

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is vital to academic and professional success. Students must be able to acquire and refine communication skills, including the ability to speak and write correctly, in order to be successful in school and in the workplace. *Basic Grammar Series* was designed specifically to promote learning for students who require more time to master grammar concepts.

Each of the ten books in *Basic Grammar Series* focuses on a single grammar concept, and lessons are presented with age-appropriate activities at a low readability level for ease of understanding and comprehension. Each book builds upon skills learned in previous books, reinforcing earlier learning while introducing new concepts.

Each book contains several activity sheets, which can be completed alone or in a small group, in class or at home. These activity sheets have clear and simple rules, instructions, and activities that can include manipulating letters and words, understanding pictorial clues, and solving problems. Additionally, each book contains multiple assessment activities, designed to measure students' mastery of skills and concepts. These assessments follow the format of a standardized test, and require students to eliminate incorrect options, choose the correct answer, and fill in the appropriate circle. The assessment activities can also be used as pretests to determine students' prior knowledge of specific skills.

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

Teaching grammar skills, strategies, and rules to students with reading and writing difficulties, as well as to English as a Second Language (ESL) students, is vital according to recent research. Students with better textual intelligence are better readers, writers, and communicators.

"Textual intelligence (TI) ... refers to our knowledge about how texts ... work. TI requires that students understand the difference between usage—where and when, or under what conditions a word or its meaning is appropriately used—and grammar—the rules that govern the structural relationships between words in sentences" (Burke, 2001, p. 57). Students must understand how words and sentence structures work in order to write well and to understand others' writing.

As The National Council of Teachers of English (1998–2005) stated, grammar is the "language that lets us talk about language. It names the type of words and word groups that comprise sentences in English and other languages. It helps with understanding what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, interesting, and precise It lets us understand that all languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns" (para. 2).

Larsen-Freeman (1997) noted, "While grammar can be thought of as static knowledge, it can also be considered a process The goal is for students to be able to use grammar in an unself-conscious fashion to achieve their communicative ends. As with any skill, achieving this goal takes practice" (p. 5). However, "We know that the learning curve for grammatical structures is not a smoothly ascending linear one, but rather is characterized by peaks and valleys, backslidings and restructurings" (p. 4). Therefore, "If the goals of language instruction include teaching students to use grammar accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately, then a compelling case can be made for teaching grammar" (p. 6).

Basic Grammar Series includes instruction in specific areas of grammar through meaningful and appropriate activities. When used as a supplemental resource, *Basic Grammar Series* can be an effective way to teach, reinforce, and review the skills students need in order to develop grammar awareness in their writing and to strengthen their reading comprehension.

The activities in *Basic Grammar Series* are designed so students can evaluate and apply grammar skills. Hudson (2001) said activities that incorporate these strategies “feed much more directly into the child’s growing repertoire of productive skills than exercises in grammatical analysis do. In short, they are more closely integrated into the teaching of writing, so the skills acquired in isolation are more likely to transfer directly into a usable skill” (para. 13).

Basic Grammar Series meets both state and national standards regarding language skills, including Standards for the English Language Arts, sponsored by The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. As students complete the activities in this book, they will

- learn and use a variety of grammar strategies to improve writing, reading, and communication skills;
- apply knowledge of language structure and language conventions, including sentence structures, types of sentences, parts of speech, and subject/verb agreement;
- develop competency in the English language arts for those students whose first language is not English; and
- use spoken, written, and visual language to improve writing, reading, and speaking skills.

Burke, J. (2001). Developing students’ textual intelligence through grammar. *Voices from the Middle*, 8(3), 56-61. Retrieved October 28, 2005, from <http://www.ncte.org/library/files/Free/Journals/vm/VM0083Developing.pdf>

Grammar. (1998–2005). Urbana, IL: The National Council of Teachers of English. Retrieved October 28, 2005 from <http://www.ncte.org/collections/grammar>

Hudson, R. (2001). Grammar teaching and writing skills: The research evidence. *Syntax in the Schools*, 17, 1-6. Retrieved October 28, 2005, from <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/writing.htm>

Larsen-Freeman, D. (1997). Grammar and its teaching: Challenging the myths. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved October 28, 2005, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED406829>

STANDARDS COVERED

Basic Grammar Series – Punctuation meets the following standards:

- Students will learn and use a variety of grammar strategies.
- Students will identify proper punctuation mark placement.
- Students will write sentences correctly.
- Students will identify different types of sentences.
- Students will write complete sentences.
- Students will use a map to answer questions.
- Students will use correct punctuation in different types of sentences.

PUNCTUATION

Objectives

- Students will identify telling, asking, command, and exclamatory sentences.
- Students will recognize periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas.
- Students will punctuate telling, asking, command, and exclamatory sentences.
- Students will use commas in dates, addresses, and words in a series.

Vocabulary

asking sentence – a sentence that asks for information; ends with a question mark

comma – punctuation mark that separates numbers, words, and phrases

command sentence – a sentence that tells people to do something; ends with a period

exclamatory sentence – a sentence that expresses strong emotion; ends with an exclamation mark

punctuation – the marks used in writing to separate words and numbers

telling sentence – a sentence that tells information; ends with a period

Suggested Activities

Look through newspapers, junk mail, and magazines for examples of telling, asking, and exclamatory sentences and commands, and cut them out. Have each student fold a piece of paper into fourths and label the sections: Telling (.), Command (.), Asking (?), and Exclamatory (!). Have students sort the sentences and glue them in the correct section. Ask students to highlight the end marks for each sentence with a highlighter.

Have students look through the newspaper for dates and addresses. Ask them to circle the commas in dates and addresses with a crayon or marker.

Have students brainstorm lists of fruit, vegetables, clothing, or animals. Use the lists to write sentences on the board. Add a comma in a different color between each word in the list in the sentence. Tell the students that commas are used between the words and before the word and. These commas separate words in a series.