

A useful website resource

Oxford University has developed a website which summarizes a structured program and gives week by week information for teachers to focus upon morphology (the building blocks for words e.g. prefixes, suffixes, plural 's', -ed, -ian, -ion). Teachers can use this as a basis upon which to create games. Parents might prefer to spend some time looking around the site to pick up specific games they might want to play. For people who like to read and think through theory, it is a practical way of doing this.

www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/child-learning/resources-2/



Understanding how words are built up with endings and beginnings (suffix & prefix)

- Discovering the Secrets of Words is a useful download.

This is a structured way of looking at how children use grammar. It will give useful word and sentence ideas for you to adapt as families if you want a lot of information in this area.

Using written language to learn grammar

Spoken Language is said and then gone.

Written Language can be seen and thought about.

At the end of a piece of homework, encourage your child to read it out loud. Do any sentences sound wrong or funny? If they are not fluent readers, read the sentence for them so that they can concentrate on listening to what sounds best. By reading it out loud rather than to themselves in their heads, they are referring to their 'Listening Loop'.

Be careful to keep it fun and focus upon what sounds best rather than simply telling them the answer. Remember what you have introduced before and if errors are made again start with these. Don't correct every sentence in their homework, ask them to pick out two or three which they think sound funny. There is a fine line between helping them identify things which sound wrong and then going too far and discouraging them or reducing their self-confidence.

Your child's written language will be different to their spoken language. If it's OK with your child, write down what they say sometimes. Can your child use the same proof reading techniques to think about how to improve their spoken language?

Using Written Language to help improve grammar:

- Multiple choice – which sounds best?
- Fill in the gaps – from a choice of words
- Word order – unjumbling sentences
- Linking words – combining parts of sentences

HOW TO HIGHLIGHT AND DEVELOP YOUR CHILD'S GRAMMAR

One of a child's strongest skills is their ability to hear using modern hearing technology. So trust your child's listening skills. Start off using phrases or suggestions which are widely different, giving alternatives which will sound very 'wrong' or 'silly'.

If your child can't hear which sounds 'best', either it's too hard a grammatical feature to focus upon at the moment or you need to make the contrast even more striking.

Children learn by working it out and applying their listening knowledge. Don't just give them the correct grammar to correct their work.

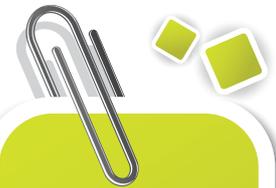
Depending upon the type of grammatical error, the following techniques are useful, e.g. multiple choice.

ONLINE VIDEOS



Use written text and proof reading to highlight correct sentences and grammar.

➤ REF: 3.5 Proof reading text to highlight grammar



Read out loud - it helps your child refer to their good listening skills of what 'sounds best'.



In the example below we have highlighted every sentence, but in reality you would only focus upon two or three each time in order to maintain your child's enthusiasm and self-confidence.

The written description of a cochlear implanted child's school trip (aged 9).

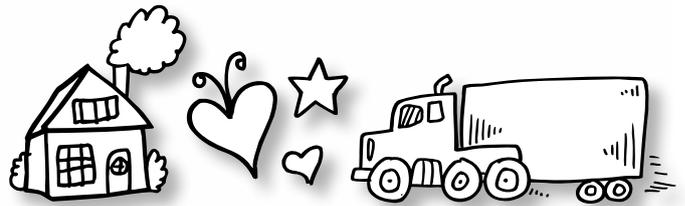
I like the best is milked cows and held an owl and chick. I saw ferret and he trying to get out. The only good thing blindfold bird. At the park I saw my friend which is Deaf. The tree was funny noise. It a fantastic place. I have not been there before. Taking sheep's coat off. I'm interested about putting horse's shoe on.'

MULTIPLE CHOICE - WHICH ONE SOUNDS BEST?

If agreements, word endings, tense or something similar is wrong – use 'multiple choice'.

Write down three different ways of constructing the sentence. At first make them very different so that it's obvious which one is correct. Read out each sentence aloud so that your child hears it. Or if their reading is quite fluent, ask them to read it out loud themselves. Eliminate which one is definitely wrong. Then re-read the other two, 'Which one sounds best?' or 'Which one sounds funny?' Gradually make the sentences being chosen more similar as your child improves.

- I like the best is milked cows
 - I liked milking the cows best
 - I like is milked the cows best
-
- And held an owl and chick
 - And I held an owl and a chick
 - And holding owl and chick



If your child cannot hear which is 'right' even when you make the differences more obvious, then use a different technique. E.g. 'and held an owl and check' Use "Fill in the gap".

FILL IN THE GAP - FROM A CHOICE OF WORDS

If one word is incorrect in the sentence or if a word is missed out, use 'Fill in the gap'.

Read the sentence out loud. Together identify which word is wrong or where another word is needed. Write down the sentence with this word missing. Write down three words which it could be. Read the sentence out loud adding in one of the three words each time. Which sentence sounds right? Or funny?

Fill in the gaps

I saw _____ ferret and he _____ trying to get out.
a, and, was, an, to

Multiple choice (The only good thing blindfold bird)

- A really good thing
- A only best thing
- A really best thing

(_____ blindfold bird)

- was blindfolded bird
- was a blindfolded bird
- is blindfolded bird

Fill in the gap

At the park I saw my friend _____ is Deaf
which / what / who

Multiple choice

- The tree was making a funny noise
- The tree was doing a funny noise
- The tree was a funny noise

Fill in the gaps

It _____ a fantastic place
a, and, was, an, to



EXPAND



ACTIVITY: Question Word Order (Happy Families)

A variety of Happy Families card games are available commercially. The aim is to find all the cards in one family which you can then keep.

The target question forms to practice are 'Mommy, Do you have --?' or 'Please may I have --?' or 'Have you got --?' The target negative answers are 'No, I don't have --' or 'No, I haven't got --'.

The game involves asking questions, giving a repetitive response, and remembering who had which card or who asked for a family and so might have others in that family.

ACTIVITY: Question Word Order (20 Questions)

Who am I?

Someone thinks of a person. The others must ask them Yes / No questions in order to guess who they are. Can you guess within 20 questions? If not, the person tells you who they are.

E.g. Are you alive? Are you a man? Are you a sportsman? Are you in a team? Do you use a ball?

ACTIVITY: Describing Words – Colour + Number

Commercially available game: Uno (published by Mattel) - blue 2, green 5)

ACTIVITY: Subject + Verb / Subject + Verb + Object / Subject + Verb agreements (Copy cats e.g. He was painting a door)

Stand in a short line with the first person facing you, the others facing away. You must take it in turns to pass the action down the line. The person at the end guesses what the action was.

Do the action to the first person in the line – you only have 15 seconds for each turn. They tap the next person and they turn round. They have 15 seconds to do the action to them. They in turn tap the next person who turns around and the action is passed down the line. The last person must guess what the action was. If they get it wrong, the next person along guesses. How far along the line do you have to go back to guess it correctly?

- Easy actions: She was brushing her teeth, He was driving a car, He was flying an airplane, I am kicking a football
- Harder actions: I was walking a dog, She was painting a picture of a face, He was walking in the rain

ACTIVITY: Plural 's' (Snap)

You will need to make these. Cut up some card. Use children's stamps or draw pictures. Have more single items so that you practice singular / plural more often.

- 1 flower (x3), 2 flowers, 3 flowers, 6 flowers, 15 flowers
- 1 pig (x3), 2 pigs, 4 pigs, 7 pigs, 12 pigs
- 1 tree (x3) 2 trees, 3 trees, 8 trees, 13 trees

You can adapt this game to practice plurals and also learn the concept words: 1 (single), couple, few, several, lots.

Take it in turns to turn over a card and put it on top of the pile. Name your card each time. If you have two of the same object it is SNAP (not necessarily the same number). The person who shouts snap first and puts their hand on top of the pile wins all those cards. They put them to the bottom of their pile and start the new pile off e.g. 'a couple of flowers / several pigs / a single flower / lots of flowers SNAP'.



ONLINE VIDEOS

Use fun games to practice specific grammatical features and gently remodel correct grammar prompting them to use alternatives.

➤ REF: 3.5 Play games and gently prompt grammar