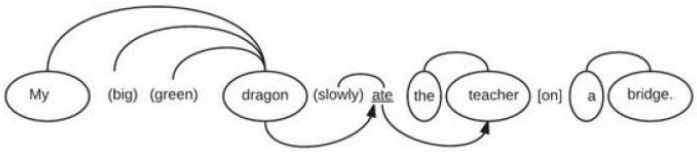
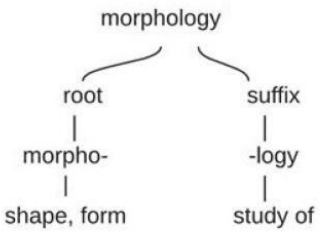
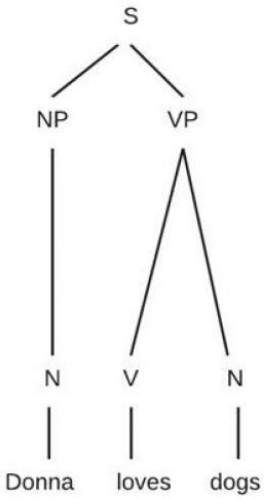


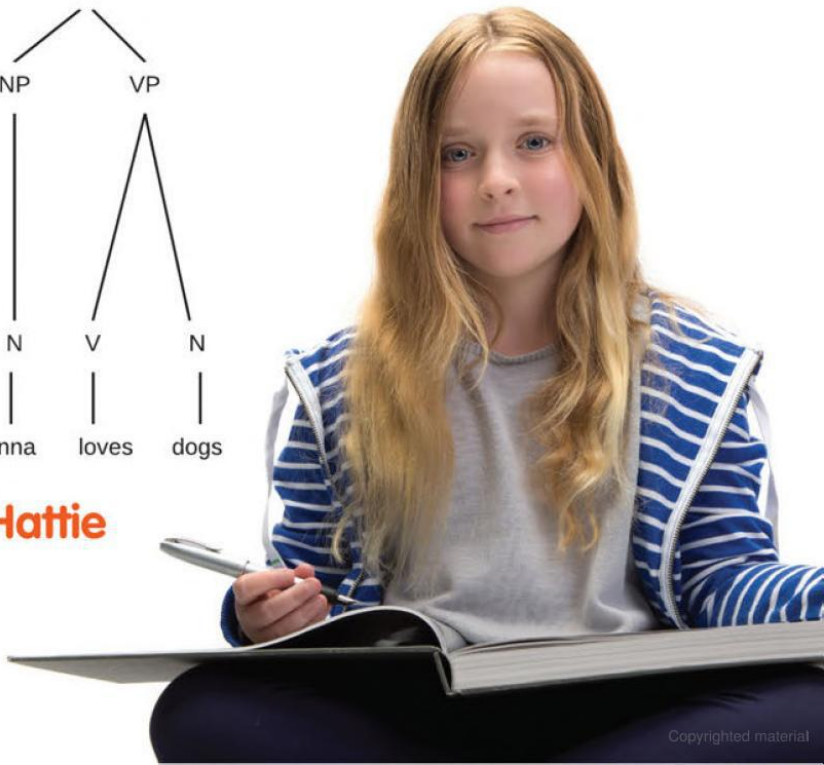
LYN STONE

LANGUAGE for Life

Where linguistics meets teaching







Foreword by John Hattie

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I must also thank the infinitely witty Anatoly Liberman, another scholar who never failed to answer my emails, be they calls for clarification or requests to poach his beautifully crafted sentences.

Writing my first book was, at times, an isolating experience. Not so this time round. My team of editors and consultants made themselves constantly available to me without complaint during the process. I am privileged to know such people. In alphabetical order, they are:

The gifted and interesting Bruce Bokor, who I met by chance through a kind friend. He has a rare talent for writing and for grasping information. Despite moving from one part of Thailand to another during the editing process, he sent timely and incredibly helpful notes on all the chapters in the book. He even assisted with the cover description, the bane of many an author's life and certainly a task synonymous with torture for me. I cannot bear to look at a final draft of a manuscript for some time after completing it. Writing 300 sparklingly positive words about it is almost impossible. Not with Bruce at hand, though. I am very lucky.

Chris Burdess, who was so very kind with *Spelling for Life*, once again provided invaluable advice for this book. Chris is one of those super-intelligent humans who exists on another level of cleverness altogether. He's also a cognitive scientist with a solid grounding in linguistics. We did our degrees together and he breezed through it. My favourite moment during the editing process was when he wrote 'Argh!' in response to something I got wrong. Love your work, Chris.

The human side of editing was personified in the equally intelligent Fiona Duffy—another linguist with academic aptitude coming out of her ears—and abundant in her critiques. Her beautifully handwritten and ever so gentle notes were a pleasure to read and I took *all* her advice.

Alphabetically last, but certainly not least, is Kenny Reay (aka Captain Pernickety). Not a linguist, but a molecular biologist and fellow Calvin and Hobbes enthusiast. How could I not take advice from him? His sharp mind picked up dozens of minute errors and seized on any opportunity to improve the text. All this was done rapidly and in the company of great silliness. My misuse of colons was referred to as 'colonic irritation', and his obsession with parenthetical commas 'continued unabated'. He was, and continues to be, a first-class conduit for procrastination.

Back in the last millennium, at a freezing cold boarding school, I was generally liked by my teachers for my academic ability, but not so much for my behaviour. I certainly wasn't as naughty as some fellow pupils, though, especially Shona Henderson, which makes it all the more pleasing to find that she is now my colleague and a leader in the field of education. She is a progressive educator whose grasp of pedagogy is expert. She has the ability to firmly help those around her achieve their potential. Her advice and support have been priceless to me. Our former housemistress would be turning in her grave if she were alive today, as the saying goes.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge my kind and patient publishers, Routledge. Once again they have given me the opportunity to bring my works up to a higher standard and to a wider audience.

My family, to whom my last book was dedicated, have once again supported me in so many ways. My husband managed to retain his usual mildness even when I disappeared as a wife and partner in the final weeks of manuscript production. My lovely girls willingly learned a whole new set of chores so that I might be able to concentrate better. My sister and brother-in-law looked after the girls above and beyond the call of duty. My brother came all the way over from Scotland and became our 'manny' for six months so that I could get the book written. My big sister encouraged me and openly showed admiration, even though she's far more admirable than I am. And of course Mum and Dad, always there for me.

This book is dedicated to my friends, all of whom I'm proud to know. Their names appear in the example sentences throughout the book, which is a good way of getting them all to buy it. Because they're my friends, they'll know perfectly well I'm joking.

Foreword

John Hattie

Within our teaching roles there are many areas that require specific expertise. If we have this expertise, we typically demand (nicely) that everyone else should have it; if we do not have it, we typically claim that we (and others) can survive very well without it! Linguistic knowledge—a deeper knowing about language—is one form of expertise whose necessity in the teacher's arsenal is hotly debated. Why do I need to know linguistics to teach students about language, reading and writing? Surely it is about teaching the love of reading, the meaning, the story-telling, others argue. Yes, but the fundamentals of deeper love and understanding are the nature, accepted rules and beauty of language.

Spelling is a wonderful test of how much we need to know, as teachers, about linguistics. I spent some research time exploring the reasons why people cannot spell. There are twenty or so major reasons, but it requires some depth of linguistics know-how to understand these reasons (fricatives, semivowels, place assimilation, etc.). Our claim was that we could develop a computer-based assessment scheme to determine the profile and interactions of these twenty or so reasons a child may have for poor spelling. Then the programme would determine the appropriate 'what-next' for teachers to reduce their particular constellation of spelling problems; and retesting using the computer package could indicate the impact of these lessons. Our argument was that we could embed this depth of linguistics knowledge into the computer package—as it is unreasonable to expect all teachers to be expert at everything, such as in-depth knowedge of linguistics. Here was an opportunity to bring depth of knowledge into the classroom to augment teachers' other expertise. But there was little appetite to support the teaching of spelling; and others argued that teachers should all know the linguistics to help students to spell.

We published an article recently looking at the Matthew effect in reading—the good readers get better and the poor readers do not—an effect that applies to many millions of students. The conclusion was simple: if you do not attain the fundamentals of reading by about the age of eight, it is very hard to catch up after this. We know that children start school with massive differences in language. Some start with 3,000–4,000 words on entry, increasing to 5,000+

by the end of Year 2; but some start with fewer than 1,000—what chance of catching up without dedicated and expert attention to language? There are so many opportunities, and missed opportunities, to enrich a child's language. For example, Blaiklock (2013) observed 582 mothers walking with young children—65 per cent of the children were in forward-facing pushchairs, 14 per cent in parent-facing pushchairs, 10 per cent were being carried and 10 per cent were walking. Parents were observed to speak to their children twice as much when parent-facing than when forward-facing.

So the question is: how much do teachers need to know about language and linguistics? Lyn Stone has provided an answer to this question with another most worthwhile book. She highlights the major grammar topics, makes them interesting, and provides great examples for use in the classroom. This book provides the resources and directions for linguistic discovery to occur. She explores the parts of speech, conjunctions, clauses, subordinate clauses, prefixes and suffixes, root and portmanteau words, punctuation and more. This book is not about linguistic legislation, but about the beauty and bases of language. She paints language as our window into the world. She dispels many myths (e.g. it can be fine to split an infinitive) and she boldly goes where so few venture!

This is the book for every teacher who wants the optimal ways to instil the basis of a love of language. It shows the way and provides the building blocks to reading, to speaking, to thinking and to participating in our society. Learning these language skills early will make it so much easier to learn later—as it is via language that we communicate ideas, listen to others and survive in classrooms. Further, this book can be particularly powerful for high school teachers, many of whose students will encounter these building blocks for the first time. Lyn Stone brings wit, joie de vivre, and a remarkable depth of knowing to an often maligned subject and provides the tools to teach it effectively in the classroom.

Blaiklock, K. (2013) Talking with children when using prams while shopping. *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal, 16*: 15–28.

Introduction

As the old joke goes, 'There are three types of people in this world: those who can count and those who can't.' I rank among those who can't. In response to the derision I sometimes receive from those in the *can* category, I say, 'Those are numbers. I do words.'

I have been thinking and talking about words as both an occupation and a preoccupation for over twenty-five years. When I talk to my pupils about words, I get the impression that they need to know certain things, and that if I teach them in a certain way, they are likely to remember and use those things in life.

This is how *Grammar for Life*, the first part of the book, came about. The main features of the book are:

- lessons for pupils
- knowledge for teachers
- resources for everyone

When I was teaching grammar, questions about morphology and punctuation inevitably arose. In response, I began compiling teaching materials from relevant resources, which I used to develop programmes of learning.

After testing these lessons and resources, I began to offer them as teacher-training workshops. It was then that I discovered another set of facts: teachers needed to attain a better knowledge of language, and if this knowledge was conveyed in a particular way, they were likely to remember and use that knowledge in their own teaching.

The lesson sections of this book (numbered 1–24) are supported by face-to-face and online courses as well as by a growing set of free YouTube videos.

This book is intended to be descriptive, while offering a range of essential facts about language and learning. I have tried not to be overly prescriptive, though I must declare my own intolerance towards certain linguistic phenomena. I have listed them below just to make the point that there is no such thing as a purely descriptive linguist:

- misuse and mis-teaching of the suffix -'s
- confusion over *your* and *you're*

- confusion over *their, they're* and *there*
- cute portmanteau words, especially for dogs (*labradoodle* and *spoodle* spring to mind)
- writing *definitely* as 'defiantly' or 'definately'
- using *extra-curricula* when *extra-curricular* is meant

My personal irritations aside, I am well aware that what I term *the misuse of language*, as listed above, is a failure of teaching that can be remedied.

There are doubtless other facets of language I find unacceptable at some level, but rather than sit and ruminate in an ivory tower, I set a goal to reach as many people as possible and facilitate both the teaching and learning of all aspects of language.

This is the essence of *Language for Life*.

Lyn Stone

Part I

Grammar for Life

Grammar for Life is the perfect name for a set of lessons on grammar, and these lessons live up to their name. Grammar is the key to how we use language in life, and the better the grammar, the better the life. Grammar is what makes language creative, allowing the highest form of intelligence.

Creative syntax combines words in novel ways and creative morphology combines word-blocks to make new words. Creative grammar permits the highest forms of verbal art: poetry, science, jokes, wise advice—as well as lies, nonsense and rabble-rousing. Grammar is probably the most important mental ability we have, and the one that distinguishes us most sharply from other animals. But, like any other ability, it doesn't come to us fully developed by Mother Nature. What grows naturally is just a small part of what adults need to function properly in the modern world. If you can't combine words or make new words comfortably, then life is limited.

How then can we help the next generation to the sophisticated grammar that modern society demands? This is where schools come in, and indeed the teaching of grammar has been one of the traditional functions of schools from the earliest days of literate society in the Middle East. In foreign languages, schools can teach children everything they need to know, at least at elementary levels; but in the native language, there's simply too much of it for schools to teach, item by item. Instead, schools can help by teaching children to talk about grammar, to think about it and to notice it. Armed with this mental skill, the skill of thinking about grammar, children can then learn much more easily from the language around them (and especially from their reading).

Unfortunately, all the English-speaking countries rejected the teaching

of grammar in the middle of the twentieth century, and are only just now starting to recognise its value again. So what can school teachers do about grammar, a subject that they themselves were never taught? This question is being asked throughout the Anglophone world, and in every country the answer is the same: teachers need imaginative and sensitive support from those who do know about grammar. They don't need a course in grammar; what they need is material that they themselves understand and that they can use immediately with a class. As every teacher knows, there's nothing like teaching something to deepen your own understanding of it. And of course at the same time, you're introducing the next generation to the fascinating world of grammar. What a privilege!

I congratulate Lyn Stone on building an excellent bridge between modern grammar and the primary classroom. The easy explanations, modelled analyses and classroom material should make it highly accessible to school teachers whose expertise lies elsewhere. Particularly important, in my opinion, are the very simple diagrams that she offers, for showing how the words in a sentence fit together to make a single unified meaning; syntax without diagrams is like geography without maps. Both teachers and pupils will appreciate these simple tools for exploring sentence structure; and maybe, in the long run, the children will even have these little diagrams in their minds in their more creative moments.

Richard A. Hudson, Emeritus Professor Linguistics,

Introduction

Why this section is particularly useful

Words help humans express their thoughts and ideas, and, like thoughts and ideas, words can cause complications.

The lessons in this book are by no means an exhaustive analysis of language and thought. They are intended as an introduction to grammar conventions.

We have lost so much of our formal teaching of grammar, both in schools and teachers' colleges, that the area is now somewhat murky and in some instances is even avoided. The purpose of this book is to assist in getting the teaching of grammar back on track.

Children come to school with many different ideas about grammar. Being understood in and understanding written language requires some knowledge of the jobs words do in sentences. These jobs are called the *parts of speech.* Too often, children know little more than the simplest definitions for a few parts of speech, e.g. 'Nouns are naming words . . . verbs are doing words'.

Since they each have a job to do, it is also a good idea to study how words relate to each other in sentences. In linguistics, the study of the parts of speech and their relationships is called syntax. It is within this branch of linguistics that students are encouraged to become linguistic detectives (Haegeman, 1991).

In this section of the book, we will begin by defining, using and exploring the relationships between:

- nouns, determiners and pronouns
- verbs

Then we will take a slightly more in-depth look at verbs and explore how they relate to nouns and how they show time by covering:

- agreement
- tense

Finally, we will cover the remaining major parts of speech:

- adjectives
- adverbs
- prepositions
- conjunctions

Each lesson consists of the analysis of a particular part of speech and builds on the preceding lesson. The overall goal is to give pupils a bigger and bigger picture of how language operates. The benefit to pupils is that they become more adept and confident as readers and writers.

This process of relating words to one another and seeing how they form a network took inspiration from R.A. Hudson's *Word Grammar* (2010). In my experience, people who have studied *Word Grammar* as part of other degrees, such as linguistics, teaching, speech pathology and psychology, often report great enjoyment of the subject. *Word Grammar* is fascinating and can be presented relatively simply. Pupils with whom I have conducted word-grammar-based lessons often provide similar positive feedback.

The syntax component of this book incorporates a simple set of marks, using a set of visual cues that identify the parts of speech and word relationships. This simple visual parsing is intended to serve as a form of scaffolding so that pupils quickly begin to recognise the various parts of speech. It is not intended to be slavishly memorised or tested. Indeed, as with any form of scaffolding, we are trying to move pupils beyond this system and into automaticity as quickly as possible.

Below is an example of a marked sentence. This sentence will be used throughout this part of the book.

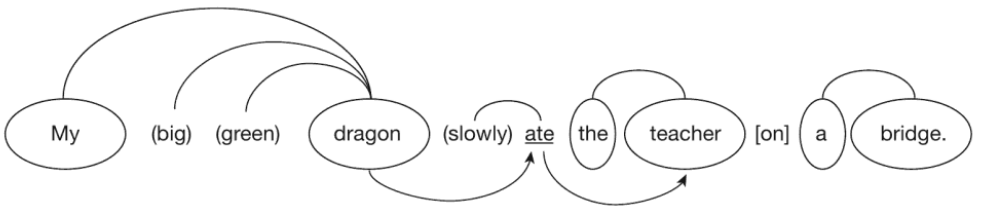

Figure 0.1 Example sentence marked

Table 0.1 Parts of speech

Parts of speech	*Examples*	*Function*	*Description*	*Notes*
Nouns (and determiners and pronouns)	town, rain, harmony, the, a, it, his, them	Universals	Together they form a complete thought and are the minimum requirement in any sentence.	When they appear together in sentences, they must *agree.*
Verbs	make, take, am, have, do			
Adjectives	charming, ill, miserable	Modifiers	They describe, intensify, limit or qualify other words.	Adjectives modify nouns, adverbs modify everything else.
Adverbs	funny, really, afraid, ever			
Prepositions	at, in, than	Relation-ship words	They carry within their meaning specific ways in which words relate to one another in sentences.	
Conjunctions	and, so, but			

This section looks at the definition of and relationships between six major parts of speech. The six parts of speech fall into the following three categories:

- universals
- modifiers
- relationship words

Lesson order

Determiners and pronouns are studied straight after nouns and are marked in the same way, since they signal the coming of nouns or take the place of nouns in sentences.

Once nouns and verbs have been discussed, agreement and tense are mentioned before the other parts of speech are discovered.

There are also categories into which many of the parts of speech can be divided (collective nouns, auxiliary verbs, demonstrative pronouns etc.), but the core lessons on the six major parts of speech are what we are dealing with in this book.

Beginners

If you're working with beginners, the concept of the parts of speech needs to be introduced. If you're working with pupils who have experience of the parts of speech, a brief introduction on the aims of the lessons is all that is required.

Example dialogue for beginners

Did you know that the words in our language all do jobs? For example, some words name things, some describe things, some show action? Can anyone think of any of the names we give to them? (NOUN, ADJECTIVE, PRONOUN, ETC.)

How do we know which names to give which words? (BECAUSE OF THE JOBS THEY DO WHEN WE SPEAK AND WRITE.)

The jobs that words do are called the parts of speech. Knowing the parts of speech will help you write and think more clearly.

By the end of these lessons, you will not only be able to name all the words in this example sentence:

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge.

You will also be able to show how they relate to one another.

The way you will show this is by using a simple set of marks. Each type of word has a particular mark. You will learn these as we go along. We will first use the example sentence. Then we will look at short passages. You will then create and mark your own example sentences.

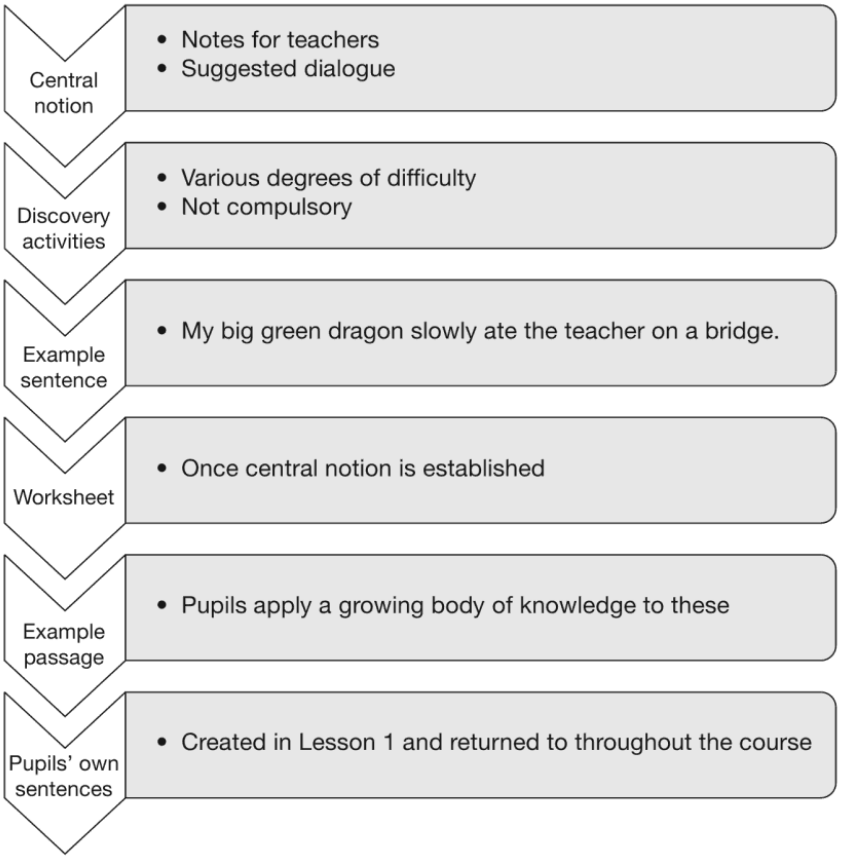

Figure 0.2 *Grammar for life* structure

Pacing

Each chapter has a central notion. This is the information that pupils need in order to continue through the programme. Teacher notes are also provided to assist with lesson planning.

Various discovery activities are offered in order to impart this central notion. The discovery activities are suggested ways in which pupils can master each concept. They provide a range of exercises before the worksheet is attempted. Some pupils may not have to complete all the activities before using the worksheet.

Once the central notion is established, pupils can attempt the worksheet. A key to each worksheet is provided for teachers.

Each lesson requires analysis of a passage. This can be done in pairs or groups, and the passage is intended to be discussed at length. Once a passage has been discussed, pupils return to their own sentences and perform the same analysis.

What isn't included

Interjections

Wow! Holy moly! Lawks-a-mussy! LOL! These have been deliberately omitted as they are neither generated by nor follow the same rules as the other parts of speech.

Lexical sub-categories

Interesting as vast lists of lexical sub-categories may be to anyone with the time and passion for further study, I felt I had to draw the line *somewhere*. Far be it from me to tell anybody precisely where to draw that line, but where I have stopped is where I deemed it fit—for various reasons.

This book does contain some lists, the most extensive of those being the list of morphemes I've compiled over the years. Teachers and pupils can use this resource as they see fit.

Tips on running the lessons

1 Select the discovery activity or activities you find most relevant.
2 In many cases, a suggested dialogue is offered, in a dialogue box (see 'Example dialogue for beginners' above).
3 Questions in the suggested dialogue are followed by typical answers (CAPITALS INSIDE BRACKETS) straight after the questions. If pupils don't give these answers, it's fine to simply give them the information.
4 Once the requisite discovery activities are done, distribute the relevant grammar worksheet and have your pupils complete the tasks within.
5 Extension activities are also provided. These delve further into language analysis and categorisation and are there for older or keener pupils. They are called extension activities because the subsequent parts of the course do not require knowledge of the information they present.

The Universals

In any human language, people talk about people and objects and what happens to them. There are classes of words that name things (nouns) and grammatically different classes of words that indicate actions or processes (verbs). This is natural. Communication could not take place without these principal elements, which is why I have called the section that deals with these two principal elements Universals.

Nouns are also closely linked to what linguists call *determiners.* The words traditionally known as the definite and indefinite articles (*the, a/an*) will be included as determiners in this analysis. Other words in that group are possessive pronouns, such as *my*, *his* and *our*, and demonstrative pronouns such as *this*, *that* and *those*. We will revisit these pronouns in the Pronouns lesson and will not shy away from including them in both classes, since their functions are so similar.

Any study of verbs will necessarily include a word or two about agreement and tense, as these concepts are the exclusive domain of verbs in English.

None of the following lessons is offered as an exhaustive linguistic analysis of English. They are merely written to ensure that knowledge gaps about word classes are filled with useful and hopefully interesting information.

The lessons in this section will cover:

- nouns
- determiners
- pronouns
- verbs
- agreement
- tense

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1 Nouns

Definition

Nouns name people, places, things, feelings and ideas.

Etymology

Latin *nomen* 'name'. This is why when you *nominate* someone, you say their *name*.

Marking

Nouns in our example sentences will be circled.

Teacher resources

- Laminated word cards (Appendix 1)
- Nouns worksheet

Noun facts

Compound nouns

Some nouns comprise two words (club sandwich, soda pop, Loch Ness). Two words for one part of speech can be confusing. It happens with verbs too, as we will soon see (*will see* in the preceding phrase constituted one verb).

This process of recombination of words to form new concepts is a common device in language. It saves us having to invent completely new words. German is particularly adept at this and actually goes as far as leaving

no spaces between words when new words are formed. The wonderful *Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz*, meaning 'the law concerning the delegation of duties for the supervision of cattle marking and the labelling of beef', has now been de-commissioned, since the Mad Cow no longer troubles the German government. It demonstrates the point quite well, though.

In English, compound nouns often begin as two separate nouns (*trick shot*). Sometimes, they start to lean towards each other by virtue of a hyphen (*trick-shot*) and indeed, if their adjacent borders are friendly to one another in sound and/or meaning, they often become one word (*trickshot* but not so much *dogs-expo*).

In fact, all compound words are formed in this way. Some sequences of words have a different meaning when brought together than when they are apart (*apart* is an example). This can cause confusion in some quarters and outrage in others. Take the words *every* and *day*. When they are adjacent in a sentence they mean 'on all days', but when together they mean 'ordinary'. Does anyone else feel a pang of righteous pique when they see signs like 'Breakfast served everyday'? Really? What do I have to do to get a special breakfast around here?

This is happening quite frequently these days with words like *every* and *any* and is a change that threatens to offend many, but change will continue nevertheless. Or is it never the less?

Compound words are used throughout the lessons and are treated as one word.

Activities

Activity 1.1—Pointing

Have pupils partner up and look around the room. Each pupil points to five things, telling their partner what these things are.

Ask pupils what part of speech they are using. (NOUN)

Activity 1.2—Heartfelt

Point to your heart and say, 'The thing that I'm feeling in my heart today is happiness.'

Have pupils point to their hearts in turn and complete the sentence 'The thing that I'm feeling in my heart today is . . .'

Ask pupils what part of speech they are using. (NOUN)

Watch out!

Pupils will try to squeeze adjectives in here, as it almost makes sense to say, 'The thing that I'm feeling in my heart today is happy.'

Handle this by saying,

> You've got the right root word there, but let's see if happy really does the same job as the other nouns we mentioned. We can do this by testing the words in a sentence.
>
> Let's take a noun we're comfortable with, like *dragon*. Does the sentence *My dragon ate the teacher* make sense? (YES)
>
> Let's replace the noun *dragon* with this word *happy*. What is the sentence now? (MY HAPPY ATE THE TEACHER)
>
> Does this make sense? (NO)
>
> *Happy* is not a thing, *happy* describes a thing, which we'll deal with later. To turn the word *happy* into a thing, what do we have to add at the end? (THE SUFFIX '-NESS')
>
> We will do some more noun tests shortly.

Activity 1.3—Test sentences

Gather up your laminated word cards from Appendix 1 and place them in random order at the top of the board.

Write the three test sentences below and place each word in each of the three sentences, one by one. You will find that any noun will make sense in at least one of the sentences while none of the other words will.

Watch out!

Words can be homonyms, i.e. they can have two separate meanings and be two parts of speech. An example is *run*, as in *We run* (verb) and *We are ready for the run* (noun).

If your pupils point this out, they are to be congratulated for their observation. At this stage, though, if *run* does come up as being ambiguous, ask your pupils to wait until later in the programme before a full explanation is revealed. The goal here is to let pupils figure out what homonyms are by themselves.

The three test sentences are as follows:

1 This is the _____.
2 (The) _____ seems fine.
3 The teacher's _____ is okay.

Important note: when using test sentence 2, always use the word *the* at the beginning unless you are testing a proper noun, otherwise, pronouns will also fit.

Test sentence suggested dialogue

I have fifteen example words here. By the time we finish this course, we will have worked out together exactly what jobs these words do and how they can be connected to each other in sentences. Knowing this will help you be a stronger reader and writer.

Let's go through the words now and see if they make sense in these sentences. If they don't, then we can be pretty sure they're not nouns. This is a good test for later on, when you are looking at all the parts of speech together.

Take the word cards and put each word in the three test sentences. If a word makes sense in at least one sentence, move it to the right of the board. If the word doesn't make sense in any sentence, move it to the left.

You should end up with three words on the right (*James*, *cat* and *idea*) and twelve words on the left.