



GRAMMAR

Fun with grammar

ACTIVITY-BASED LEARNING CAN HELP STUDENTS TO LEARN GRAMMAR. DR BEENA ANIL SHARES PRACTICAL TIPS.

Teaching grammatical aspects of English language to young learners can be a daunting task. Young students may think of grammar as ‘uncool’ or ‘boring’, a common view among the peer group. Therefore, teachers have to move away from prescriptive teaching, and design activities to teach grammar in a non-intimidating manner.

The *Guardian* newspaper has described this as, ‘the third hindrance to grammar is its reputation. When we think of grammar we picture dusty textbooks, evil teachers holding canes and dry lesson plans. But grammar is colourful, and its ability to completely change the meaning of a sentence is fascinating’.

How do we make grammar interesting for students? And what do you do when children acquire English as their second language? Clearly, activity-based learning and improved teaching can make grammar more enjoyable for students. So, let me

elaborate a task where learners learn quantifiers with help of a simple game.

You must be wondering why I have chosen to discuss quantifiers. Studies have pointed out that most second language learners find it difficult to use quantifiers correctly. As Parrot found in his 2010 work, ‘choosing the correct quantifier is complicated and learners often leave them out altogether’.

To those who are not grammarians, quantifiers can be used before and after nouns to answer questions like ‘how much?’ or ‘how many?’ Quantifiers are used with both countable and uncountable nouns. ‘Many’ learners have ‘more’ difficulties in understanding the usage of quantifiers, thus, the task Wonder With Words (WWW) helps them to learn simply.

Teachers can redesign or restructure the game according to the level of understanding and background of the learner. This task can be further modified to teach other

grammatical components like verbs, nouns, adverbs, etc. The following section outlines the procedure and functionality of WWW to teachers.



Wonder With Words [WWW]

Levels	3 – 6 grades
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use quantifiers – many, more, few, all, both, enough, every, each, any, some, etc. • To enhance students' interest in learning grammar • To develop collaborative learning
Class Time	15 – 20 minutes
Preparation time	10 – 15 minutes
Resources	Paper, pen, and dice or smartphone/LCD

Procedure

1. This task can be played by two or more players.
2. The player should move from start to finish.
3. The player throws a dice. The move depends upon the number on the dice.
4. Based on the number or square the player lands upon, she has to answer the given question in order to move forward or backward according to the instruction given in the brackets.

5. As the player continues playing, she keeps moving along the outer loop.
6. When the player stops at 'Game Changer' square, she can change the route according to her choice.
7. Seven and 21 are the game changer squares. If the players land on these boxes, they can choose to take their previous path or a new path.
8. If a player is unable to answer at any point in time, she can avail two helplines that are provided by the teacher.

9. Teachers should reserve extra questions to each square so that duplication of questions can be avoided. Continuous supply of various questions will kindle interest among players.

10. Teachers can use mobile phones or LCD in the classroom to play this game.

Notes for the teacher

1. The teacher should be able to provide players with extra questions so that the game continues for a given time.
2. Playing this game for long hours may lead to boredom.

As teachers, we are constantly improving our teaching methods – learning new techniques and making classroom innovations. In 21st century learning environments, we are likely to use technology for Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Activity-based learning, however, offers opportunities to teach grammar to learners with English as a second language.

If you implement this activity and find it useful, do not forget to write to us at anannya.chakraborty@acer.org 



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