

Grammar and Syntax

Grammar consists of set rules regarding language and sentence structure, such as no splitting infinitives, no hanging prepositions and the importance of subject-verb agreement.

Grammar relies on the learner understanding the different parts of speech, the common name for a word class or category into which words are placed according to the work they do in a sentence. There are eight traditional parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition, and interjection.

Syntax is how a sentence is worded and structured, the order of the words that must be utilized to convey meaning. It consists of the type of sentence: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative. For example, syntax would refer to the sentence being declarative: stating a wish that the boy had. It would also refer to the length of the sentence mimicking the long twisted paths in the mountain and the long time the boy had been wishing to walk them. Syntax can also describe the “voice” of the sentence and whether it is passive or active. For example, He wants to run down the trail (passive) vs. He runs down the trail (active).

Syntax has literary meaning and use, while grammar just shows good form. They are two different things that can be easily confused.

Syntax can be used as a literary device to add extra meaning to your sentences, whereas grammar adds no greater meaning to your sentences.

This “kit” has been designed to provide you with activities that will promote youth’s understanding of both grammar and syntax. The Word Box has library pockets full of words categorized by part of speech. There are activity cards that will share ways to use these different library pockets. Grammar Minutes are games, complete with a variety of game boards and game cards, labeled with the name of the game, as well as activities that you can use to help youth become more proficient in identifying the part of speech in context. Punctuating sentences correctly can also be challenging for youth. Sometimes it seems that when a young person learns about a new punctuation mark, he/she over-use it just to practice. Activities to support correct punctuation can be found in Grammar Minutes. The Syntax Challenge helps youth to work on correct syntax. Without syntax, language would be gibberish. Changing word order changes the meaning. “I can go,” for example, is very different from “Can I go?” And we all know that “Go I can” is meaningless. English language syntax is different from Spanish language syntax, so for our English Learners, increased opportunities to intentionally practice syntax is important.

Finally, in this “kit” you will find poems, songs, and books to share with youth to activate different learning modalities. These poems, songs and books could also serve as a “model” for a youth writing process.

The Word Box

The purpose of the Word Box is to provide you with activities that you can do with youth that do not require a lot of preparation on your part and that utilize a minimal number of materials that can be used in a variety of ways.

The words in this box represent the parts of speech:

- Nouns—person, place, thing, or idea
- Pronouns—words that take the place of nouns
- Verbs—action (jump, skip, eat) or state of being (is, are, etc.)
- Adverbs—describe and can modify anything but nouns or words that are used as nouns. Adverbs express how, when, where, how often, and how much.
- Adjectives—describe nouns
- Conjunctions—words that combine other parts of speech or sentences in a particular relationship
- Interjections—words or phrases that show strong emotions
- Prepositions—prepositions work with nouns and pronouns to form a phrase that can act as an adjective or adverb.
- Articles—a, an, the

Your Word Box has library pockets by grade level. If you work in an elementary program, you will have access to library pockets for Kindergarten through 6th grade (5th if that is the highest grade level on your campus. Middle school programs will receive 6th through 8th grade materials, unless they also serve 5th grade.

In your Word Box you will find individual library pockets that have a particular part of speech within. However, you may have more than one library pocket with nouns included because each pocket represents different types of nouns. For example, you will have one library pocket for Common Nouns and one for Proper Nouns at all grade levels. However, as youth mature, you may also have library pockets of Collective Nouns, Countable and Uncountable Nouns, Possessive Nouns, and Concrete and Abstract Nouns.

In your Word Box you will also find this ring of information which includes basic things about the Word Box, and also a variety of activities that you can do with the different library pockets of words. You will discover that basic activities include “sorts”. A sort asks a youth to look at a library pocket of words and then sort them into categories. These categories can be ones that you identify, such as common and proper, or ones that the youth determine such as people, animals, things, and places. Or the youth might also categorize words by color, living or non-living, or any other category that seems to make sense to them.

While all activities can be done by the whole class, we recommend that you have the youth work in pairs, triad, and groups of four. (This is why you will have multiple library pockets that are exactly alike.) Activities that are best done with the entire group are labeled as Group Activities.

In addition to the library pockets of words by part of speech, you will discover a library pocket of punctuation marks, Frye’s Fast Phrases. These two pockets can be used when you are working with the class to form sentences.

Word Box Activities

Give an individual youth a set of cards and ask him/her to put them in alphabetical order by the first letter of each word (remember, if the first letters are the same, you continue to the second letter, then the third and so on). This is appropriate for grades 3rd and up.

Give youth (groups of 2 work best) a set of cards and ask them to categorize them and label the categories they have placed the words under. (Help youth look for the bigger picture and certainly beyond alphabetizing the words.) Have them explain the rationale to another student.

Give youth the adverb cards and ask them to categorize them and then label the categories. Have them explain the rationale to another student. (Remember, adverbs identify how, when, where, how often, how much.)

Give each student an interjection card. Have the group walk around to music. When the music stops, students pair up. Each member of the pair needs to make a sentence to which the other person replies with his/her interjection. (Example: I am going to pet my cat. BAM!) You might want 3-4 sample cards.

Give youth the adverb and verb cards, ask them to combine a verb and an adverb that makes sense.

Randomly give out three word cards to each student. Have them find a “group” of others that can help make a sentence. (Be sure to distribute some punctuation cards.)

Give teams of two a preposition card. Have them act out the prepositional phrase for the group. Note: Before you have youth do this activity on their own, demonstrate several phrases for them. Also consider reading the book, **Rosie’s Walk** to them and act out the prepositional phrases in the book.

Give youth the noun and conjunction cards. Ask them to use the conjunction cards to combine two nouns. Most common conjunctions are and, not, but, or, yet. (Examples: This cookie contains neither chocolate not nuts. This cookie contains both chocolate and nuts. This cookie contains either chocolate or nuts. The cookie contains not only chocolate but also nuts. This cookie contains chocolate whether it contains nuts or not.)

Divide the class into three groups. Give cards to each group randomly. Be sure that each group has several conjunctions. As a team the groups use the cards to create sentences. Ask the groups to read the sentences they’ve created aloud for everyone to hear. Then ask groups to combine sentences using a conjunction.

Distribute the Frye’s Fast Phrases. Ask youth to use the phrase in a sentence. Have groups read the sentence they wrote aloud to the group.

Create a word wall or word chart. Have students write sentences with any of the word cards that you have distributed to them. These can be original sentences that use one or more words. Have them place the word(s) on the word wall. Note: Word walls have spaces for words to be placed in alphabetical order or by categories.

Randomly distribute words to the group. Call on one student at a time to come up and help create a sentence. When there are enough words to complete the first sentence, students should begin making a second sentence.

Nouns:

Nouns: Nouns are either common (which does not start with a capital letter unless it is at the beginning of a sentence) and names a person, place or thing generically. A proper noun names a specific person, place or thing

and always begins with a capital letter. You can play the game **I Spy** with the students. Ask youth to change between identifying common or proper nouns (maybe have the words common and proper can be written on popsicle sticks and then youth can pick a stick and then identify the type of noun that is on the stick.

Give youth (groups of 2 work best) a set of cards and ask them to categorize them and label the categories they have placed the words under. (Help youth look for the bigger picture and certainly beyond alphabetizing the words.) Have them explain the rationale to another student.

Give youth the nouns and ask them to classify the words as person, place, thing or idea; or ask them to pair up common and proper nouns.

Give youth the noun and pronouns cards, ask them to match the nouns with a pronoun that could take the noun's place in a sentence.

Give youth the verbs and the nouns. Ask them to create two word sentences. Ask them to write the sentences on a white board. Ask them what they know about how sentences begin and how they end.

Give youth the adjective and noun cards. Ask them to pair an adjective with the noun. Ask them to add two different adjectives to the noun that make sense. (Yes—The large brown dog, No—The big tiny cat)

Sorts: There are a number of different sorts that you can ask youth to complete:

Assigned Common Noun Sorts:

- Person—Place—Thing—Animal—Idea
- Plural nouns and singular nouns

Assigned Proper Noun Sorts:

- Names of people, pets, etc.
- Names of places
- Names of days, months
- Names of holidays
- Matching common nouns with proper nouns

Adjectives: Have youth select a noun and then describe it with two adjectives—these do not have to be from the Word Box. For example, I have a yellow, folded napkin.

Verbs: Have youth act out a verb that you call out (use the cards to keep the action moving). Move quickly to keep them engaged, perhaps calling out a new verb every 3 seconds. Example: breathe...eat...think...stand...flap...sit...turn...dance...sing...clean...drum...and so on. You can not act out state of being verbs s select the verbs you will use in advance.

Adverbs: Create cards that state: how, when, where, how often, how much under what circumstances. Then give youth a verb and have them draw one of the cards you created above and find an adverb to answer that question. For example, if the verb is “eat” and the card states “how often”, the sentence or phrase could be “John eats daily.”

Instructions

Model correct syntax. Learning & Teaching suggests that rather than correcting, you rephrase the sentence as it should have been constructed. If a child says, "Home I went today," reply, "Oh, you went home today. What did you do there?"

Use sentence completion exercises to improve syntax. Give **students** open-ended sentences, such as "The duck waddled..." or "The man went..." and have them complete the sentences so that they make sense. These exercises can be done orally or as written assignments.

Write words on cards and have the students arrange them to form complete simple sentences. As with the modeling exercise, read the sentence and ask whether it makes sense. Students sometimes hear a syntax error that they do not see.

Develop basic skills. Teach **students** that sentences start with capital letters and that they end with periods.

Teach how sentences often use a noun-verb-direct object pattern. Build on the earlier sentence exercise and make flashcard piles of nouns, verbs and direct objects, identifying the categories with different-colored markers, and have the students construct more complex sentences by adding adjectives and pronouns.

Perform verb exercises. Write "yesterday," "today" and "tomorrow" on the whiteboard, Have the students conjugate a list of verbs using the past, present and future tenses, then have them construct short sentences such as, "Yesterday I went to school. Today I go to school. Tomorrow I will come to school." This short exercise can easily be done when you have five minutes before recess.

Use songs and nursery rhymes to help children improve their syntax. Repetition is essential to language learning, and singing helps make learning correct word order automatic.

Praise students when they get it right. Say quietly, "Oh, I'm so pleased that you got the word order right." A little positive reinforcement goes a long way toward improving language skills, particularly at the primary level.

Word Box—5th Grade

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Pronouns
able	accelerate	abandoned	Accidentally	all
achieve	acquire	abnormal	Awkwardly	another
acoustics	adopt	absurd	Beautifully	any
action	afford	accurate	Eagerly	anybody
activity	analyze	actually	Grimly	anyone
aftermath	apologize	amazing	Lazily	anything
afternoon	approve	astonishing	Quietly	both
afterthought	assemble	attractive	Recklessly	each
apparel	assess	average	Sloppily	each other
appliance	attempt	bashful	Unevenly	either
beginner	behold	bewildered	Urgently	everybody
believe	boast	brainy	Well	everyone
bomb	burst	breakable		everything
border	cheat	charming		few
boundary	classify	cheap	Adverbs that tell TO WHAT EXTENT	he
breakfast	command	cheerful	absolutely	her
cabbage	concentrate	colossal	almost	hers
cable	confront	cooperative	awfully	hers
calculator	confuse	courageous	because	herself
calendar	consider	cruel	every	him
caption	continue	cute	extremely	himself
carpenter	create	dazzling	generally	his
cemetery	demonstrate	decisive	not	I
channel	describe	defiant	any contraction "n't"	it
circle	determine	delicious	quite	its
creator	diagnose	delightful	rather	itself
creature	disapprove	determined	really	many
education	display	diligent	terribly	me
faucet	embarrass	disastrous	too	me
feather	examine	disturbed	very	mine
friction	exist	efficient		more
fruit	expand	elated	-Syllable Regular	most
fuel	express	envious	1. soon	much
galley	facilitate	exciting	2. sooner	my
guide	forecast	expensive	3. soonest	myself
guitar	foresee	fabulous		neither
health	generate	filthy	1. quick	no one
heart	govern	flagrant	2. quicker	nobody
idea	graduate		3. quickest	none
kitten	harass			nothing
laborer			1. happy	one

language	hook	flawless	2. happier	one another
lawyer	ignore	friendly	3. happiest	other
linen	impress	frightened	3 or more syllable adverbs use the word more and most in front of the word	our
locket	increase	glamorous		ours
lumber	influence	grateful	1. carefully	ourselves
magic	inspect	gruesome	2. more carefully	several
minister	intend	handsome	3. most carefully	she
mitten	introduce	heavenly		some
money	irritate	hesitant	1. ridiculously	somebody
mountain	lecture	hilarious	2. more ridiculously	someone
music	lighten	honorable	3. most ridiculously	something
partner	market	ignorant		that
passenger	mislead	important	1. frantically	their
pickle	modify	impossible	2. more frantically	theirs
picture	negotiate	incredible	3. most frantically	them
plantation	occur	intelligent		themselves
plastic	organize	jagged		they
pleasure	originate	jumbled		this
pocket	overcome	knowledgeable		those
police	persuade	level		us
pollution	possess	magenta		we
railway	prefer	magnificent		what
recess	prepare	marvelous		whatever
reward	promote	momentous		which
route	propose	motionless		whichever
scene	provide	mysterious		who
scent	raise	nervous		whoever
squirrel	reflect	odd		whom
stranger	represent	outrageous		whomever
suit	respond	outstanding		whose
sweater	retrieve	parallel		you
temper	revise	perpetual		your
territory	satisfy	pleasant		yours
texture	shrink	powerful		yourself
thread	sketch	precious		yourselves
treatment	smash	productive		
veil	soothe	quaint		
vein	spoil	relieved		
volcano	strike	remarkable		
wealth	succeed	scientific		
weather	tempt	separate		
wilderness	transform			
wren	translate			
wrist	tumble			

<p>writer</p> <p>Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns</p> <p>Concrete nouns refer to their ability to register on your five senses. If you can see, hear, smell, taste, or feel the item, it's a concrete noun.</p> <p>Abstract nouns on the other hand refer to abstract objects such as ideas or concepts, like the nouns "politeness" or "hatefulness".</p>	<p>unify unpack verify warn weep whine wrap wreck</p> <p>Linking Verbs Do not show action but link nouns and pronouns to other information in the sentence.</p> <p>am are being appear be become feel get grow have has been is lie look might be have prove remain seem smell sound stay sit taste turn were</p> <p>Being Verbs</p>	<p>silent simple sincere special splendid steady tasteful temporary tender tremendous truthful undesirable upbeat vague various vivacious wealthy zesty</p> <p>Condition Adjectives</p> <p>alive better careful clever dead easy famous gifted helpful important inexpensive mushy odd powerful rich shy tender uninterested vast wrong</p> <p>Feelings (Bad) Adjectives</p> <p>angry</p>		
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	<p>Being verbs tell about something in a state of being. A noun or pronoun does not always take action. Sometimes is just is.</p> <p>am are is was were will be have been had been will have been</p>	<p>bewildered clumsy defeated embarrassed fierce grumpy helpless itchy jealous lazy mysterious nervous obnoxious panicky repulsive scary thoughtless uptight worried</p> <p>Feelings (Good) Adjectives</p> <p>agreeable brave calm delightful eager faithful gentle happy jolly kind lively nice obedient proud relieved silly thankful victorious witty zealous</p>		
Prepositions	Interjections	Articles	Conjunctions	
One Word Prepositions	ack ah	a an	Coordinating Conjunctions	

<p> aboard about above across after against along alongside amid among around as at before behind below beneath beside between beyond but by concerning considering except excluding despite down during following for from given gone in into inside including les like minus near notwithstanding of off on onto opposite over past pending </p>	<p> aha ahem ahhhh ahoy alas aw aye bah bam bingo blah boo boo-hoo boo-ya bravo brr cheers congratulations eek hallelujah hmm... oh oops ouch pew pow shh... thanks uh-oh wahoo wow yeah yes yikes yippy yuck </p>	<p> no some the zero </p>	<p> and but or for so nor yet </p> <p>Subordinating Conjunctions</p> <p> after although as as if as long as as much as as though because before by the time even if even though if in order that in case lest once only if provided that since so that than that though till unless until when whenever where wherever while </p>	
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<p>per plus pro regarding respecting round save since than through throughout to toward under underneath unlike until up upon versus via with within without worth</p> <p>Complex Prepositions according to ahead of along with apart from as for aside from as per as to as well as away from because of but for by means of close to contrary to except for depending on due to further to in addition to in between in case of in favor of</p>			<p>Correlative Conjunctions both...and either...or neither...nor not only...but also whether...or</p>	
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in lieu of instead of next to near to on account of on behalf of on to on top of opposite to other than out of outside of owing to prior to regardless of thanks to together with up against up to up until vis á vis with reference to with regard to				
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Word Box

Business card size

Need library pockets

Labels

5-10 sorting activities with n, v, adj, adv

Rosie's Walk—prepositions—across, around, over, under, past, through

Sorts for nouns:

- Common and proper
- Person, place, thing, animal, idea
- Singular-plural
- Noun—not a noun
- In a classroom, home, garden, etc.

Proper Noun Sorts:

- Names of people, pets, etc.
- Names of places
- Names of days, months
- Names of holidays
- Matching common nouns with proper nouns

Adjective Sort

- Color
- Number
- Shape
- Size
- Feelings
- Silly or Serious
- Looks
- Behaves
- Sounds
- Noun + adj.

Verbs

- To Root, To Toot, To Parachute
- Action—regular
- Action—irregular
- Present-past-future tense
- Regular –irregular
- Action, helping, linking
- Charades