creates the power: Structure? Word choice? Parallelism? Some rhetorical device? And how might we use the element in our own writing?
A comment during class about a current event that has a language element to it (often political or sports related)	Discuss how language might play a role in the way events are interpreted and perceived, particularly the emotional content (connotation) many words have in the public sphere.
Vocabulary or word study	Discuss how synonyms carry different connotations and the impact of those differences on communication.
Unpacking density or complexity in an academic text	Explain a part of the content in the way we would to our mom or a six-year-old and discuss what the differences suggest about language use in different situations and with different audiences.

Grammar and Writing

Principles:

1. Teach grammar principles for the purpose of more effective (not simply more "correct") writing.
2. Use mentor texts to help students collect authentic language and syntactic options for their own writing and to understand which options are most appropriate for different kinds of writing.
3. Teach grammar that intentionally addresses the needs of the writer through the entire writing process, not only during editing.
4. Help students see how grammar can give their writing voices power.

Grammar in writing usually focuses on two main areas: syntax and punctuation.

Syntax

Many students have not had opportunities to consider the different ways syntax can contribute to meaning in their writing—or how it might influence our understanding of what we read. They know the traditional sentence pattern—subject followed by predicate, with a few pieces added in, maybe at the end. That is a very common pattern in English (right-branching sentences), and it serves many good purposes for flow in writing. But when we want to add ideas or emphasize an idea, we can use syntax to draw readers' attention to aspects of our sentence. We can move key ideas to a place of emphasis, bury less important details in places that don't distract, use parallelism to establish rhythm and establish credibility. Understanding syntax can empower writers and improve readers.

Example of In-Class Practice:

Begin by noticing the elements of grammar important to the genre students are writing, and then create minilessons to be taught at appropriate times during students' process of writing. For example, if students are writing biographies of famous people in the style of *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*, I would study elements of grammar in this mentor text that will help students write their own biographies. One such element might be the use of appositives to add additional information.

To begin a minilesson, give students sentences from the mentor text that contain the targeted grammatical structure. Ask them what they notice. If students need more help after they have discussed the sentences, or if they need more

scaffolding in the beginning of this practice, give sentences with the targeted structure highlighted (see examples below).

- Ann was great at building things, and she was especially passionate about transistors, **devices that regulate the flow of electric current**.
- But her dream was to bring classical ballet to Cuba, **her home country**.
- Her name was Margherita and she would grow up to become an incredible astrophysicist (**a scientist who studies the properties of stars and planets**).
- **The largest library in the whole world at that point**, this was a library with no books and no paper.
- Her name was Lozen, and she belonged to one of the Apache tribes, **groups of Native American people who originally roamed across what is now Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas**.

Whatever the grammatical structure under study, the process is the same: Notice and Talk.

- Notice what the target elements have ***in common***. (In this case, they are phrases that add more information positioned next to a noun or pronoun.)
- Notice what ***differs*** among the examples (e.g., length, placement, possible punctuation choices, including dashes, which are not in these examples, and some of these appositives actually include modifying clauses).
- Talk: Discuss ***why*** a writer might use this structure in writing (for appositives: to add information, to give clarifying detail, to improve flow).

After students have explored the concept under study, have them practice constructing it, either collaboratively, or perhaps, beginning with sentence combining (example below) to scaffold their practice.

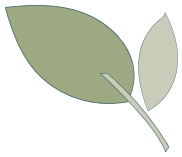
Sentence Set	Possible Combinations
■ When she was just 24 years old, she joined NASA. ■ NASA is the US agency that explores outer space.	■ When she was just 24 years old, she joined NASA, **the US agency that explores outer space**. ■ She joined NASA, **the US agency that explores outer space**, when she was just 24 years old.

Eventually, students should include the grammar concept under study in appropriate places in their writing. With the appositive example, teachers could prompt the construction either by identifying nouns that a reader might need more information about and adding an appositive to provide it or by considering where combining sentences to create an appositive would improve the flow of the writing.

Punctuation

Punctuation is often included in grammar study because, like syntax, punctuation contributes to meaning. Sometimes tension arises between the perspective that punctuation must strictly adhere to rules and a more flexible perspective that allows writers to use punctuation to shape meaning. Students need an understanding of how punctuation affects reading so that they can interpret texts effectively, just as drivers need to know that a red light means *stop*. Teachers should read strong examples of texts with effective punctuation aloud so that students can hear its effects.

Example:



I haven't gotten to you yet.

versus *I haven't gotten to you—yet.*

versus *I haven't gotten to you. Yet.*

Writers who understand how readers read punctuation—the expectations they have for the use of punctuation—can learn to make effective choices. But research shows that worksheets or rules don't actually teach the expectations for punctation effectively. Instead, helping students see the patterns and how they influence readers will make more difference. The pattern for teaching rules is the same pattern for teaching style: Notice and Talk.

Picturebooks are excellent tools to teach rules. Picturebooks engage students and provide a complete text in a short form—so students can see the effects of punctuation quickly. Find a book that has several examples of the target concept. Here is an example using the book *How to Live Forever* (Thompson).

Ways to Use Picturebooks to Teach Punctuation Rules

Examples	Non-examples
Two hundred years ago someone hid its record card under the bottom drawer of a filing cabinet, and the book quietly vanished.	On the shelves near the empty space there were books about age-old medicines and health books full of exercises and salads.
Doors and windows appear on the backs of the books, lights come on, and the sound of voices drifts out between the pages.	Peter walked past rows of books with people in leotards leaving about, eating celery, and having their thighs photographed.
They too were growing old, but their children were swimming in their shadows.	The old men had white hair and deeply lined faces.

Examples	Non-examples
The fourth man didn't move, and when Peter looked closer, he saw that he was asleep.	Peter took it and read the faded words: *How to Live Forever or Immortality for Beginners.*
Chinese quail picked across the earth, and bright butterflies flew around his head.	They grew out of toys and fell in love.
I kept saying that I had everything, but all I had was endless tomorrows.	"You are wiser than I was," said the Ancient Child, and led him back to the world.

Ask students to work in groups to theorize about what makes the examples fit in the same category and what makes them *not* fit in the other category. They should eventually notice a few things:

- All the sentences have *ands* or *buts*.
- The examples have a whole sentence on both sides of the *and* or *but*, but the non-examples do not.
- The examples have a comma before the *and* or *but*; the non-examples sometimes do, but it is for a different purpose (part of a list or for clarity). This point is one that teachers will want to help students understand—there are lots of reasons to use commas and sometimes they might appear on the surface to be the same thing. We want to think of one specific way differently.

When this discussion ends, it might be interesting to share the following sentence with students. It is the only compound sentence in the book *not* punctuated in the expected way. When sharing examples like this with students, ask: Clearly the author knew the rule, knew what readers expected. Why would they choose in this example to NOT follow the rule?

Full-grown trees spring up and chimneys begin to smoke.

To make effective choices as writers, students also need to know that punctuation can be used to influence meaning. Finding examples like the one above can help them consider this aspect of punctuation and language. For example, when Elie Wiesel punctuates three compound sentences three different ways in one paragraph, we can ask students to consider why.

"*Where was I to discover a fresh vocabulary, a primeval language? The language of night was not human, it was primitive, almost animal—hoarse shouting, screams, muffled moaning, savage howling, the sound of beating. A brute strikes out wildly, a body falls. An officer raises his arm and a whole community walks toward a common grave. A soldier shrugs his shoulders, and a thousand families are torn apart, to be reunited only by death. This was the concentration camp language.*"

~ E. Wiesel, "Why I Write: Making No Become Yes"

Ask students to notice the three different ways the three compound sentences are punctuated in this paragraph. Notice that only one of them follows the expectation of "rules": a comma before the coordinate conjunction. Because we know that not only the author but also the editors and translators all had an option to use the expected punctuation, ask students why they think the final choice is what we see here—one sentence with only the conjunction (no comma) and one sentence with only a comma (no conjunction). Have them then consider how punctuation can add meaning to a sentence. We don't really know why the author made the choices he did, so there is no single "correct" answer. Even so, students can have some incredibly insightful responses in this discussion that have taught them the power of punctuation in contributing to meaning.

There is no single
correct answer.

Usage and More

Sometimes when people talk about grammar, they really mean *usage*, or the appropriateness of language for each situation (Speaking and Listening, Standard 3). Usage is often connected to correctness—what people call "good" or "bad" grammar, language that is "right" or "wrong." However, usage is best approached from a consideration of appropriateness for a situation. Consider the following questions:

What kind of language does this situation require?
■ How much formality or informality?
■ How much jargon or specialized language?
■ Could my language choices have social or economic consequences?

Students need to know enough about academic English to make informed choices about when they want to use it versus other styles of English; this means that they need to learn enough about language—of all types—so that they know how to move among the potential styles for each situation. This flexibility might begin with learning that there might be times when "standard" or academic English is not the best choice. The Utah ELA writing standards address usage by expecting students to "use appropriate conventions and style for the audience, purpose, and task." Language can be grammatical without also being acceptable in certain situations and acceptable in some situations without be grammatical. After all, when toddlers are learning to speak, we often encourage their language development by responding positively to ungrammatical uses of language. It's important to remember that all languages and dialects have rules for the way the structures are developed; as such, they are grammatical—even if those rules are not the same as the grammar rules we are familiar with. Mostly, we want students to have many options for using language in many situations, rather than restricting their usage to only one dialect—academic English, for example.

Contrasting language across a variety of settings encourages students to see patterns in how language differs depending on the situation. Teaching how language can shift respects language variation while also reinforcing expectations of academic English. Teachers can address language variation when classes read novels or short stories with characters who use dialects. They may also sometimes use activities like the following for short minilessons on how language shifts for situation.

1. **While he was throwing a ball to a friend in the house, a boy knocked over a vase his mother valued—and broke it. Which of the following is he most likely to say? Why?**
   - My mother will exhibit a great deal of anger upon learning of the loss of this treasured vase.
   - My mother will be very sad to learn of this breakage.
   - My mom's going to ground me for sure now.
2. **The principal calls you into his office to ask about what you saw as a food fight broke out in the cafeteria. Which of the following is most likely how she would ask for the information? Why?**
   - Give me the scoop.
   - Please tell me what you saw happen that led up to the food fight?
   - Will you please inform me as to the events preceding the unfortunate event in the lunchroom today?

After they have tried a few of these scenarios that teachers design, ask students to create their own scenarios and three different levels of language in response. As they do so, they show their understanding of using language appropriate for audience and context.

Word History and the Study of Language Change Over Time

One way to engage students' interest in language is to help them discover some of its intriguing aspects by studying how language has changed over time and geography.

For example, explore the following:

- Do students say "hotcakes," "pancakes," "griddle cakes," or another term?
- What do they call the pans used to cook them? "Frying pan"? "Griddle"? "Skillet"? "Spider"?
- Is their beverage a "soda"? "Pop"? "Coke" (even when it's not)?
- What do they call their grandparents?

When students think about these differences in language, they can begin to consider why these varieties exist. Are they regional? Is age a determiner? Looking at what words mean—and what they used to mean—can help students see that language is a reflection of the people who use it and is as infinitely interesting as the people who use it.

Even briefly studying some aspects of the history of English can help students understand something about why spelling or plurals aren't always straightforward: Why is there a "b" in debt? Why is the plural of goose "geese"? Bringing these questions about language into the classroom helps students to think about language use in general and increases their interest in how language shapes meaning, an important element of grammar instruction. Additional ideas

Teaching Latin and Greek roots and prefixes is a helpful way for students to explore the history of English and develop vocabulary skills, since many academic words grow from these historical roots. Each week, teachers may introduce three to five bases or prefixes to the class in connection with their vocabulary study.

Example of Teaching Latin and Greek Prefixes and Roots

If the teacher selected the following words from the day's reading: *divert, abduction, aversion*, they could include these Latin/Greek origins: ab (away from), duct (to lead), vert (to turn).

1. On day one, provide students with sentences containing the vocabulary words from the text. Students then are to use context clues to speculate on the meaning of the underlined word.

   My mother has an aversion to messy houses.

2. Then, have students look at the meanings of the Latin or Greek parts and use those meanings to establish if they had speculated effectively. Students can also generate words they know that use these same Latin/Greek parts.
3. As the week proceeds, students incorporate these words into their own writing. As they accumulate knowledge of Latin and Greek parts of words, they can better attack unfamiliar words in their reading by either using their knowledge of those parts or using context clues.

Tests and Assessments

Tests

One challenge of teaching grammar in this way is that the new standards are often looking at effective use in complex practices, the ways we use language in the real world. But if students are tested on their knowledge, tests tend to be reductive. They often focus on rules and standard expectations that may differ from the way language is used in the real world and the ways we have been talking about it in class. As much as the practices of teaching language in this document are evidence based, tests require students to take a different stance toward language knowledge, one that requires—at least for time just before the test—a different approach. The picturebook *Hooray for Diffendorfer Day* (Suess, Prelutsky, and Smith), promotes the idea that effective instruction will prepare students for every situation, including tests. However, just before tests, some traditional instruction and practice with the stance of a test benefits many students.

Suggestions for Test Prep

- Remind students that language shifts in different situations; in many ways, they already know this and instinctively shift their own language when presented with different situations. With that in mind, they can understand that the knowledge required for tests is only one facet of how language works—not the end of what they need to know or even the most important aspect of learning grammar.
- Next, if teachers are aware of the specifics of the tests, they can make sure to draw attention to those specifics during reading and writing assignments in authentic ways that don't resort only to "test prep," helping students learn the concepts in the service of long-term goals. For example, if students need to know semicolons for the test, be sure to notice when an author uses them in a text they are reading. Maybe put all the sentences with semicolons on a screen and ask students to generate explanations for their use and why a writer might use them instead of other options.
- Teachers should also be aware that test questions are often more complex than they appear on the surface; questions about commas in introductory phrases may also contain commas used for other purposes, potentially confusing test takers. Because of that complexity, it makes sense to provide students with a solid foundation of grammar understanding instead of focusing too specifically on the topics that will be on the test. Teach to the big ideas and the small ones will fit in naturally.

Many questions in the multiple-choice section of the AP exam require students to read carefully—a great reason why we want to teach language in context

with our reading. Understanding implications from word choices, syntax and punctuation is essential to answering the questions, as the responses relate to students' understanding of grammatical structures and what they do to writing. Questions are often structured to ask students about the effects of grammar more than the actual grammar, so knowing the terminology is less important than knowing the effects of grammatical choices.

For example, the following test question is typical of AP exam questions:

> The writer wants to clarify the information in sentence 16 (reproduced below) by changing the underlined text, adjusting the punctuation, and capitalizing as needed. *To put this cap in perspective, it is important to note that U.S. paper products have a 25 percent food contamination rate.* Which of the following versions of the underlined text best achieves this goal?
>
> (A) (as it is now)
>
> (B) U.S. paper products have, it is important to note, a food contamination rate of 25 percent.
>
> (C) Americans need to understand that U.S. paper products are highly contaminated with food.
>
> (D) 25 percent of all U.S. paper products placed in a recycling bin are marred by food waste or residue.
>
> (E) You should know that nearly a quarter of U.S. paper products cannot be recycled due to food contamination.

Although some aspects of choosing an answer have to do with answering the question that is posed instead of grammar, some of the ability to answer correctly does rely on grammatical understanding. Clearly, A would not be an effective option as the question asks about clarifying a wordy sentence. E creates a similar issue of bulky writing, more typical of speech than clear writing. C is less clear because it lacks specifics. B uses an interrupter, that, effective in a speech to draw readers' attention to the information at the end of the sentence; however, that doesn't clarify. D, on the other hand, puts key information in important places in the sentence, drawing attention to that information without distraction—a perfect example of clarity.

After practicing a few sample test questions, students can also benefit from writing their own test questions. They can write such questions on teacher-chosen or their own choices of content. From these, teachers will understand if students know the content—and students like to share the questions with classmates to see how others might respond to the questions they design.

It would also be good for teachers to familiarize themselves with the test questions *and* the explanations. When considering the example above about phrases, teachers need to have a clear definition of a phrase to clarify the answer; such clarity can be built with regular sentence combining practice that helps to build students' sense of what constitutes a sentence, phrase, or clause. This skill can also be taught with an activity called *thumbs*. After a brief explanation of phrases/clauses, (phrases

can have nouns or verbs but not subjects and verbs, which clauses do), put a list on the screen, phrases and clauses that were pulled from a book students are reading or a song students know. Read each group of words aloud and ask students to put their thumbs up if it's a phrase, and down if it's a clause. Repeat this practice a few times—it's fast to do—students get a good sense of this distinction.

Assessment of Grammar and Language Teaching

When educators use a writing workshop model or teach grammar in context, it can be more challenging to assess what students have actually learned. Formative assessment can be embedded in many of the suggestions outlined in this document.

Examples of Formative Assessment

During student classroom talk, teachers need to be asking and observing:

- What are students noticing about the way language influences their reading?
- How do we see our class talking about the influence language has on student writing or reading comprehension?

During sentence combining practices, teachers need to be asking and observing:

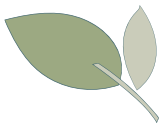
- Do I see in student writing improved fluency and inclusion of some of the grammatical principles we have discussed?

During or after reading, teachers can include a reading question on a test or quiz that asks students to consider a passage considering its grammar:

- How does the author's use of _____ in this passage influence the insights a reader might have into a character or situation?

When students submit polished writing, ask them to identify two places where they incorporated some of their language learning into their writing to improve it. This identification is a good summative assessment of language learning as it applies to writing. Their use—and their identification of their learning—should be part of the final grade. Spending more time teaching language means that teachers can make this language use identification a part of a rubric. Students would then be evaluated on their effective use of the language elements. This portion of the rubric may say: *Effectively uses two elements of language learning to enhance communication of ideas—and identifies these two uses with an * in the text.*

These types of assessments might not be the traditional, comprehensive types of assessment many teachers know from their own experiences as students, but they are effective ways to measure the kind of learning that comes from this more nuanced approach to grammar instruction. Each of these requires students to apply their understanding to situations that are more like the way they (hopefully) will apply their language learning in their lives beyond school.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. **I am not very secure in my grammar knowledge. What if all this talk about language and grammar in all sorts of ways causes students to ask questions I don't know the answer to?**

   That would be wonderful! Think what a powerful message you will send when you have to say, "Great question! I'm not sure of the answer, but let's see if we can find out." You are telling students that curiosity about language is a good thing and that learning about language is a lifelong pursuit. You are modeling inquiry and encouraging their further interest. This is the best teaching!

   If you would like to improve your understanding of grammar, begin with curiosity. As you read, do you notice something that the writer is doing that is curious to you? When you hear people speaking in public, do you hear uses of words or constructions that are interesting? If you do, look them up online. See what you learn as you pay attention to the curiosities of language in your world—and in your students' reading and writing. Lots of information is available online, so it's easy. The most important thing is to find trusted sources that discuss (1) grammar specifically and (2) grammar broadly.

   Some Recommendations:

   - *Mechanically Inclined* by Jeff Anderson is about teaching grammar but it also has a section in the back with explanations of various elements of grammar. This is written in a very readable, understandable style.
   - *The Giggly Guide to Grammar* by Cathy Campbell teaches traditional grammar and some usage with humor. The book also includes exercises and practices.
   - *Templates: Models of Style and Usage for Writers* by Stephen Lewis is a book that explains more technical aspects of grammar as they are related to sentence structures.
   - Patterns of Power by Jeff Anderson for different grade levels has activities that help teachers show students the ways that grammar can empower them as writers.
   - *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves* by Lynne Truss is a general book about grammar and attitudes about it.

2. **I learned diagramming when I was a student—and I loved it. Why has it gone out of favor?**

   This is a controversial subject! Those of us who enjoyed learning to diagram, find some reasons to encourage it. Mostly, though, diagramming is no longer

encouraged because research suggests that traditional methods of grammar instruction (which include diagramming) don't really teach students how to write more effectively. Diagramming might teach them to diagram, but it doesn't really help them construct better sentences. What's more, diagramming involves learning additional information (when lines are slanted versus vertical or dotted versus solid, for example) that doesn't always help students as readers and writers. If we want students to learn that subjects and predicates should agree, there are more effective methods, usually involving active involvement in reading and writing and talking. Sure, some English teachers like the puzzle, the structure, and the logic of diagrams. But beyond that, there isn't research to support taking the time away from reading and writing to teach students how to diagram.

3. **Subject/predicate? Noun/verb? Participial phrase? Gerund? Future perfect? How much terminology should I teach as part of grammar instruction?**

   Although some teachers advocate not teaching any terminology, it can be difficult to have a conversation about what language is doing in a text if we have no common words to describe it. Other teachers teach lots of terminology and their definitions; however, this position may limit student learning, since many definitions can be incomplete or inaccurate in addressing the complexities of language. When teachers identify language concepts or terms they think students need to know, they can teach them inductively: provide several examples of the concept, have students identify and explain it, and then give the concept the name. This process allows students to learn the concept from discovery rather than from a definition, a process more effective for long-term learning.

4. **How do I pace this kind of grammar teaching, especially when I have students who may lack important skills in reading and writing and need me to review parts of speech at the start of every year?**

   While an understanding of grammar is important for developing good reading and writing skills, it is not the naming of the parts that does this. Students need enough understanding of the terminology to have a conversation, but the labels and terminology, in and of themselves, are not the important thing. And lessons that start with a term and a definition don't help students in the short or long-term.

   Instead, helping students understand the concepts related to their reading and writing—and then giving the concepts a name—help students no matter what their level of learning is. Sentence combining provides a natural way to bring in the necessary terminology in authentic conversation and related to students' own writing—and could be the first regular practice teachers introduce for grammar teaching. As we model sentence combining and talk of putting prepositional phrases before or after a noun or verb, we are teaching the vocabulary as an element of meaning-making. Shanahan explains

another way to approach understanding of language during a reading lesson by taking a sentence apart with students.

Rather than starting the year with a review of parts of speech, teachers need to consider authentic ways to introduce these concepts through the authentic work of the class. For example, after reading the first chapter of *Lord of the Flies*, ask students on an exit slip to provide two adjectives they would use to describe Ralph or Piggy. Sometimes teachers start the year by asking students to interview another student and then write up an introduction. As part of that writing, teachers could provide a short minilesson on appositives, where conversation about nouns and articles/adjectives would be natural. During any reading or writing, naming grammatical elements could be embedded so that students who need it are getting a review while teachers go about the reading and writing all students need to do for class.

5. Is there anything I should know to help the multilingual learners in my classroom, students whose English is still developing?

First, multilingual learners (MLLs) need teachers who recognize the language resources students bring with them from their first language. These students know a lot that they can't always explain, and we can help them feel recognized for that knowledge. They also need time—time to develop skills in all levels of language written and spoken, formal and informal.

Beyond the suggestions found in NCTE's position statement (particularly "Teaching Academic Language" [point 9] and "Teaching Language through Content" [point 10]), the following principles are helpful for teachers whose classes include ML students:

- Provide rich and challenging content with authentic literacy experiences.
- Use technology and images as scaffolds and supports.
- Learn about the backgrounds of the students.
- Consider how the home and native language can be resources for students.
- Keep expectations high and teach academic literacy skills.

Practices that benefit all learners but also specifically help MLLs include the following:

- Use picture books and graphic novels when possible to include images when scaffolding content for students. Information on Color in Colorado can easily be adapted for secondary classrooms.
- Provide opportunities for students to write about their home cultures.
- Encourage students to share language and traditions from a variety of cultures.
- Create a visually rich classroom environment with posters and guides around the room.
- Use targeted writing projects such as creating a class book based on Megan McDonald's *My House Has Stars*.

Additional Recommended Resources

Anderson, J. (2005). *Mechanically inclined. Building grammar, style, and usage into writer's workshop*. Stenhouse/Routledge.

Anderson, J. & Leach, T. (2022). *Patterns of power: Teaching grammar through reading and writing, grades 9–12*. Routledge.

Anderson, J, Leach, T., & Clark, M. (2021) *Patterns of Power: Inviting adolescent writers into the conventions of language*, Routledge.

Anderson, J. & Dean, D. (2014) *Revision decisions: Talking through sentences and beyond*. Stenhouse/Routledge.

Brandt, M. (2019). *Between the commas: Sentence instruction that builds confident writers (and writing teachers)*. Heinemann.

Campbell, C. (2005) *The giggly guide to grammar* (teacher's edition). Discover Writing Company.

Crovitz, D. & Devereaux, M. D. (2016). *Grammar to get things done*. NCTE.

Dean, D. (2020). *Teaching grammar in the secondary classroom*. NCTE.

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Dunn, P. & Lindblom, K. (2011). *Grammar Rants: How a backstage tour of writing complaints can help students make informed, savvy choices about their writing*. Heinemann.

Lewis, S. (2014). *Templates: Models of style and usage for writers*. Broadview Press.

Noden, H. (20011). *Image grammar: Teaching grammar as part of the writing process* (2nd ed). Heinemann.

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