

Verb Tense Consistency

Content includes:

- The important role of verb tenses in sentences
- How do unnecessary tense shifts cause confusion?

Discussion Questions & Activities

- Consider the following statement: "All verbs in a sentence must use the same tense." Have students use what they learned from this video clip and additional examples of their own to formulate an explanation that agrees or disagrees with the statement.

Active & Passive Voice

Content includes:

- Identifying the active voice and passive voice
- The active voice as an effective form of communication
- When is the passive voice useful?

Discussion Questions & Activities

- Why is the active voice often the preferred method of expressing an idea? Discuss this with students by comparing two similar sentences — one in the active voice and one in the passive voice.
- Do sentences in the passive voice have a direct object? Consider the following sentence: "The building was designed by that architect." Discuss the function of "by that architect" in the sentence.

Word Order

Content includes:

- What is normal word order?
- Altering word order for variety or emphasis

Discussion Questions & Activities

- Not sure if a sentence is in normal word order? Try the pronoun replacement test for complete subjects. A complete subject is replaceable by a third-person subject pronoun, like "he," "she," "it" or "they." Students can practice applying this test to sentences pulled from books they are currently reading.
- Compare and contrast the normal word order of the English language to that of other languages. This is a great opportunity to cast the spotlight on the native languages of any ELLs in the classroom. ELLs can help to serve as experts in their native languages.

Parallel Structure

Content includes:

- Why is parallel structure important?
- Forming sentences with parallel structure

Discussion Questions & Activities

- Gather examples from student writing where parallel structure is missing. Ask students to suggest alternative ways of revising each sentence.
- Why is parallel structure important? Discuss with students how it helps to avoid confusion.

Suggested Print Resources

- Lester, Mark. *Grammar and Usage in the Classroom*. Allyn & Bacon, Needham, MA; 2001.
- O'Conner, Patricia T. *Woe is I Jr.: The Younger Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*. Putnam Juvenile, New York, NY; 2007.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- owl.english.purdue.edu/owl
The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University provides a variety of resources and instructional materials. Click on "Grammar and Mechanics" for detailed explanations and examples.
- www.chompchomp.com/
Grammar Bytes is a useful resource for grammar terms, definitions, tips, handouts and exercises.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- COMMON USAGE ERRORS
- SENTENCE STRUCTURE
- USING ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS & OTHER MODIFIERS
- USING CAPITALIZATION & PUNCTUATION
- USING CLAUSES & PHRASES
- USING END MARKS & COMMAS
- USING NOUNS & PRONOUNS
- USING VERBS

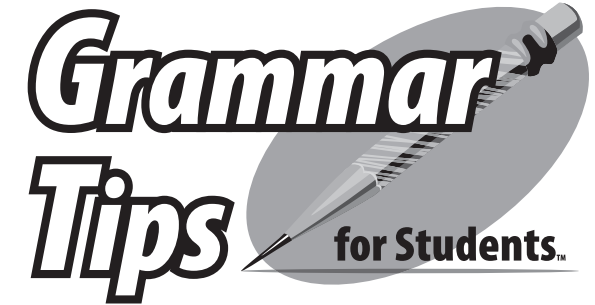
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SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Grades 5–12

Effective communication, both in the classroom and the real world, is important and grammar is a key element of communication. All students should understand how their choice of words, the order in which they are placed and the punctuation they use work together to express their thoughts in a clear and accurate way. *Grammar Tips for Students* is designed as brief mini-lessons that highlight specific grammar topics using clear explanations and specific examples and offering useful tests and tips for avoiding confusion and misuse.

Because each show contains a series of independent clips, clips can be viewed individually or in groups. Teachers can also choose to show the clips in an order that works for them and their curriculum.



Program Overview

Take an up-close look at how words are chosen and arranged to form sentences. This tip-filled video program explores subjects, predicates, direct objects and more. Discover how to ensure subject-verb agreement and parallel structure in a sentence and find out why these elements are important. Experiment with word order in a sentence to see how it can bring variety or emphasis to a written work. Understand how a sentence can be expressed using the passive voice or active voice and see the value of each. Tackle verb tense consistency to see how unnecessary tense shifts can be a source of confusion. Students will step beyond traditional definitions and investigate examples that showcase the ways in which these elements of grammar are applied. *Sentence Structure* can serve as a useful tool to develop students' oral and written communication skills.

Supporting English Language Learners (ELLs)

- ELLs bring to English their own language experiences. The amount and type of exposure ELLs have to the English language can vary greatly. In addition, their ability to read and write in their native languages can influence their understanding of grammar as well as the type of grammar errors made.
- ELLs may not make the same type of grammar errors as native speakers. Native speakers often rely on their ability to determine if a sentence “sounds or looks right.” This is difficult for ELLs. ELLs should be encouraged to practice the tests and tips provided and may benefit from additional teaching and reinforcement.
- While sharing grammar tips with ELLs is helpful, it is also important for them to develop a reading fluency. By exposing ELLs to texts written in English and encouraging them to read extensively, they can increase their comfort and familiarity with the language and how words are used.

Vocabulary

active voice — A sentence feature in which the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed by the verb. (Example: John threw the ball.)

dependent clause — A group of words that contains a subject and a verb but cannot stand on its own as a complete sentence. A dependent clause can function as a noun, adverb or adjective and typically begins with a relative pronoun or subordinating conjunction.

direct object — A word, phrase or clause that functions as a noun to name the goal or receiver of the action in a sentence.

linking verb — A word that connects, or links, the subject of a sentence to additional information about the subject.

normal word order — The preferred word order for a particular language. In English, a sentence is in normal word order when the complete subject is on the left and the complete predicate is on the right.

parallel structure — Also known as parallelism, when similar elements in a sentence are given equal weight and are expressed in the same way.

passive voice — A sentence feature in which the subject is not performing the action. Instead, the subject is acted upon and receives the action expressed by the verb. (Example: The ball was thrown by John.)

predicate — An essential part of a sentence, the predicate is the comment made about the subject. A **complete predicate** includes the verb with its complements and modifiers. A **simple predicate** is just the verb that tells what the subject is doing or being.

subject — An essential part of a sentence, the subject is a word or group of words that functions as a noun to tell what the sentence is about. A **complete subject** includes the noun with all of its modifiers. The **simple subject** is the noun or pronoun that all other words in the subject modify.

subject-verb agreement — The matching of a subject, in terms of its number and person, to its appropriate verb form.

transitive verb — An action verb that requires a direct object to be complete. (e.g., Andy met Joey.)

verb tense — A “time stamp” placed on verbs to indicate when they are taking place. The basic verb tenses are the present tense, past tense and future tense.

Subject & Predicate

Content includes:

- Subjects and predicates as essential sentence elements
- Tests for identifying the simple and complete subject of a sentence
- Tips for identifying the simple and complete predicate of a sentence

Discussion Questions & Activities

- The subject and predicate are two essential sentence components and can be a snap to spot in declarative sentences, but how about in imperative sentences? Consider this sentence: “Mow the lawn.” What is the subject? Engage students in an investigation of imperative sentences and “you” as the understood subject. Visit www.arts.uottawa.ca/writcent/hypergrammar/subjpred.html for additional information.
- Have students consider the definitions of terms such as “simple subject,” “simple predicate,” “complete subject” and “complete predicate.” Students can use what they know to predict what a “compound subject” and a “compound predicate” are. Have them write their own definitions and examples, and then compare them to the actual definitions. As an extension, students can apply what they’ve learned to predict what a “compound sentence” is.

Direct Objects

Content includes:

- What is a direct object and how can you spot it in a sentence?
- Action verbs and direct objects
- What is a transitive verb?

Discussion Questions & Activities

- Have students test the rule that linking verbs do not take direct objects. They can generate a list of linking verbs, including verbs of the senses (e.g., smell, look, sound). Then, have students create sentences using verbs from the list. As a class, investigate these student-created examples and try to apply the tests to spot direct objects.
- While the direct object of a sentence can answer the question “whom” or “what,” be careful not to confuse that with the subject of a sentence. A sentence’s subject reveals whom or what the sentence is about. Compare and contrast these two sentence elements.
- If a transitive verb is an action verb that requires a direct object to be complete, then what is an intransitive verb? Engage students in an investigation of intransitive verbs. Discuss how some action verbs can be transitive or intransitive (e.g., read, eat, move, walk). Then, have students play the role of word detectives to create a list of action verbs that are only used intransitively (e.g., howl, waddle, cry, laugh).

Subject-Verb Agreement

Content includes:

- Why do a subject and a verb need to “agree”?
- Present-tense verbs and third-person singular subjects
- Ensuring agreement and avoiding common pitfalls

Discussion Questions & Activities

- When checking to see if a sentence has subject-verb agreement, it helps to know how to spot the simple subject. Discuss the role of the simple subject in ensuring agreement. Students who need a review of simple subjects can view the “Subject & Predicate” clip.
- Investigate how other languages are similar or different from the English language in terms of subject-verb agreement. This is a great opportunity for English language learners to take a leadership role in the classroom as experts in their native languages. For a quick primer on how the Spanish and English languages differ in terms of subject-verb agreement, visit www.indiana.edu/~spangram/VERBFORMS/agreement.htm.