

Chapter 1 Focused Grammar Activities (FG Activities)

FG Activities–Parallel Structures

Have each student provide two or three sentences from their grammar literacy papers that contain the conjunctions “and” or “but.” Working in small groups, they should mark the word class of each part that is being conjoined. Each group then chooses one sentence that best demonstrates the use of parallel structures and writes it on the board for class discussion.

FG Activities–Correlative Conjunctions

These pairs of conjunctions can change the focus of a sentence and must be used sparingly. Most students avoid them completely. Finding a place to use them in a text is a good follow-up to the parallel structures activities since they also must conjoin like structures (two noun phrases, two verb phrases, etc.).

Have each student change one sentence in his or her grammar literacy paper to take advantage of this powerful construction and submit it for a homework grade or class discussion. Put sentences on a document viewer for discussion.

Chapter 2: Extending The Basics

The purpose of this chapter is to extend the discussions from the first chapter, in particular, those on nouns and prepositions. Additionally, the use of active and passive voice is introduced in this chapter as an important structure that can change the focus of a sentence. This introduction also prepares students for the discussions of verbs in the next chapter since the “be” helping verb used in a passive sentence can easily be confused with a linking verb.

Important punctuation is reviewed in the discussion of conjunctive adverbs. These adverbs have simple punctuation rules that many of my students are unaware of; in fact, students are often surprised by the simplicity of the rules.

In the section on appositives, students get their first introduction to restrictive and nonrestrictive elements as well as the associated punctuation rules. They will see these terms again in Chapter 4 when introduced to participles and again in Chapter 5 as part of the discussion of adjective and noun (appositive) clauses.

The most challenging section for my students is that on voice. Most students are familiar with the terms active and passive but seem to be genuinely confused about what these terms mean. Even after students work through the book and complete the exercises, they still may not recognize their own passive constructions. I am often conflicted about how much time to spend on this section.

Chapter 2 Grammar-Writing Portfolio

GW Portfolio–Prepositional Phrases

Beginning writers often overuse prepositional phrases. This could come from trying to reach a certain word requirement (prepositional phrases have more words). The commentaries found at the links below refer to the overuse of prepositional phrases in writing as clunky, confusing, wordy, cluttering, complicated, cloudy, and so on.

Have students circle all of the prepositional phrases on one page of their grammar literacy papers and turn it in. The circles give the students a good visual cue to their prepositional phrase use. It will also give you the opportunity to check whether they are getting prepositional phrases confused with infinitives. Students should evaluate their use of prepositional phrases (can some be changed?) and make changes to their texts where needed.

Here are some links to discussions of prepositional phrases:

<http://writetightsite.com/2011/11/plentiful-prepositions/>

<http://writetightsite.com/2011/12/how-to-reduce-prolific-prepositions/>

<http://www.sterling.edu/documents/academics/Conciseness.pdf>

<http://www.jneurosci.org/site/misc/publishingpointers.xhtml>

http://www.cjr.org/language_corner/language_corner_121613.php?page=all

GW Portfolio–Active/Passive Voice

Students often have trouble understanding how active and passive voice can change sentence focus. Most students have had instructors tell them not to use passive voice, but they have received no instruction on why or how this is done.

After reviewing active and passive voice, have students circle the verbs in passive sentences in their papers. I often have them start by circling all of the “be” verbs first (using one to two pages of their grammar literacy paper) and then ask them to decide if each circled

verb is part of a passive verb (is there a past participle?), a progressive verb (is it a helping verb as in “is talking?”), or a linking verb. (This exercise also helps prepare them for Chapter 3 on sentence patterns.) I also ask students to look at those sentences critically and decide if the passive sentences should be rewritten in active voice; if so, they should make the appropriate changes to their text.

Extra help with active and passive voice can be found through the following links:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/passive.htm>

<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/bien-bien/fra-eng/grammaire-grammar/actpssv-eng.html>

https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CCS_activevoice.html

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/dash/dashactive.cfm>

GW Portfolio—Conjunctive Adverbs

Incorrect punctuation can create challenges for the reader. Have the students search their grammar literacy papers for conjunctive adverbs such as “consequently,” “however,” and “therefore” and check the punctuation around these words. They should make changes where needed.

Chapter 2 Focused Grammar Activities

FG Activities—Prepositional Phrases

Students are instructed to find four (or more) sentences with prepositional phrases in their grammar literacy papers. Two of the prepositional phrases must function as adjectives and two as adverbs. The prepositional phrases should be placed in parentheses and marked as ADJ or ADV.

In this assignment, I warn students about infinitives (also addressed in the book) because they are often confused with prepositional phrases. Students check their work with their group members (see “Student Groups” in the **General Grammar Activities**) before turning it in for a homework grade. I use some of the sentences for class discussion.

FG Activities—Prepositional Phrases

Students are divided into small groups, and each group writes a prepositional phrase (without sentence context). You can ask them to be creative, or you can specify that they write a phrase using a particular theme (e.g., homecoming). Each group passes the prepositional phrase to another group, which has to use the phrase in two sentences—once as an adjective and once as an adverb. For example, “with a tiara” might be used as follows:

The woman with a tiara is the homecoming queen. (adj)

The homecoming queen bent over to tie her shoe and broke the homecoming king’s nose with her tiara. (adv)

Each group writes its sentences on the board for the class to review.

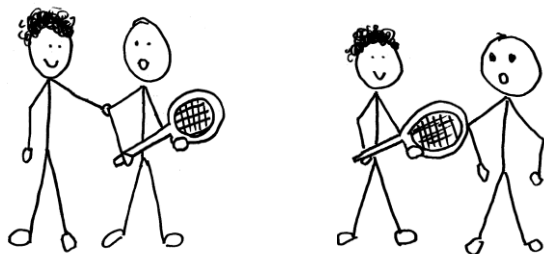
FG Activities—Prepositional Phrases

I write the following sentence on the board and ask students to tell me if the prepositional phrase functions as an adjective or adverb:

The woman touched the man with a tennis racket.

You will most likely get both answers.

Ask a student who said that it functions as an adjective to draw a picture that represents the sentence; ask another student who claimed that it is an adverb to draw a picture as well. You can draw your own pictures and have students vote on which picture the sentence represents (both!). This helps students to understand the concept of linguistic ambiguity and the importance of context.



FG Activities–Active/Passive

Students often have trouble identifying passive sentences in their own texts. Have students circle the verbs in passive sentences on one to two pages of their grammar literacy papers and record the number. If a student has a large number of passive sentences, he or she may want to reconsider this preference for passive voice since many instructors ask students to avoid using it. Working in small groups, students check each other's pages to make sure that only verbs in passive sentences have been circled.

Ask for students who are willing to share a sentence with the class (I put the sentences on a document viewer). The class could talk about these sentences in terms of the choices available to the writer and how changing the sentences to active voice would affect the text.

FG Activities–Active/Passive

An online resource site (<http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415478168/ch02.asp>) from Routledge offers a good activity for active/passive voice. A text (a Helsinki traffic planning report about urban bicycle lanes) is provided along with the answers (feedback).

You can also use a local newspaper to search for passive sentence constructions. It is instructive to discuss why passive might be deliberately used in certain contexts.

FG Activities-Conjunctive Adverbs

This activity (suggested by Mary Hood, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi) is designed to help students practice distinguishing among common conjunctive adverbs while also giving them practice punctuating compound sentences containing conjunctive adverbs.

Come up with several pairs of independent clauses that when placed together with a conjunctive adverb really illustrate the meaning of the adverb.

Examples:

- *Lucy does not talk much around her peers; **however**, she loves public speaking.*
- *Johnny tends to avoid studying; he, **consequently**, isn't doing well in school.*
- *Monique played videos games in the den. **Meanwhile**, we watched Netflix and ate popcorn in the living room.*

- *I've always found African names interesting; **for example**, a girl born on Monday may be called "Adjo" in Togo, West Africa.*
- *We're looking forward to our hiking trip this weekend; **furthermore**, we're excited to explore a new state park.*

Each student receives eight randomly-ordered independent clauses that clearly have a match within the set (like the clauses in the above example). Provide the students with a bank of commonly used conjunctive adverbs on the board or on a separate sheet of paper. Ask the students to match the independent clauses, using an appropriate conjunctive adverb to create four compound sentences. The students must correctly punctuate their sentences. Finally, students take turns reading their sentences aloud and evaluating each other's punctuation and choice of conjunctive adverb.

Chapter 3: Sentence Patterns

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce students to common sentence patterns and the terminology associated with them. For future teachers, this terminology is important since they will see it again in their own classrooms.

The terminology in this chapter can be confusing for students. I use visual cues to help students separate the linking verb patterns and terminology from the intransitive/transitive verb patterns and terminology. For instance, I put examples of the three linking verb patterns at a different end of the board from the four intransitive/transitive verb patterns with a big line separating the two groups. Students write sample sentences for each of the seven patterns; however, they must make the subject of the linking verb patterns different from the subject of the intransitive/transitive verb patterns. When discussing the specific patterns, I ask them for their sample sentences.

Chapter 3 The Grammar-Writing Portfolio

GW Portfolio—Linking Verbs