

Higher-Order Thinking with Grammar

LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

GRAMMAR FREEBIE ONE

PURPOSE:

Grammar and language can be seen as “black and white,” but modern standards ask students to understand the nuances of language and the changes of language that occur over time.

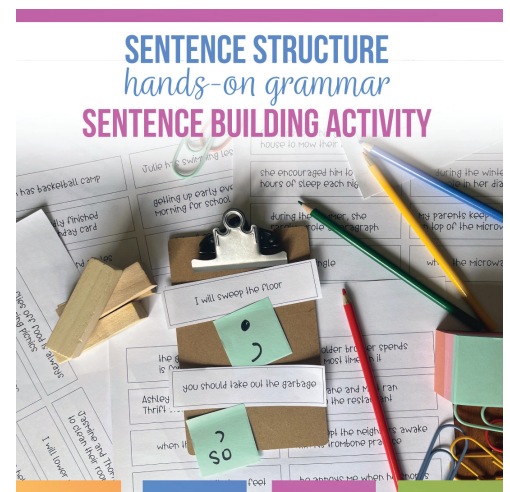
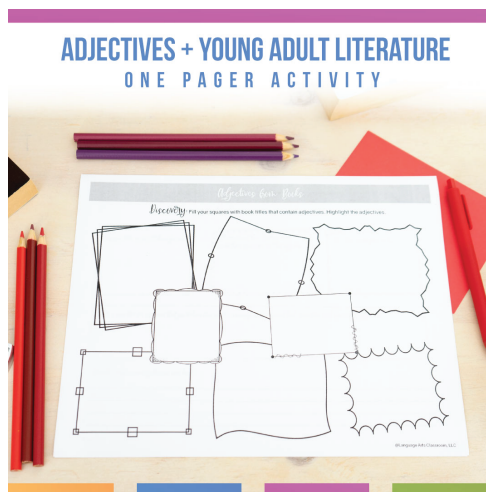
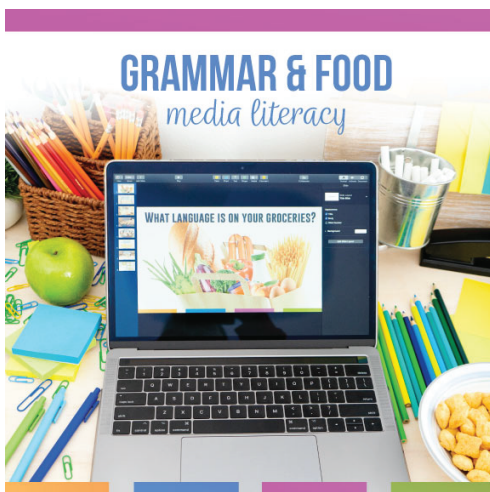
Students will connect to language and grammar more when they see the connections to their everyday lives. When students understand the way language is used in their lives, they will understand the concepts in a deep way.

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Don't be afraid to experiment! Add one activity to a larger classroom assignment and take cues from students.

Take your time. Use one of the activities for a small portion of class and then add more activities as you feel comfortable.

HIGHER-ORDER THINKING ACTIVITIES:



HIGHER ORDER THINKING WITH GRAMMAR

1. **Encourage creative thinking.** Ask students to make video clips that demonstrate their understanding of a grammar concept. The goal, aside from entertainment for the class, is to take a difficult concept, separate it, and put it together in a new way.
2. **Use graphic organizers.** Students can rearrange and organize their information in graphic organizers, and then they can build word walls or creative writing pieces from those organizers. Graphic organizers are often a scaffolding step for using grammar in other situations. For example, grammar word walls can also be vocabulary word walls. Building a word wall allows natural conversations about using words properly and in different forms, like changing a noun to an adverb.
3. **Connect grammar concepts to real life and to class.** Simply mention grammatical terms outside of "grammar lessons." For instance, after you watch a speech, bring out a few sentences and break them down. Did the speaker use parallel structure? Was it powerful?
4. **Solve problems.** We do this with writing all the time! When peer revising occurs, you can model questions like, *what if the author changed the linking verbs to action verbs? Are the predicate adjectives stronger than action verbs? What should change in this paragraph? How would you revise? What do you suggest?* Revision is not simply beneficial for the student with the paper. When students are looking at another paper, they are also practicing domain-specific vocabulary and answering higher order questions.
5. **Ask students to create an analogy.** Sentence structure is like following a recipe. Using scripted sentences at the start might feel forced, but eventually, strong cooks will add their own seasonings. Instead of using garlic salt, I'll use celery salt. Instead of using a coordinating conjunction, I think a correlative conjunction will be better. Talk through analogies with students, and soon, they will be understanding grammar in new ways.
6. **Ask questions about writing (not about errors).** What alternative would work for this sentence? If a piece of writing has many complex sentences, what would work better? Would simplicity help the reader? Is the sentence structure helping provide transitions? Sometimes, a grammatical question does not have a "right" answer. We can discuss our language and preferences, and decide what works.
7. **Evaluate a specific part of writing.** For example, rank the author's use of modifiers. Are adjectives and adverbs helpful to the image as a whole? Next, look at verb voice. Is the author using passive voice? What is the subject of sentences written with passive voice? Are you being misled?
8. **Think big picture.** What plan can you implement for your overall tone? Do your modifiers contribute properly? Have you checked the connotation of unusual words? Ask students to highlight every verb in a paragraph. Do the verbs convey the best possible meaning?
9. **Jigsaw a chapter or pages of a short story.** Assign different groups to evaluate specific grammar concepts.
10. **Evaluate a specific idea.** What is the strongest transition in the paper? Determine how its sentence structure (or conjunction, or placement of clauses) makes it so.