Grammar in its Place...

Putting the teaching of grammar back in to the heart of books.

UKLA
The United Kingdom Literacy Association

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHANTRY, LITTLE COMMON AND THE AURORA ACADEMIES

Grammar in its Place…

Putting the teaching of grammar back in to the heart of books.

Series Editor: Jo Tregenza

This document has been the result of a two year collaboration between the University of Sussex, University of Exeter, Chantry Primary School, Aurora Academy and Little Common Primary School. It began when the University of Sussex was approached by the Hastings East Sussex Coastal group to develop project to raise the understanding of the teaching of grammar in the locality. The University decided to engage the support of Professor Myhill from Exeter University to support the work and provide subject knowledge training and development for the teachers in the first year with the view to them developing subject knowledge and resource in their own schools the following year.
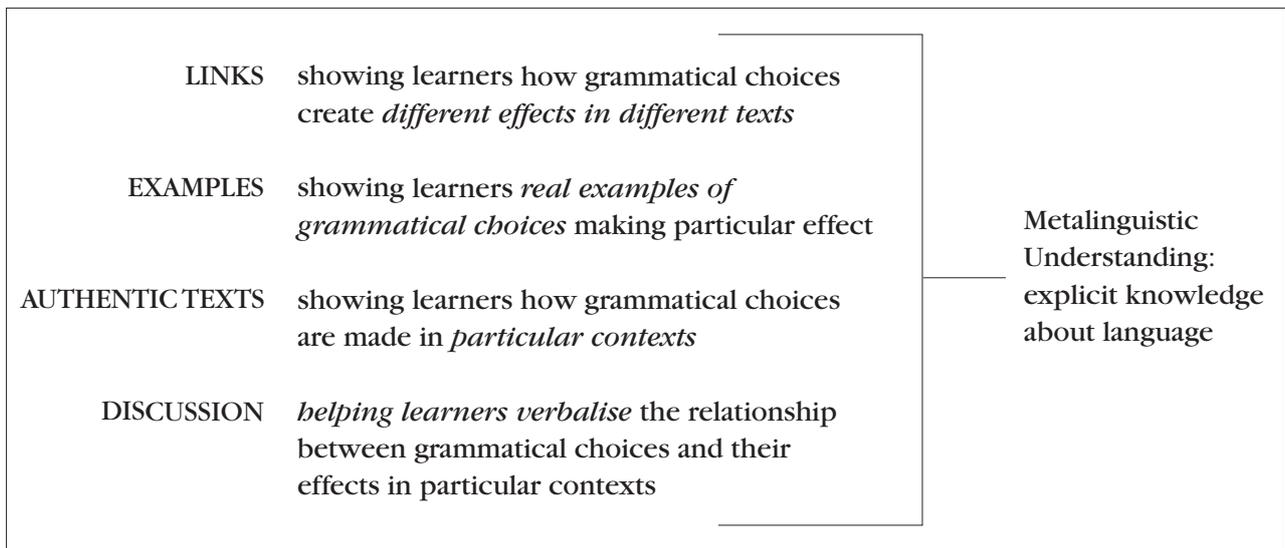
> *'UKLA maintains that language study is a vitally important aspect of learning in English, and that grammar is an important strand of language study, for its own intrinsic interest and for its contribution to communication and the making of meaning. However, if grammatical knowledge, spelling and punctuation are to make positive contributions to children's writing, they need to be taught and assessed in the context of writing meaningful texts, not as sets of 'facts' or 'rules'. Learning to write is about much more than grammar and the conventions of transcription. Grammatical knowledge should be neither taught nor tested outside the context of purposeful writing.'* UKLA position statement 2019.

At the heart of the project was the determination that grammar should be taught in context and through high quality books. Having worked with schools on grammar training in the locality, it had become clear that many teachers lacked the knowledge of what grammar could be explored through real books.

We felt that if we provided strong models and examples these could be used by all schools in the region as training and guidance. The UKLA (United Kingdom Literacy Association) states "language study is a vitally important aspect of learning in English, and that grammar is an important strand of language study, for its own intrinsic interest and for its contribution to communication and the making of meaning. However, if grammatical knowledge, spelling and punctuation are to make positive contributions to children's writing, they need to be taught and assessed in the context of writing meaningful texts, not as sets of 'facts' or 'rules'.

Myhill also found "significant positive effects from teaching that included explicit attention to relevant grammatical constructions within the context of pupils' writing of particular genres". (Myhill *et al.* 2012 p.151). However, Myhill's team also found that the effectiveness of the approach was heavily influenced by teachers' capacity to use high quality texts and to stimulate meaningful discussion about language choices. The table below reflects how the key pedagogical principles foster purposeful engagement with grammar and language choices (for more detail about the pedagogical principles, visit:
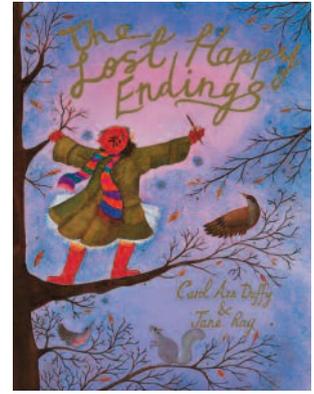
http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/research/centres/centreforresearchinwriting/grammar-teacher-resources/

LINKS	showing learners how grammatical choices create *different effects in different texts*	
EXAMPLES	showing learners *real examples of grammatical choices* making particular effect	Metalinguistic Understanding: explicit knowledge about language
AUTHENTIC TEXTS	showing learners how grammatical choices are made in *particular contexts*	
DISCUSSION	*helping learners verbalise* the relationship between grammatical choices and their effects in particular contexts	

The exemplars in this booklet have been created by experienced and trainee teachers: they are not grammar experts but are passionate about the teaching of English, meaningful learning and putting a love of books at the heart of any learning about grammar. We hope schools will find the materials helpful as a planning tool or CPD materials. Key to each unit was a clear focus on the enjoyment of the story. Teachers initially shared the books, reading aloud to immerse children in the book.

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The Lost Happy Endings
by Carol Ann Duffy and Jane Ray
Y1 - Y6

Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
Year 1: Using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun "I"	Any narrative which names characters and/or places e.g. opening sentences which establish settings. The choice of names for title characters or main protagonists or invented or mythical creatures. *Hansel and Gretel were trapped screaming in the Gingerbread House.* *The Big Bad Wolf gobbled up Little Red Riding Hood and enjoyed every mouthful.*	Teaching can draw out what the name of a place or person might suggest about their character, based on word and sound associations, or investigate how choices of proper noun can signal historical period or narrative genre.
Year 1: Suffixes that can be added to verbs where no change is needed in the spelling of root words	*Some of the Endings **drifted** away like breath and others **fluttered** upwards like moths fumbling for light. Some **looked** like fireflies …*	It would be useful to begin to display these words as a set that you don't change so children can begin to see the patterns.
Year 1: Suffixes that can be added to verbs where no change is needed in the spelling of root words **Year 2:** Use of the suffixes –er, –est in adjectives	***Faster** than fury ….*	
Year 2: Learn to use sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation and command	Statement: *Jub jumped.* *The old woman had* grabbed hold of Jub's arm. Question: *"What's in the sack?"* Exclamation: *The Happy Endings were lost!* (doesn't fit government definition as it doesn't start with "How" or "What") Command: *"Let me alone!"* *"Shut up!"*	Oral rehearsal of these phrases would be effective. Let children make up commands, questions and exclamations as part of lining up routines etc.

Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
Year 2: How adjectives are used to distinguish characters in traditional tales	Any traditional folk tale or fable, e.g. *Little Red Riding Hood*; *The Sleeping Beauty*; *The Little Mermaid*; *The Valiant Little Tailor*; *The Naughty Boy*; *The Talkative Tortoise* etc. *A **twisted old** woman…. was standing on the path in front of Jub.* *The **wicked witch** made the oven hotter and hotter.*	Traditional tales often use adjectives, singly or in pairs, to form one-dimensional archetypal characterisations e.g. a handsome prince, a wicked stepmother, a greedy king, a wise old woman. Teaching can draw attention to placing of adjectives before the noun and after the verb.
Year 2: Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as –ful, –less	*They were **worthless** to a witch.*	Explore the impact of different suffixes. You could make up games using matching cards to see if different endings work.
Year 2: Use of–ly in Standard English to turn adjectives into adverbs	*Then, very **carefully**, Jub would open the sack.* *Jub trotted **quickly** along.* *(She) hobbled **rapidly** away.*	As an extension to this you might explore word order, look at the impact of the sentence if you start with the adjective.
Year 2: Use of the progressive form of verbs in the past and present tense. (eg she is drumming, he was shouting) **Year 3:** Use of the present perfect form of verbs instead of the simple past (eg He has gone out to play contrasted with He went out to play) How verbs can establish character by showing what characters do	*Children in their beds **were listening** to their bedtime stories.* *Soon the night was filled with the awful sound of frightened or disappointed children **weeping and wailing** in their beds.* *When **she had first opened** the sack of Happy Endings she had been furious.*	Teaching might bring out the descriptive power of well-chosen lexical verbs that make the use of adverbs redundant.
Year 2: Subordination (using when, if, that, because) **Year 3:** Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions How subordinate clauses are used to suggest simultaneous actions in a narrative	***Once she had reached the edge of the forest**, Jub had to climb to the top of a huge old oak tree.* ***When the last Ending was out of the sack**, Jub would scamper and rustle her way down to the ground and set off homewards through the darkening woods.*	Teaching can draw attention to placing of subordinate clauses in different positions with the sentence and how this might affect which actions are em-phasised or prioritised.

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Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
Year 2: Learn to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify. **Year 4:** Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases How noun phrases in apposition can be used to reinforce or emphasise aspects of character	*She turned and ran back down the path towards her home, scattering **bitter tears**.*	Definitions of nouns as 'names of people, places or things' are not always enough for children to locate nouns quickly; teaching can show position within a sentence eg preceded by a determiner or at the head of a noun phrase, and the form of the noun e.g. abstract/concrete; singular/plural. Teaching can show how well-chosen nouns can be more effective in providing descriptive detail than over-use of adjectives. Use of synonyms for nouns from the same lexical field is an important way of creating detail authentic to historical period or narrative genre, and for linking ideas convincingly.
Year 2: Learn to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify. **Year 4:** Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases How noun phrase choices provide descriptive detail of settings and create narrative cohesion	*She was soon home in her own **cosy hole**.* *…. scattering bitter tears into the **cold, black night**.* *The witch lived in the trunk of a dead tree in the **darkest, thorniest part of the forest**.*	
Year 2: Learn to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify. **Year 4:** Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases How noun phrases support visual descriptions of characters How noun phrases can create evocative images	*A twisted old woman with a **face like the bark of a tree** and horrible **claw hands** was standing on the path in front of Jub. She had **fierce red eyes** like poisonous berries.* *To bite the head off any small bird she could catch and crunch its beak between her **long yellow teeth**.* *Her **straggly white hair** hung in front of her **walnut face**.*	Useful constructions for adding post-modified detail include: • adjectives placed after the noun • relative clauses starting with a relative pronoun (e.g. who, which, that, whose) • a prepositional phrase starting 'with…' • a subordinate clause • similes Text examples like these offer scope for combining literary and linguistic analysis, for example by drawing attention to word choices within the noun phrase that appeal to the senses or that sound appealing because of the use of alliteration and rhyme.

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Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
Year 2: Learn to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify. **Year 4:** Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases How noun phrases, especially with post-modification, generate descriptive detail of characters or objects	*Sometimes the eyes of owls **flashed from the trees like torches** and made her jump, or bats skimmed the top of her head **like living Frisbees**.* *The Happy Endings had flown back to the forest **like homing pigeons**.* *She noticed scarves of mist draped in the trees. One of them noosed itself round Jub's neck, **soft and damp**, and made her shiver.* *She dreamed of a Golden Pen **which could write on night itself**.* *The moon gaped down at the forest, **agog with light**.*	Text examples like these offer scope for combining literary and linguistic analysis, for example by drawing attention to word choices within the noun phrase that appeal to the senses or that sound appealing because of the use of alliteration and rhyme.
Year 2: Learn to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify. **Year 4:** Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases. How noun phrases create descriptions which help readers to infer character.	*She had **fierce red eyes** like poisonous berries.* ***Faster than fury**, the old woman was on her.*	Teaching can bring out how noun phrase detail is used to 'show not tell' information about characters and to firmly link reading and writing processes, by focusing on the 'clues' we use to make inferences when we read and how as writers we can lay a trail of similar clues for our reader.
Year 3 and 4, Year 5 and 6: Reading – comprehension: identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning How minor sentences (all noun phrases) create a frozen moment in time and focus attention on the description	*The shadowy trees looked villainous: **tall ghouls with long arms and twiggy fingers**.*	Minor sentences do not have a finite verb - compare 'A terrible ?? with… a wart on the end of her nose' with 'She was a terrible ?? with…with a wart on the end of her nose' or 'A witch who shrieked and yelled' which is a subordinate clause, with 'she shrieked and yelled', which are co-ordinated main clauses. Without attention paid to the role of the verb in forming a clause, children can be misled by the idea that a main clause 'makes sense on its own' and a subordinate clause 'doesn't make sense on its own'.

Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
Year 3: Expressing time, place and cause using prepositions How prepositional phrases can establish a clear picture of a setting	*Jub would scamper and rustle her way **down to the ground**.* *A twisted old woman …. was standing on the path **in front of Jub**.* *(She) hobbled rapidly away **into the darkness and the fog**.* *Frightened or disappointed children weeping and wailing **in their beds**.* *She had flung the sack **into the corner of her lair**.*	Prepositional phrases provide detail that can be part of a noun phrase, relating back to the noun and functioning like an adjective e.g. *the **darkness behind the tea chests***; *the **rain from** the mountains*. They also provide adverbial detail, relating back to the verb e.g. *I **found** him **in the garage***; *I **planted** beside roads*. They are therefore an important way of making writing 'more detailed' or 'more descriptive'. Teaching can build a store of prepositions and experiment with positioning prepositional phrases differently within a sentence.
Year 3 and 4, Year 5 and 6: Reading – comprehension: identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning How varied sentence rhythms can draw attention to the narration of an episode and create a hook for the reader How short sentences can create emphasis or anticipation in developing a plotline	*Cinderella's foot was too big for the glass slipper. Some of the children started to howl. Snow White died when she bit the poisonous apple and she stayed dead for ever. Some of the children started to scream. The Big Bad Wolf gobbled up Little Red Riding Hood and enjoyed every red mouthful. Some of the children had hysterics.* *Before long the rapid movement of her witchy hands had made a spark. Then another. Then another.* *The shadowy trees looked villainous: tall ghouls with long arms and twiggy fingers. Bushes crouched in the fog as though they were ready to pounce like muggers. Jub hurried on.*	One purpose of manipulating sentence lengths and types is to create distinctive textual rhythms that might emphasise ideas or alter the pace of reading, for example: • an opening pattern of questions and short statements to withhold information and suggest a sense of mystery; • the subject verb inversion, typical of folk tales, myths and legends, so helping to establish genre • 'Short sentences' can have one clause (*Jub hurried on*) or more than one clause (*I **could hear** it **turning in the lock now**.*) Short sentences can be presented as an 'automatic' way of increasing narrative tension but text examples like this offer scope for open-ended discussion of choices and effects about how well they 'work' in creating suspense.

Learning Objective	Text Example	Commentary
Year 1: Joining words and joining clauses using and. **Year 2:** co-ordination (using or, and, but) **Year 3:** Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions How co-ordinated clauses are used to link events and actions in a story	*Jub would open the sack **and** shake out the Happy Endings into the violet evening air.* *Some of the Endings drifted away like breath **and** fluttered upwards like moths fumbling for light.* *Children in their beds were listening to their bedtime stories. **But** tonight there were to be no Happy Endings.*	Deliberate use of co-ordinated conjunctions (and, but, or) to link clauses is very different from uncontrolled chaining together of ideas. Teaching might bring out the use of 'and' to join closely linked events or actions and the use of 'but' to signal an unexpected event;.
Year 3 and 4, Year 5 and 6: Reading – comprehension: identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning How a patterns of three co-ordinated clauses creates a good rhythm in a text; use of 'and' and comma to substitute 'and'	*When Jub came near to the spot where the witch had snitched her sack **she stopped. She wondered what to do. She held the Golden pen** before her fingers and drew a question mark on the night air* *The flames danced with her, **cheek to cheek, step by step, arm in arm.*** *Jub dropped the Golden Pen as **she ran, and ran and ran.***	The pattern of three clauses again is suggestive of myth and creates strong textual rhythms – particularly satisfying when used in the final sentence, a good signal that the story has ended.
Year 3 and 4, Year 5 and 6: Reading – comprehension: identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning How non-finite clauses can add strong visual images of a character or setting	*One of them noosed itself round Jub's neck, **soft and damp**, and made her shiver.*	The non-finite clauses are strongly descriptive and a concise way to write. They are all additional information that could be removed, so we can see that the writer has added extra detail, appealing especially to how we picture the scene.

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