Teaching Grammar to Young Learners in a Real-World Context

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Grammatical structures are the building blocks of language.

The approach to teaching grammar should match the way students learn.
active
teaching
interactive
meaningful

APPROACH TO TEACHING GRAMMAR
YOUNG LEARNERS

GRAMMATICAL EXPLANATIONS

?
...children see the foreign language ‘from the inside’ and try to find meaning in how the language is used in action, in interaction, and with intention, rather than ‘from the outside’ as a system and form.

Cameron, 2003
“Learning grammar is a messy process requiring the teacher to provide lots of meaningful practice, recycling, and guidance in attending to language form.”

~ Pinter, 2006
Approach to teaching grammar

• Learning-centered grammar teaching (Cameron, 2001)
• Meaning-focused input (Pinter, 2008)
• Grammar is “noticed” (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2008)
Tips for teaching grammar to young learners

• Contextualize the grammar
• Use natural, real-world contexts
• Use a variety of tasks
• Practice the grammar using all four skills
• Use games to reinforce target structures
Real-world contexts

Authentic oral text types

- Songs
- Chants
- Storytelling
- Plays
- TV shows
- Commercials
- News reports
- Weather reports
- Announcements
- Cartoons
- Movies
- Jokes and riddles
- Tongue twisters
- Dialogues (conversations)
Real-world contexts

Authentic written text types

- Stories
- Poems
- Emails
- Text messages
- Menus
- Flyers
- Recipes
- Greeting cards

- Travel brochures and posters
- Comic strips
- Crossword puzzles, word jumbles, anagrams
- Newspapers articles
- Magazine articles
- Advertisements
Grammar Games for Practice

• Word card sort – Song Q&A “What are you wearing?”
• Personalize it! – Students personalize songs or chants for meaningful practice.
• Fix it! - Re-read story and using wrong verb tense and students have to tell you how to fix it.
• Grammar dice – Students make sentences based on what they roll on the dice.
• Grammar spinners – Students make sentences based on what they spin.
Word Card Sort

[Joan will take her own photo and insert]
What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
I'm wearing my _______ _______,
and I really like them.

What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
I'm wearing my orange shirt,
and I really like it.

What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
I'm wearing my purple pants,
and I really like them.

What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
I'm wearing my pink skirt,
and I really like it.

CHORUS
Oh, you look nice.
Thank you.
Nice hat.
Nice shoes.
Nice shirt.

Sing again.
Hold up pictures.

What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
I'm wearing my _______ _______,
and I really like it.
Fix it!

From Our World published by National Geographic Learning
It is raining!
There is a nice, dry shed.
A butterfly is flying into the shed.

A frog is hopping into the shed.
Now there are two animals.
Two birds are flying in.
Now there are four animals.

Two ducks are swimming in.
Now there are six animals.
Two goats are climbing in.
Now there are eight animals.

A horse is running in.
Now there are nine animals.
A cow is walking in.

How many animals are there now?
There are too many animals!
Too Many Animals

Based on a Folktale from Ukraine
by Sofia Feldman
Grammar Dice

you
you
your brother
your cousin your sister your friend
11 Play a game. Make the wheels on page 165. Spin and make sentences. Play with a partner.

Flowers, were. The flowers were beautiful, but now they aren’t.

Good job. My turn. Music, are. No match!
THANK YOU

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