

# Grammar:

## How we can help students

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# Synopsis

- The relationship between language and context; sentence grammar and texts (initial focus on ‘Teacher Knowledge of Language’/KAL)
- Common practices and strategies for teaching grammar in the secondary English classroom;
- The use of academic and narrative texts for grammatical awareness and learning the features of different text types to achieve specific communicative purposes
- How grammar affects the coherence, tone, style and register of a text
- Tasks that integrate grammar learning with the development of other language skills (e.g. writing) and provide opportunities for application of grammar knowledge for purposeful communication
- Hands-on activities on designing, selecting and adapting resources and activities

# Main Elements of the Session

- Collaborative Inquiry: sharing and discussing lesson plans and resources with you
- I want to introduce you to some extensive sites for grammar resources developed by leading scholars in this area (e.g., Professor Bas Aarts, UCL & Prof Professor Debra Myhill, U of Exeter). All resources are free.



Discussion: How do you currently approach grammatical development? Are there specific questions you have about grammar instruction?



# Types of Grammar

- **Prescriptive grammar:** e.g. no double negatives, don't split infinitives, don't start a sentence with a conjunction!
- **Descriptive grammar:** The grammar of the language objectively described and as used by speakers.
- Contemporary school pedagogy tends to be a mixture (Cushing, 2019)
- Standard Variety: e.g., Standard British English = what is marked as correct/incorrect in school.
- Does not always match the home language or the variety of English our students or ourselves use

# Is Teaching Grammar Useful?

- Students obviously must acquire grammar, but we know surprisingly little about how best to teach it.
- Metanalysis of intervention studies **suggest that explicit instruction does not show clear significant predictive improvements on students' writing** (or other literacy outcomes) (Green et al., 2024; Wyse & Torgerson, 2017).
- This is true of direct instruction in more traditional grammar and newer genre approaches (Myhill, 2021).
- Having said that, we have promising research that provides us some guidance on what helps.
- And, teacher's knowledge of grammar/language (KAL) also correlates with better student outcomes (Myhill et al., 2013), so we will also need to build our professional KAL.



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# Major Grammar Teaching Approaches

# Deductive and Inductive Pedagogical Approaches to Grammar

**Deductive:** Rules explicit provided e.g. Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP pedagogy) (Ellis, 2002)

Mostly this common practice looks something like this:

**Presentation:** "If I had a lot of money, I would buy a sports car and a big house." > teacher explains the second conditional rules and meaning, gives several use examples.

**Practice:** gap fill exercises, sentence combining, correcting sentences, sentence transformations, reordering, matching sentences to pictures etc. ← (**Error correction and feedback**).

**Production:** any suitable task such as information gaps, role plays, interviews, replication of a model text, games etc.

For more resources on PPP, British Council: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/planning-lessons-and-courses/articles/planning-grammar-lesson>



# Deductive and Inductive Pedagogical Approaches to Grammar

**Deductive:** “A deductive approach (rule-driven) starts with the **presentation** of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied.” (Thornbury, 1999).

	Advantages	Disadvantages	
➔	The deductive approach goes straightforwardly to the point and can, therefore, be time-saving.	Beginning the lesson with a grammar presentation may be off-putting for some learners, especially younger ones.	➔
	A number of rule aspects (for example, form) can be more simply and clearly explained than elicited from examples.	Younger learners may not be able to understand the concepts or encounter grammar terminology given.	➔
	A number of direct practice/application examples are immediately given.	Grammar explanation encourages a teacher-fronted, transmission-style classroom, so it will hinder learner involvement and interaction immediately.	
	The deductive approach respects the intelligence and maturity of many adult learners in particular and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition.	The explanation is seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation (for example, demonstration).	
➔	It confirms many learners' expectations about classroom learning particularly for those who have an analytical style.	The deductive approach encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rule.	➔

# Deductive and Inductive Pedagogical Approaches to Grammar

**Inductive:** Input and exposure with rules discovered as regularities, e.g. data-driven learning corpus investigation

5. Below are example sentences of Conditional sentences. However, some contain mistakes. Work in pairs:

- i. Decide which is correct and which is wrong.
- ii. Explain to your partner.

	Correct or wrong?
1a If trees <u>gave</u> off Wi-Fi signals, we <u>would plant</u> many trees and <u>save</u> the planet.	_____
1b If trees <u>give</u> off Wi-Fi signals, we <u>would plant</u> many trees and <u>save</u> the planet.	_____
2a If mosquitoes do not bite, everyone would love them.	_____
2b If mosquitoes did <u>n</u> ot bite, everyone would love them.	_____
3a We might not pick up the pen if the school cancelled exams.	_____
3b We may not pick up the pen if the school cancelled exams.	_____
4a I could chat with animals if I knew their languages.	_____
4b I can chat with animals if I knew their languages.	_____
5a I will go the Wetland Park if the weather is fine.	_____
5b I would go to the Wetland Park if the weather was fine.	_____

# Deductive and Inductive Pedagogical Approaches to Grammar

**Inductive:** “An inductive approach (rule-discovery) starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred” (Thornbury, 1999).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Learners are trained to be familiar with the rule discovery; this could enhance learning autonomy and self-reliance.	The approach is time and energy-consuming as it leads learners to have the appropriate concept of the rule.
Learners' greater degree of cognitive depth is “exploited”.	The concepts given implicitly may lead the learners to have the wrong concepts of the rule taught.
The learners are more active in the learning process, rather than being simply passive recipients. In this activity, they will be motivated.	The approach can place emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson.
The approach involves learners' pattern-recognition and problem-solving abilities in which particular learners are interested in this challenge.	It encourages the teacher to design data or materials taught carefully and systematically.
If the problem-solving activity is done collaboratively, learners get an opportunity for extra language practice.	The approach may frustrate the learners with their personal learning style, or their past learning experience (or both) would prefer simply to be told the rule.

(Widodo, 2006)

# Activity: Illustrating a Consciousness-raising (CR) Inductive Grammar Task



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DDL (data-driven learning) is an approach to learning the patterns of grammar and vocabulary through corpora (Hunston, 2019; Crosthwaite & Baisa, 2024). Typically, students inductively learn patterns through authentic text exploration (Bolton, 2024).

Corpora can serve as references for schools in Hong Kong when designing their curriculum, particularly in providing authentic examples of grammatical patterns and frequency information about language use.

- CorpusMate is a resource for k-12 students designed for exploring patterns across many genres and registers <https://corpusmate.com/search>

Model activity (approx. 5-10mins): In the online corpus tool, compare ‘say/tell’ and/or ‘less/fewer’- what is the difference between these two grammatical patterns?

Look at the concordance lines. Look over the common words to right and note down recurrent words for word 1 (e.g., say) and then for word 2 (e.g. tell). What are the most typical forms (e.g., tense)? What types of functions and patterns do you observe occur?

Once you have discussed with colleagues in your group, develop an explanation that you think captures the differences in use between ‘say/tell’ and/or ‘less/fewer’

Check against the explanations in the Cambridge Dictionary Online. How close was your (inductive) discussion to the explanations provided by the dictionary?

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/say-or-tell>

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/less-or-fewer>

Crosthwaite, P., & Baisa, V. (2024). A user-friendly corpus tool for disciplinary data-driven learning: Introducing CorpusMate. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*.

# Morphology

Words are made up of **Morphemes**

Morphemes are the smallest meaningful part of the language: **run, runner, running**

They carry grammatical information such as number, tense, aspect, person, and sometimes part of speech.

Two types:

1. **Inflectional**: signal grammatical relations such as tense, number etc.

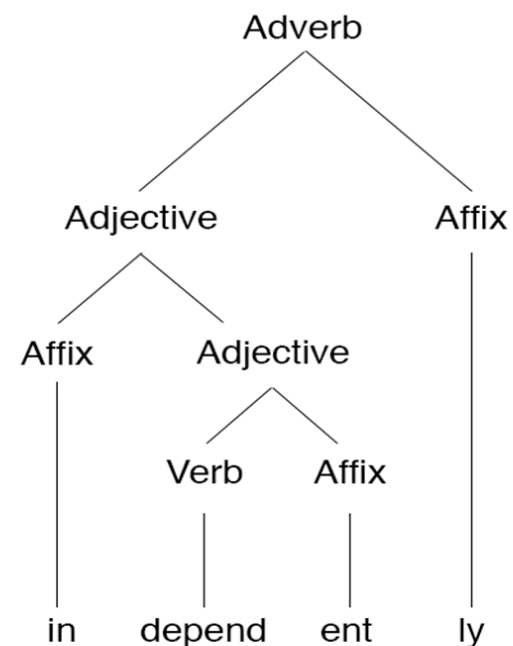
**look + ed** = 2 morphemes, **-ed** is an inflectional morpheme for past tense.

**book + s** = 2 morphemes, **-s** is an inflection morpheme for plural number

2. **Derivational**: morphemes that create/derive new words :

**sing + er** = 2 morphemes, **-er** is a derivational morpheme, converts verb to noun

**child + hood** = 2 morphemes, **-hood** derives an abstract noun from common





# Research Recommendation: Teach Morphological Awareness

- Morphological awareness is a child's ability to attend to meaningful parts of words: roots, affixes (Duke et al., 2021).
- Robust relationships with word reading, spelling and comprehension (Levesque et al., 2021).
- Amongst other benefits, a word learning strategy: **child: childish: childhood: childlike: Book: bookish: books etc.**
- Important to Disciplinary Literacy (Greek and Latin morphemes): **Photosynthesis [Photo (light)] photography, photograph etc.**
- As with vocabulary instruction generally, inc. phonics, teach **more productive (i.e., frequent) morphemes first**

Table 3.2: Frequently Occurring Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefix	Percentage of All Prefixed Words	Suffix	Percentage of All Suffixed Words
un-	26	-s, -es	31
re-	14	-ed	20
in-, im-, ir-, il- (meaning "not")	11	-ing	14
dis-	7	-ly	7
en-, em-	4	-er, -or (indicating agency)	4
non-	4	-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition	4
in-, im- (meaning "in" or "into")	4	-ible, -able	2
over- (meaning "too much")	3	-al, -ial	1

(Marzano, 2020)

- A Ready-to-go Systematic Instructional Sequence: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/en/home/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/professional-learning/myplfile/morphemes-suggested-sequence.pdf>

# Word Building

- **Word Family** (Nation & Bauer, 1993): All forms, derivational & inflectional
- A **Lexeme/Lemma**: inflected forms, ignoring derivational morphology (e.g. dictionary entries).
- The headword/root = unmarked form.
- For more proficient students, if they learn a headword, they comprehend most of the family (Laufer, 2021) if you have taught them morphology.
- For less proficient, better to teach lemmas (Nation, 2022).

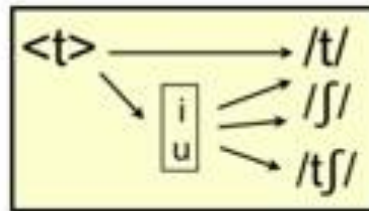
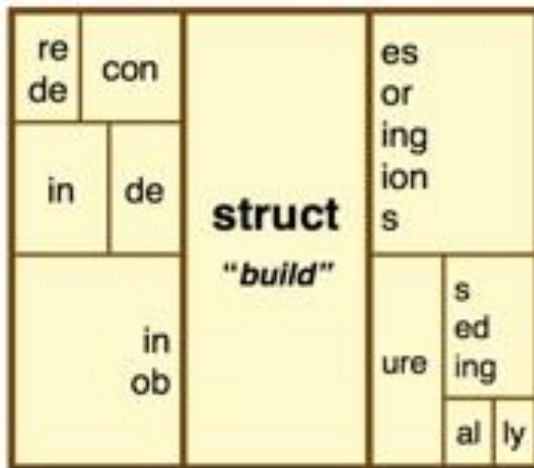
Headword	Lemmas	Word Family
<b>Develop</b>	Develop, develops, developing developed	+ developer, development, developmental...

(Academic Wordlist, Coxhead, 2000): Online resource <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>

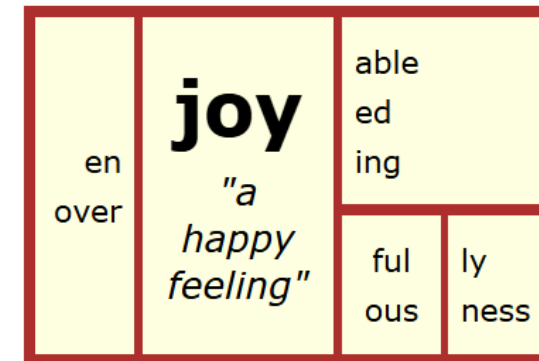


# Structured Word Inquiry

- Structured Word Inquiry (SWI) is a framework for teaching morphology (+ spelling, phonology and semantics).
- Children explore words to learn how word parts “tell the story of what words mean, how words are connected, and how they are spelled” (Bowers & Kirby, 2010.)
- Students taught to inquire ask, “**What does the word mean? How is the word built? What is its structure? Origin?**” Identify roots, prefix and/or suffix. Explore etymology.
- Example Student Project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsfyHdlrtM>
- They expand words and visually represent word structure in a **Word Matrix**.
- For example, you may model ‘reconstructed’ or ‘overjoyed’ as:



con + <b>struct</b> + ion	→	construction
re + con + <b>struct</b> + ed	→	reconstructed
in + <b>struct</b> + or	→	instructor
<b>struct</b> + ure + al + ly	→	structurally



From: [https://www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Structured\\_Word\\_Inquiry.html](https://www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Structured_Word_Inquiry.html)



# Activity: Word Grammar and Morphological Awareness

Example activity: In groups, can you create a Word Matrix? How many words can you make from these roots.

Follow up can include: **Sharing the created words. Have students practice using the words they created/found online in sentences**

form
= to shape
[OR]
spect
= to see

un	help	ful	ness
		s ing ed	
		S	
shanahanonliteracy.com			



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# Form, Meaning and Use

# Forms and Functions of Grammar

In sentences, there are formal syntactic ‘**structures**’ (e.g., words, phrases and clauses) which have ‘**functions**’

Two main functions we need to understand but keep clear in our minds:

1. Grammatical function: the grammatical role a group of words plays in sentence
2. Discourse function: the role a group of words plays in communicating meaning, e.g. why it is used in writing.

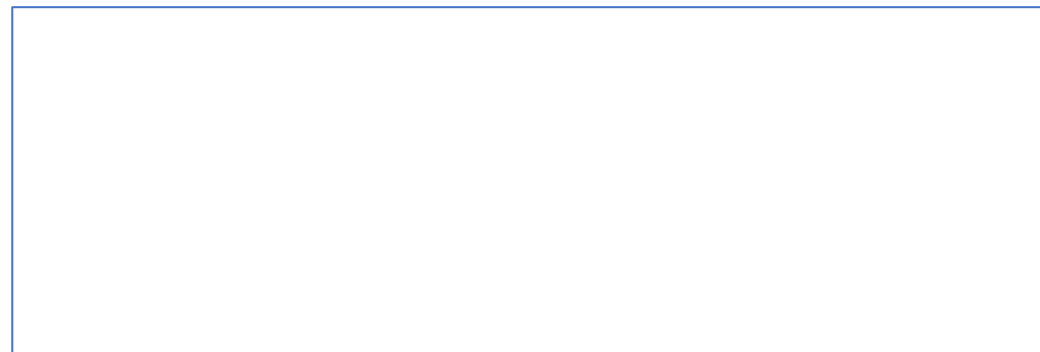
Goldilocks // had eaten // the bear’s porridge, // before she went to their bed.

[subject // predicator // direct object // subordinate clause/adverbial ]

[participant // process // goal/affected /// circumstance/secondary information]

Hierarchal structure in natural language:

Phonemes > morphemes > words > phrases > clauses > written  
communication/speech



# Grammatical Functions

**1. Predicate:** main verb to end of the clause. The subject's actions/states/experiences. New information.

The teacher taught the student about the functions of grammar.

**2. Subject:** Typically, a noun phrase. Agrees with the main verb inflections. Often the topic/actor.

The student learned about the functions of grammar.

**3. Complement:** A type of predicate for copula verbs. No action.

The student was a teacher.

**4. Object (direct, indirect):** A type of predicate where there is subject acts on/through some other participant.

The teacher taught the student

**5. Modifiers:** A word used to alter the meaning of another word.

The teacher taught the interesting material.

**6. Head :** A word that 'heads' a phrase rather than modifies.

The teacher taught the interesting material.

# Form and Functions

One **form** can fill multiple grammatical **functions**, and one **function** sometimes can be filled by different **forms**:

**The student** dislikes his English teacher.

Student is a NOUN in form, and functions as SUBJECT in this clause.

Although disliked, the English teacher likes **the student**.

Student is still a NOUN in form but now functions as OBJECT.

Activity: use the criteria to determine the underlined word:

The younger teachers were as kind as the older teachers.

1. Morphology of nouns: plural –s inflection, -er derivation from teach
2. Meaning of nouns: teacher is a person
3. Grammatical Function : subject, agrees with verb: teachers were; also, modified by an adjective younger.

# Resource for Teaching Forms and Functions (& Meanings)

## Englicious: (Aarts, B. 2019).



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- Developed by Prof Bas Aarts and colleagues, University College of London.
- Has many lesson plans and activities for all grade levels. Focuses mostly on the word/sentence levels, though some text/genre. (We'll look at a resource for texts/genre and grammar later for you to draw on in classroom practice).
- Free, simple registration (Let's do that now!)
- <http://www.englicious.org/>

# Collaborative Lesson Plan Study: Englicious Example



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- 1) In your groups, study the example grammar lesson [handout] it is designed for KS2 (Grade 2) but it all depends on EL level and the text BFG can sit in lower sec KS3 grade 6-7.
- 2) What are your thoughts on this lesson? What are the learning objectives, activities, outcomes?
- 3) How does it extend beyond traditional PPP structured pedagogy for grammar.
- 3) Could you adapt this to your context? Would it work with your students? Would you improve/change aspects of it?
- 4) Explore other resources in the portal. Which strike you as valuable for what you want to accomplish with your students?



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# Teaching Grammar in Context, Instructional Activities and Strategies for Grammar Teaching



# Systemic Functional Grammar & the Genre Approach

- Popular in Australia, HK, Singapore, UK: the **Sydney School** founded by M.A.K. Halliday (2003)
- Emphasizes explicit teaching of grammar as it functions within genres.
- “Texts are instances of the systemic choices being made, and writers make meaning choices that serve particular functions.” (Oliveira & Smith, 2019)

## Students learn:

Different grammar choices available.

To choose from their grammar options to improve their own writing

To identify these choices in text and explain how these lead to certain meanings being made.

**Metalanguage about grammar.**

To support their interpretations of the texts by citing evidence from their analysis

To articulate their views and discuss the ideologies in a text

(Lim & Tan, 2017)

# For Example... what are the functions of a clause in a text?

## 1. Ideational

A clause will **function** to present an idea, consist in of *participants*, *processes* with different functional roles and optional *circumstances*.

## 2. Interpersonal

A clause will have **functions** related to the speaker/writer, e.g. formal/informal, mood (declarative, interrogative, or imperative), modality (expressions of evaluation, attitudes, judgments).

## 3. Textual

The clause will be written in a way that reflects **a function within a text**, for example, it may be in present tense because the genre is a first person narrative, the message will also flow to manage theme and rheme (new and given information), **cohesion and coherence**.

See how now we are dealing with the term function again, but different from what we meant earlier when discussing the grammatical functions. We might call this new level of function part of text grammar or discourse grammar.

# The Exeter Pedagogy = Teaching Grammar in Context and Functionally

Myhill's (2021) suggestions are:

1. **Link grammar** to how it works in authentic texts, e.g. “how the past and present tense are differentiated in use in newspaper reports for recounting the reported event and for journalistic comment on the event”
2. **Explain grammar through examples**, e.g. fronted adverbial clause for context in narrative, ‘in the beginning, ....’
3. **Discuss effects of grammar in texts**, e.g. noun phrases are a way to package information densely in science texts ‘tough strips of tissue called tendons (LaRue, 2004)’

THE LEAD PRINCIPLES FOR GRAMMAR AS CHOICE		
PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION	RATIONALE
LINKS	Make a <i>link</i> between the grammar being introduced and how it works in the writing being taught	To establish a purposeful learning reason for addressing grammar, and connect grammar with meaning and rhetorical effect
EXAMPLES	Explain the grammar through <i>examples</i> , not lengthy explanations	To avoid writing lessons becoming mini-grammar lessons, and to allow access to the structure even if the grammar concept is not fully understood
AUTHENTIC TEXT	Use <i>authentic</i> texts as models to link writers to the broader community of writers	To integrate reading and writing and show how ‘real’ writers make language choices
DISCUSSION	Build in <i>dialogic talk</i> about grammar and its effects	To promote metalinguistic learning about why a particular choice works, and to develop independence rather than compliance

# The Exeter Pedagogy = Teaching Grammar in Context and Functionally

One of the best online resources is the “Writing Resources for Teachers” Exeter Pedagogy/LEADS webpage, led by Professor Debra Myhill.

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/languageandliteracy/grammar-teacher-resources/>

Professor Myhill and her team have provided teachers with a research-based pool of resources aligned that can support robust grammar instruction in the context of a range of text types and across the curriculum.

“This site has been designed to support the teaching of writing and each section draws on research we have conducted here in the Centre for Research in Writing. These resources have either been developed for CPD with primary and secondary teachers or used in research projects...”

The resources include lesson plans, worksheets, PowerPoint slides and teacher professional development materials.

**Let's Have a Look!**



# Collaborative Lesson Plan Study: Exeter Pedagogy Example

Genre 1: Narrative Text Example, please access here: [BFGCo-ordinateClauseSequences.docx](#)

## Grammar for Writing: Teaching Activities

	<b>Writing Learning Focus:</b> ➤ How to intensify a key moment in a plotline	
	<b>Grammar Learning Focus:</b> ➤ How using a sequence of co-ordinated clauses can help intensify a key moment in a plotline	
<b>Context:</b>	This activity would fit within a teaching unit where Roald Dahl's <i>BFG</i> is shared reading, and where children are working on developing understanding of narrative writing, especially plot development. The activity could be adapted to suit the reading of almost any other narrative text, as this pattern of sequenced co-ordinated clauses is very common.	
<b>Let's Talk!</b>  During the paired task, support children in reading the sentences aloud to hear their effect. Help all children to see the repeated <i>and</i> ; extend learning by inviting children to recognise the verbs, and for the most able, the clauses.  During the feedback, use questioning to ensure all see the <i>and</i> pattern, and the verbs. You could talk about the effect of the alliteration and rhyme (humorous?).  During the final whole class discussion, manage the discussion carefully to allow children to explore their views of this pattern, and create space for alternative interpretations eg it emphasises how hard the giants are fighting; it makes us laugh at the giant's movements...  Children often don't realise that in a list of clauses a comma can substitute for <i>and</i> : this is a good opportunity to point this out.	<b>Activity Outline:</b>  <u>Whole class:</u> Share again the reading of the sections where these come from (pages 95/6; 194; 95; 90) <u>Pairs/threes:</u> teachers hands out or displays the four sentences, exemplifying the co-ordinated clause pattern, and asks children to read them aloud and to explore any patterns they can see. If necessary, prompt with <i>Are there any repeated words?</i> <u>Whole class:</u> take feedback from pairs on patterns noticed: they might pick up on alliteration and rhyme in the second sentence; or the number of verbs in these sentences; as well as the repetition of 'and'. <u>Teacher:</u> use colour to highlight the ' <i>and</i> ' repetition, and underline the verbs. Explain that these are a sequence of co-ordinated clauses (finite verb joined by <i>and</i> ). Also note the comma instead of <i>and</i> in the final text. <u>Whole class:</u> discuss the effect of these sequences of co-ordinated clauses, drawing out how they intensify the action being described. <u>Individual:</u> students to look at their own narrative and consider whether using a sequence of co-ordinated clauses would intensify a key moment in the plot.	<b>Text examples:</b>  <i>They punched and kicked and scratched and bit and butted each other as hard as they could.</i>  <i>He rolled and wiggled, he fought and he figgled, he squirmed and he squiggled.</i>  <i>The giants roared and screamed and cursed, and for many minutes the noise of battle rolled across the yellow plain.</i>  <i>He took a deep breath, puffed out his cheeks and then whoof!</i>

# Collaborative Lesson Plan Study: Exeter Pedagogy Example

Genre 2: Informational Text Example, please access here: [SavetheTigerDescribe and Inform.docx](#) [SavetheTigerPPT.pptx](#)

SAVE THE TIGER: WRITING TO DESCRIBE AND INFORM	
LESSON PLAN	
Learning Objectives	To understand how well-chosen nouns, verbs and adjectives create description To recognise how short sentences draw attention to important information or ideas
Introduction	<b>Whole class: 5 minutes</b> Read together the <i>World Wildlife Fund</i> text about the Tiger (PPT Slide 2). Briefly find out from the class what they know about tigers, where they live, and why they are endangered.
Development	<p><b>Pairs: 5 minutes</b> Read aloud the first paragraph of this text (PPT Slide 3). How do you think the writer wants to make the reader feel? What does the writer want to make us think about these tigers? (Elicit they are beautiful creatures; they are at home in the wild; they are relaxed.) Draw out that the writer makes us see the tiger as noble, special, relaxed and at ease in the environment, caring for her family...</p> <p><b>Teacher: 10 minutes Key Learning:</b> Using PPT Slide 4, invite children to notice how the choices of adjectives and nouns help the reader to see the tiger as royal, and strong because the tigers take fright; <u>also</u> that we see happy playful cubs. Using PPT slide 5, discuss what impressions the verbs create.</p> <p><b>Pairs: 5 minutes Look</b> at the picture of the elephants (PPT Slide 6), also endangered. Quickly, together, make a list of phrases to describe the elephants which will make the reader see how special elephants are.</p> <p><b>Teacher: 10 minutes Key Learning:</b> Read aloud the second paragraph of the WWF text (PPT Slide 7). Use the questions to discuss how the short sentences are important: <i>dusk falls</i> – night is coming and the night is dangerous; <i>the tiger is hungry</i> so needs to eat; we find out it will be her last meal. The three short sentences describe the key narrative events; the two long sentences provide explanatory information.</p> <p><b>Individual: 15 minutes. Magic Silence time:</b> write one or two paragraphs about the elephants which will make the reader see the elephants as special and happy in the wild. Choose nouns, verbs and adjectives carefully to create descriptions which will make the reader want to save them. Think about using one or two short sentences to draw attention to key ideas or information. You might want to introduce a sense of threat.</p>

Conclusion	Whole class: 10 minutes Hear one or two of the descriptions and invite peer feedback on how well they work and what they might do to improve them. End by summarising that well-chosen vocabulary and some use of short sentences can make persuasive writing more effective.	
Assessment	Use the discussion of Slides 4 and 5 to assess how well they are understanding the relationship between vocabulary chosen and creating particular impressions in the reader.  Use the discussion of Slide 7 to assess their grasp of the way short sentences are deliberately used to emphasise what they contain. Assess whether more able students can see how long and short sentences work together to create a better rhythm.	
Support		Challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In the reading aloud task, check that readers observe the sentence boundaries in how they read.</li><li>Encourage the selection of appropriate nouns and adjectives rather than simply their inclusion</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In the discussion of the second paragraph, encourage students to hear that variety in sentence length creates a good rhythm to the writing: it is not monotonous.</li><li>Push for clear explanation of how vocabulary choices influence the reader</li></ul>



# Focus Question: Lesson Plan Study

## Activity:

- 1) What are the **lesson objectives** of these lessons and **how do they link grammar and writing outcomes in authentic texts**?
- 2) What do you think works well about these lessons that you could draw on in your own practice? What do you think would be challenging in your context?
- 3) Compare the two genres and discuss how the lessons are designed to enrich the students' knowledge of how the links between target grammar features and different text types to achieve specific communicative purposes?

Grammar for Writing: Teaching Activities		
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	<b>Grammar Learning Focus:</b> ➤ How using a sequence of co-ordinated clauses can help intensify a key moment in a plotline	
<b>Context:</b>	This activity would fit within a teaching unit where Roald Dahl's <i>BFG</i> is shared reading, and where children are working on developing understanding of narrative writing, especially plot development. The activity could be adapted to suit the reading of almost any other narrative text, as this pattern of sequenced co-ordinated clauses is very common.	
<b>Let's Talk!</b>	<p>During the paired task, support children in reading the sentences aloud to hear their effect. Help all children to see the repeated <i>and</i>; extend learning by inviting children to recognise the verbs, and for the most able, the clauses.</p> <p>During the feedback, use questioning to ensure all see the <i>and</i> pattern, and the verbs. You could talk about the effect of the alliteration and rhyme (humorous?).</p> <p>During the final whole class discussion, manage the discussion carefully to allow children to explore their views of this pattern, and create space for alternative interpretations eg it emphasises how hard the giants are fighting; it makes us laugh at the giant's movements...</p> <p>Children often don't realise that in a list of clauses a comma can substitute for <i>and</i>; this is a good opportunity to point this out.</p>	
<b>Activity Outline:</b>	<p><b>Whole class:</b> Share again the reading of the sections where these come from (pages 95/6; 194; 95; 90)</p> <p><b>Pairs/threes:</b> teachers hands out or displays the four sentences, exemplifying the co-ordinated clause pattern, and asks children to read them aloud and to explore any patterns they can see. If necessary, prompt with <i>Are there any repeated words?</i></p> <p><b>Whole class:</b> take feedback from pairs on patterns noticed: they might pick up on alliteration and rhyme in the second sentence; or the number of verbs in these sentences; as well as the repetition of '<i>and</i>'.</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> use colour to highlight the '<i>and</i>' repetition, and underline the verbs. Explain that these are a sequence of co-ordinated clauses (finite verb joined by <i>and</i>). Also note the commas instead of <i>and</i> in the final text.</p> <p><b>Whole class:</b> discuss the effect of these sequences of co-ordinated clauses, drawing out how they intensify the action being described.</p> <p><b>Individual:</b> students to look at their own narrative and consider whether using a sequence of co-ordinated clauses would intensify a key moment in the plot.</p>	
<b>Text examples:</b>	<p><i>They punched and kicked and scratched and bit and butted each other as hard as they could.</i></p> <p><i>He rolled and wiggled, he fought and he figgled, he squirmed and he squiggled.</i></p> <p><i>The giants roared and screamed and cursed, and for many minutes the noise of battle rolled across the yellow plain.</i></p> <p><i>He took a deep breath, puffed out his cheeks and then whoof!</i></p>	

SAVE THE TIGER: WRITING TO DESCRIBE AND INFORM	
LESSON PLAN	
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	To understand how well-chosen nouns, verbs and adjectives create description To recognise how short sentences draw attention to important information or ideas
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Whole class: 5 minutes</b> Read together the <i>World Wildlife Fund</i> text about the Tiger (PPT Slide 2). Briefly find out from the class what they know about tigers, where they live, and why they are endangered.
<b>Development</b>	<p><b>Pairs: 5 minutes</b> Read aloud the first paragraph of this text (PPT Slide 3). How do you think the writer wants to make the reader feel? What does the writer want to make us think about these tigers? (Elicit they are beautiful creatures; they are at home in the wild; they are relaxed.) Draw out that the writer makes us see the tiger as noble, special, relaxed and at ease in the environment, caring for her family...</p> <p><b>Teacher: 10 minutes Key Learning:</b> Using PPT Slide 4, invite children to notice how the choices of adjectives and nouns help the reader to see the tiger as royal, and strong because the tigers take fright; <u>also</u> that we see happy playful cubs. Using PPT slide 5, discuss what impressions the verbs create.</p> <p><b>Pairs: 5 minutes Look:</b> at the picture of the elephants (PPT Slide 6), also endangered. Quickly, together, make a list of phrases to describe the elephants which will make the reader see how special elephants are.</p> <p><b>Teacher: 10 minutes Key Learning:</b> Read aloud the second paragraph of the WWF text (PPT Slide 7). Use the questions to discuss how the short sentences are important: <i>dusk falls</i> – night is coming and the night is dangerous; <i>the tiger is hungry</i> so needs to eat; we find out it will be her last meal. The three short sentences describe the key narrative events; the two long sentences provide explanatory information.</p> <p><b>Individual: 15 minutes. Magic Silence time:</b> write one or two paragraphs about the elephants which will make the reader see the elephants as special and happy in the wild. Choose nouns, verbs and adjectives carefully to create descriptions which will make the reader want to save them. Think about using one or two short sentences to draw attention to key ideas or information. You might want to introduce a sense of threat.</p>

# Activity: Linking Grammar Learning Outcomes and Authentic Texts

You have been given a series of learning objectives in one column. You have also been provided with authentic text examples, but I have shuffled these randomly.

**In your groups, decide which authentic text excerpts belong with which LOs. Draw a line between the text and LO. Comment on why and how you might use the text.** This activity adapted from Exeter Pedagogy resources:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/languageandliteracy/grammar-teacher-resources/grammaraschoice/learningobjectivesandtextexamples/>

There are both Informational Texts and Narrative Text examples in their resources, but we will practice with some narrative examples.

## Narrative Examples

Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
How prepositional phrases can establish a clear picture of a setting	I was just pushing the lower half of the ladder back up when I heard it. There was someone at the front door. I held my breath. It was OK. They couldn't get in. I slid my hand into my pocket to make sure the key was still there. It wasn't. I'd left it in the front door. I could hear it turning in the lock now. I raced back up the ladder and hauled it after me. When I reached down to pull the hatch back up, I could hear someone coming up the stairs. I quickly pulled the hatch back into place and scrambled over to the water tank, holding my breath. (From Millions by Frank Cottrell Boyce)	
How subject verb inversion in sentences alters the emphasis in a sentence for plot effects	When I reached down to pull the hatch back up, I could hear someone coming up the stairs. I quickly pulled the hatch back into place and scrambled over to the water tank, holding my breath. (From Millions by Frank Cottrell Boyce)	
How short sentences can create emphasis or anticipation in developing a plotline	And, to my amazement, up out of the lake came a shining sword, a hand holding it, and an arm in a white silk sleeve. (From Arthur, High King of Britain by Michael Morpurgo)  Outside the walls of Heorot in the dim and dark there stalked an enemy from hell itself, the monster Grendel, sworn enemy of God and men alike, a beast born of evil and shame. (From Beowulf by Michael Morpurgo)	
How subordinate clauses are used to suggest simultaneous actions in a narrative	High above the hidden valley, her song clothed the world in white and built a crackling fortress of snow, buttressed with ice, to keep all things safe and secret. High in the mountains the scared cat walked alone, cloaked in her shadow-dappled fur	
How non-finite clauses can add strong visual images of a character or setting	I found him in the garage on a Sunday afternoon...He was lying there in the darkness behind the tea chests, in the dust and dirt (From Skellig by David Almond)  I planted beside roads, on roundabouts, among rubble, ruins and rusty railings, train tracks, tramlines and traffic lights. In abandoned parks and gardens laced with broken glass. Behind factories and shopping malls, at bus stops, cafes, blocks of flats. (From The Promise by Nicola Davies)  Silver eel waits for a night that is moonless, when the rain from the mountains has flooded the stream. Then he slips down the river, down to the seashore. (From Think of an Eel by Karen Wallace)	



# Activity: Grammar Learning Outcomes and Authentic Texts (Informational & Narrative Texts)

An example!!

Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
How choice of noun phrases can convey information precisely and create text cohesion	<b>Dandelions</b> bloom like <u>little suns</u> . But <u>the flowers</u> don't last long – they fold up like <u>furled umbrellas</u> pointing at the sky. Then <u>each rolled umbrella</u> opens into <u>a puff of down</u> : <u>a hundred fluffy parachutes</u> , each carrying a small brown seed. Just one blow and you can set them flying. (From <i>Outside Your Window: A first book of nature</i> by Nicola Davies)	All the underlined noun phrases in the example provide descriptive synonyms for the topic noun 'dandelions'. Using synonyms is one important way of ensuring text cohesion.

# Sentence Combining: An evidence-based practice

- Sentence combining is a common pedagogical practice.
- It is “...an instructional technique used to improve sentence quality, complexity and variety. **Students are taught how to combine two or more basic sentences to create more interesting, sophisticated and varied sentences.** (AERO, 2022, Practice Guide on Sentence Combining)
- “More than **85 studies** ... sentence combining improves students’ sentence-level writing across years and ability levels. Some studies have also demonstrated improvement in students’ overall writing quality and revision abilities....” (AERO, 2022, Practice Guide on Sentence Combining)
- While it is important to focus on text and grammar, we don’t need to think of grammar instruction always going from model text (genre) > sentence. The learning progression can go from sentence to extended writing (e.g. Hochman Writing Revolution Method): “**crafting sentences that accurately convey their intended meaning is particularly challenging.** [As such] **Sentence combining can provide systematic instruction in sentence-construction skills**” (Sadler, 2011)

# Sentence Combining: An evidence-based practice

8 recommended sentence combining areas (from AERO evidence based practice guides)

<b>Modifying nouns using adjectives</b>	<b>Embedding clauses</b> (using who, when, where)	<b>Embedding phrases</b> (prepositional phrase, appositive/noun phrase)	<b>Pronoun substitutes using questions or phrases</b> (for example, answering what or why)
The baby cried.  The baby was hungry.  The hungry baby cried.	That was the restaurant.  We stopped for pizza.  That was the restaurant where we stopped for pizza.	The woman is my Grade 2 teacher.  She is in the library.  The woman in the library is my Grade 2 teacher.   Melbourne is the most livable city.  Melbourne is a very popular travel destination.  Melbourne, the most livable city, is a very popular travel destination.	The teacher made her stay behind after school.  She never understood it.  She never understood why the teacher made her stay behind after school.   She ran through the park.  It was her favourite form of exercise.  Running through the park was her favourite form of exercise.
<b>Modifying verbs using adverbs</b>	<b>Coordinating conjunctions</b> (creating compound sentences)		
The woman ran five kilometres.  The woman ran quickly.  The woman quickly ran five kilometres.	She liked reading.  I liked writing.  She liked reading and I liked writing.		
<b>Applying grammatical morphemes</b> (-s, -'s, -ing, -ed, -en, -er, -est)	<b>Subordinating conjunctions</b> (creating complex sentences)		
I saw the dog.  The dog sleeps.  I saw the sleeping dog.	I will be late for school.  I pack my bag quickly.  I will be late for school unless I pack my bag quickly.		

From AERO: <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/sites/default/files/2022-04/aero-sentence-combining-practice-guide-190422.pdf>

# Practice Recommendation: Teach Sentence Combining

I will miss the start of the class. I will need to pack my bags quickly. (unless)

The cat purred. The cat was hungry. > The \_\_\_\_\_ cat purred.

## Tips:

- Increase the number of sentences to combine over time. Increase the complexity of the sentences or ideas.
- Often the process is to start with cues, then remove
- For example, “use a cause-and-effect conjunction; use a time conjunction”.
- Align with the grammar point being taught (e.g. sentence types, conjunctions, adjectives etc.)
- Embed in content and curriculum area
- Discuss responses in pairs or as a class.
- Have students generate more than one combined sentence for given targets (AERO, 2022)

Feedback around quality. Nordquist’s (2023) areas:

- **Meaning.** As far as you can determine, have you conveyed the idea intended by the original author?
- **Clarity.** Is the sentence clear? Can it be understood on the first reading?
- **Coherence.** Do the various parts of the sentence fit together logically and smoothly?
- **Emphasis.** Are keywords and phrases put in emphatic positions (usually at the very end or at the very beginning of the sentence)?
- **Conciseness.** Does the sentence express an idea without wasting words?
- **Rhythm.** Does the sentence flow?

Nordquist, Richard. (2023, April 5). An Introduction to Sentence Combining. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/an-introduction-to-sentence-combining-1692421>

# Activity: Sentence Combining and AI

Choosing from the 8 recommended sentence combining areas, sketch out some possible stimuli sentences and an activity that would facilitate development of each. Think about embedding the activity in a content area/text type you may have been teaching lately (e.g. a book, a historical period)

Develop the materials using AI, either Co-pilot or ChatGPT.

Evaluate: Compete the sentence combination yourselves and try assessing their quality.

You may find the criteria in Nordquist's useful resource a guide:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/an-introduction-to-sentence-combining-1692421>



GPT-3.5 (Tokens used 331)

Certainly! Here are some prompt sentences related to Roman history that you can use to teach sentence combining with subordinating conjunctions:

Prompt Sentences:

1. Julius Caesar was a famous Roman general.
2. He became dictator of Rome.
3. Cleopatra was the queen of Egypt.
4. She had a romantic relationship with Julius Caesar.
5. The Roman Empire expanded across Europe.
6. It eventually reached its peak under Emperor Augustus.
7. The Colosseum was a famous Roman amphitheater.
8. Gladiators fought against each other there.

Activity:

1. Provide the students with the prompt sentences.
2. Instruct them to combine two sentences at a time using subordinating conjunctions (e.g., because, although, while, when, if, etc.).
3. Encourage them to focus on creating complex sentences that provide additional information or show relationships between the ideas.
4. Have students share their combined sentences with the class and discuss how the use of subordinating conjunctions enhances the clarity and complexity of the sentences.
5. Optionally, you can provide additional sentences or ask students to create their own sentences related to Roman history to practice further.

This activity will help students practice combining sentences while also reinforcing their knowledge of Roman history.

I am teaching sentence combining to grade 10 students. Can you help me design prompt sentences and an activity that teaches them how to properly combine sentences through the use of subordinating conjunctions? The content they have been learning is Roman history.

20/01/2025, 12:36:42

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# Further Resources and Examples of Practice

Time Permitting:

[References and Resources - Education Bureau](#)

[The LPF for English Language \(Writing\)](#)

## The Learning Progression Framework for ENGLISH LANGUAGE (WRITING SKILLS)

Writing – ATM 1	Writing – ATM 2	Writing – ATM 3	Writing – ATM 4	Writing – ATM 5	Writing – ATM 6	Writing – ATM 7	Writing – ATM 8
Learning Outcomes							
Content							
Completing blanks in short texts to convey simple information centred around objects, people and actions	Writing short texts to convey simple but limited information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics	Writing short texts to convey simple information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics	Writing short texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some elaboration	Writing texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some elaboration	Writing texts to convey information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with elaboration	Writing texts to convey information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar and less familiar topics with elaboration	Writing texts to convey information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar and less familiar topics with substantial elaboration
Organisation							
Putting words under appropriate headings/ topics	Putting ideas about a topic in sentences	Linking ideas quite coherently in a short text, or showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas	Linking ideas quite coherently in a short text, and showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas	Linking ideas quite coherently in some parts of a text, and showing some overall organisation of ideas	Linking ideas quite coherently throughout the text, and showing appropriate overall organisation of ideas	Linking ideas coherently throughout the text, and showing appropriate overall organisation of ideas	Linking ideas coherently throughout the text, and showing effective overall organisation of ideas
Language and style							
Using some simple words quite appropriately, and showing an awareness of some simple formats	Using some simple language forms and functions, and simple formats quite appropriately	Using simple language forms and functions, and simple formats quite appropriately and accurately	Using a small range of quite appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of tone, style, register and features of some text types	Using a range of quite appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and quite appropriate tone, style, register and features of some text types	Using a range of generally appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and generally appropriate tone, style, register and features of some text types	Using a wide range of generally appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and generally appropriate tone, style, register and features of a range of text types	Using a wide range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and appropriate tone, style, register and features of a range of text types

[please refer to handout]

“This site has been designed to support the teaching of writing and each section draws on research we have conducted here in the Centre for Research in Writing. These resources have either been developed for CPD with primary and secondary teachers or used in research projects...”

The resources include lesson plans, worksheets, PowerPoint slides and teacher professional development materials.

The pages for this activity you might explore are:

- Grammar as Choice:  
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/languageandliteracy/grammar-teacher-resources/grammarschoice/>
- Sample lesson plans:  
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/languageandliteracy/grammar-teacher-resources/grammarschoice/samplelessonplansandschemes/>
- Fiction and Non-fiction PPTs with activities:  
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/languageandliteracy/grammar-teacher-resources/grammarschoice/thegrammarforwritingpedagogy/#a1>
- Grammar Activities :  
[https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalstudies/education/research/centres/writing/teacherresources/Cross-curricular teaching activities.docx](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalstudies/education/research/centres/writing/teacherresources/Cross-curricular%20teaching%20activities.docx)

**Learning Tasks:** In small groups, select and discuss some resource(s) from the Exeter Pedagogy database. Think about how might you use/adapt these materials to promote student engagement and vocabulary acquisition, for example, think about:

- Meaningful learning objectives linked to, for example: [The LPF for English Language \(Writing\)](#)
- Connecting abstract ideas to student experience
- Appropriate level of difficulty
- Links to oral language
- Localization of materials
- Inclusion of variety and novelty elements
- Student interaction
- Opportunities to provide feedback

- (a) What are the materials you selected about and what parts you find particularly interesting and useful?

# Summary

- Good to adapt and share resources from experts in grammar, writing and pedagogy.
- Sentence combining effects: one of the most robust research findings around grammar
- Morphological Awareness and Vocabulary = Potential positive benefits on literacy outcomes
- LEADS: Link grammar and text. Build from word-grammar to sentence to text type
- Functional Grammar in Context of Genres= Possibly helpful for some learners.
- Deductive and inductive approaches can be used: Both have pros and cons.
- Content matters: Embed within content area learning, texts across the curriculum (Hochman & Wexler, 2017)