

Grammar: *Discussion Guide*

Overview

Understanding grammar helps students improve their writing and speaking. Explore the various parts of speech and how to use them correctly as you examine vital fundamentals of grammar. Learn about the process of writing and how editing can help you keep grammar in check. The end result will be improved communication and an ability to speak and write clearly and correctly.

This lesson explores several areas of grammar, including parts of speech, proper usage, and editing for accuracy. Attention to these areas can help your students achieve superior writing and speaking skills.

Classroom Activities

1. Show the “Singular and Plural Nouns, Regular and Irregular Nouns” segment from the *Pendemonium: The Ink on the Sphinx* video.
 - **Pre-Viewing Activity:** Outline the eight parts of speech, giving examples of how they are used in sentences:
 - Noun – identifies a person, place, or thing (*girl, city, table*)
 - Verb – expresses an action or a state of being (*walk, feel*)
 - Pronoun – takes the place of a noun (*he, who*)
 - Adjective – describes a noun or pronoun (*small, tricky*)
 - Adverb – modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb (*tightly, too*)
 - Preposition – relates its object to another word in a sentence (*to, with*)
 - Conjunction – links words or groups of words (*and, since*)
 - Interjection – expresses strong emotion (*wow, hey*)
 - **Noun Game:** Hold a noun bee, similar to a spelling bee, where students are shown a noun and must spell its plural. Remind students that regular nouns form their plurals by adding *-s* or *-es*. Nouns that end with *-sh* or *-ch* often add *-es* (*bushes, churches*), and nouns ending with a consonant and *-y* change the *y* to *i* and add *-es* (*babies, ladies*). Irregular nouns form their plurals in different ways. Examples are *deer-deer, goose-geese, child-children, woman-women*.
 - **Noun Exercises:** Engage students with activities to explore nouns. Read these sentences aloud, asking students to find the nouns and identify them as singular or plural, common or proper (proper nouns, which name a specific person, place, or thing, are capitalized):

The jets did somersaults over Oak Street Beach.
A pilot waved at Brittany and the other children below.
In July, jumpers parachuted in formations.

Or, ask students to jot down the plural for the following nouns: *brush, latch, dress, tooth, key, event, party, crutch, wolf*. (*brushes, latches, dresses, teeth, keys, events, parties, crutches, wolves*) Invite students to make up silly stories, leaving blanks for plural nouns, and ask other students to supply plural nouns without knowing the context. Finally, assign students to write paragraphs about a favorite after-school activity, underlining all nouns.

- **Diagramming:** Diagram sentences to show these uses of nouns:
 - Subject of verb (*Dessert followed.*)
 - Object of verb (*We ate sorbet.*)
 - Object of preposition (*We picked from a list of flavors.*)
 - Predicate noun (*Dana is the chef.*)
2. Show “Review on Verbs and Battle With Dark Marker” from *Pendemonium: The Great African Surfari*. (Access to unitedstreaming is required.)
- **Pre-Viewing Activity:** Review the definition of a verb as a word expressing an action or a state of being, and ask students to imagine talking or writing without verbs. Introduce the video clip by explaining that the *Pendemonium* superheroes are trying to outwit Dark Marker. Students should know the following rules:
 - Verbs must agree with their subjects.
 - The past tense of a verb may have an irregular form.
 - **Diary Writing:** Assign students to use the past tense of the following irregular verbs in a diary entry about a trip: *go, drive, see, meet, find*.
 - **Reading Literature:** Present students with the opening paragraph of a short story and have them identify the verbs in it. Discuss how precise these verbs are and how they help the reader to create a visual image of the story.
 - **Verb Game:** Write verbs, including many irregular verbs, on slips of paper. Have students pick a slip of paper from an envelope and give the past tense of the verb.
 - **Agreement Practice:** Review the rules of subject-verb agreement, and have students give examples of each:
 - A verb agrees with its subject in number, even when the order of a sentence is inverted. *Example:* There are ways to proceed.
 - A verb agrees with its subject, not the object of an intervening prepositional phrase. *Examples:* One of the horses is loose. The horses in the stable are resting.
 - Compound subjects joined by *and* need a plural verb. *Example:* Dan and his friends are here.

- Compound subjects joined by *or* or *nor* need a verb that agrees with the nearest subject. *Examples*: Dan or his sisters make the meals. Police officers or the fireman was the first on the scene.
 - **Parts of Speech Practice**: Have students identify the part of speech of the underlined word in each sentence and explain how it is used:
 - Oh! It's a carnival or a circus. (interjection, conjunction)
 - Look closely at the magician's hands. (adverb, noun)
 - He turns small dots into huge flowers. (verb, adjective)
 - Did he pull that coin from your ear? (pronoun, preposition)
 - **Parts of Speech Game**: As further practice in identifying parts of speech, have students play the advanced parts of speech game at Grammar Gorilla: www.funbrain.com/grammar/.
3. Show the "Think Big: An Elephant's Tale" segment from the *Writing Strategies* video. (Access to unitedstreaming is required.)
- **Discussion**: Hold a discussion based on the following questions: What makes a complete sentence? Why use complete sentences? Why use descriptive words? Reinforce the importance of using complete sentences, which have both a subject and a predicate and express a complete thought, and descriptive words, including adjectives and adverbs, which add meaningful details to writing.
 - **Exercises**: Instruct students to complete the following exercises:
 - Sentence Completion*. Have students edit and combine the following fragments to create complete sentences:
 - Cycling past the finish line
 - The biker in the lead
 - Waves from the crowd
 - That picks up speed
 - Run-ons and Fragments*. Write the following on the chalkboard, pointing out the run-on sentences and sentence fragments, and have students rewrite them as complete sentences.
 - The German team got a penalty kick, the goalie blocked the shot. In the World cup. The crowd of international fans not just Germans was waving and cheering frantically. For the team.
 Have students prepare similar fragments and run-ons for others to correct.
 - **Writing**: In addition to the paragraph about elephants that the video assigns, ask students to write a paragraph about their ideal pets. Have them label descriptive words as adjectives or adverbs, and check for complete sentences.
4. Show the "Editing and Publishing: A Dog Scrapbook" segment from the *Discovering Language Arts: Writing* video. (Access to unitedstreaming is required.)

- **Outlining:** Review the edits that the video clip demonstrates, and make sure that students understand each. Have them complete this summary outline with sentences explaining the headings:
 - I. Subject-Verb Agreement
 - II. Capitalization
 - III. Spelling
 - IV. Punctuation
- **Diagramming:** Create a visual aid diagramming the process of writing. Emphasize the importance of editing one’s work in order to correct grammatical mistakes before publishing it.



- **Punctuation:** Show the segment “Dark Marker’s Second Message” from the *Pendemonium: The Posse in Australia* video to review punctuation. Assign groups of students to make presentations about the correct use of the following punctuation marks: apostrophe, quotation marks, period, colon, semicolon, and comma.
- **Peer Editing:** Have students write paragraphs and exchange papers to check for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- **Proofreading Checklist:** Have groups of students make up a proofreading checklist to use when editing their writing. It should include questions such as “Do all verbs agree with their subjects?” and “Are there any run-on sentences?”
- **Newspaper Editing:** Create a class newspaper for students to write, edit, and publish with news from their class and school. Emphasize the importance of editing for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- **Interactive Quizzes:** Encourage students to review grammar with these tutorials and quizzes, and urge them to ask about any questions they have.
 - <http://aliscot.com/bigdog/>
 - <http://eatshootsandleaves.com/ESLquiz.html>
 - <http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/~russial/grammar/grambo.html>
 - <http://a4esl.org/q/h/grammar.html>
 - www.grammarstation.com/quizzone.html
 - http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quiz_list.htm
 - www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/6_8/quizzes/
 - www.wadsworth.com/devenglish_d/special_features/grammarquizzes.html
 - www.englishclub.com/esl-quizzes/grammar-quizzes.htm
 - www.grammarbook.com/grammar/gr_master_test.asp

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)



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McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts
 - Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
 - Writing: Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions
 - Reading: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process
 - Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching the English language. To view the standards online, visit

www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm

This lesson plan addresses the following English standards:

- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes
- Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts