

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is vital to academic and professional success. Students must be able to acquire and refine communication skills, including the ability to speak and write correctly, in order to be successful in school and in the workplace. *Basic Grammar Series* was designed specifically to promote learning for students who require more time to master grammar concepts.

Each of the ten books in *Basic Grammar Series* focuses on a single grammar concept, and lessons are presented with age-appropriate activities at a low readability level for ease of understanding and comprehension. Each book builds upon skills learned in previous books, reinforcing earlier learning while introducing new concepts.

Each book contains several activity sheets, which can be completed alone or in a small group, in class or at home. These activity sheets have clear and simple rules, instructions, and activities that can include manipulating letters and words, understanding pictorial clues, and solving problems. Additionally, each book contains multiple assessment activities, designed to measure students' mastery of skills and concepts. These assessments follow the format of a standardized test, and require students to eliminate incorrect options, choose the correct answer, and fill in the appropriate circle. The assessment activities can also be used as pretests to determine students' prior knowledge of specific skills.

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

Teaching grammar skills, strategies, and rules to students with reading and writing difficulties, as well as to English as a Second Language (ESL) students, is vital according to recent research. Students with better textual intelligence are better readers, writers, and communicators.

"Textual intelligence (TI) ... refers to our knowledge about how texts ... work. TI requires that students understand the difference between usage—where and when, or under what conditions a word or its meaning is appropriately used—and grammar—the rules that govern the structural relationships between words in sentences" (Burke, 2001, p. 57). Students must understand how words and sentence structures work in order to write well and to understand others' writing.

As The National Council of Teachers of English (1998–2005) stated, grammar is the "language that lets us talk about language. It names the type of words and word groups that comprise sentences in English and other languages. It helps with understanding what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, interesting, and precise It lets us understand that all languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns" (para. 2).

Larsen-Freeman (1997) noted, "While grammar can be thought of as static knowledge, it can also be considered a process The goal is for students to be able to use grammar in an unself-conscious fashion to achieve their communicative ends. As with any skill, achieving this goal takes practice" (p. 5). However, "We know that the learning curve for grammatical structures is not a smoothly ascending linear one, but rather is characterized by peaks and valleys, backslidings and restructurings" (p. 4). Therefore, "If the goals of language instruction include teaching students to use grammar accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately, then a compelling case can be made for teaching grammar" (p. 6).

Basic Grammar Series includes instruction in specific areas of grammar through meaningful and appropriate activities. When used as a supplemental resource, *Basic Grammar Series* can be an effective way to teach, reinforce, and review the skills students need in order to develop grammar awareness in their writing and to strengthen their reading comprehension.

The activities in *Basic Grammar Series* are designed so students can evaluate and apply grammar skills. Hudson (2001) said activities that incorporate these strategies “feed much more directly into the child’s growing repertoire of productive skills than exercises in grammatical analysis do. In short, they are more closely integrated into the teaching of writing, so the skills acquired in isolation are more likely to transfer directly into a usable skill” (para. 13).

Basic Grammar Series meets both state and national standards regarding language skills, including Standards for the English Language Arts, sponsored by The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. As students complete the activities in this book, they will

- learn and use a variety of grammar strategies to improve writing, reading, and communication skills;
- apply knowledge of language structure and language conventions, including sentence structures, types of sentences, parts of speech, and subject/verb agreement;
- develop competency in the English language arts for those students whose first language is not English; and
- use spoken, written, and visual language to improve writing, reading, and speaking skills.

Burke, J. (2001). Developing students’ textual intelligence through grammar. *Voices from the Middle*, 8(3), 56-61. Retrieved October 28, 2005, from <http://www.ncte.org/library/files/Free/Journals/vm/VM0083Developing.pdf>

Grammar. (1998–2005). Urbana, IL: The National Council of Teachers of English. Retrieved October 28, 2005 from <http://www.ncte.org/collections/grammar>

Hudson, R. (2001). Grammar teaching and writing skills: The research evidence. *Syntax in the Schools*, 17, 1-6. Retrieved October 28, 2005, from <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/writing.htm>

Larsen-Freeman, D. (1997). Grammar and its teaching: Challenging the myths. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved October 28, 2005, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED406829>

STANDARDS COVERED

Basic Grammar Series – Capitalization meets the following standards:

- Students will learn and use a variety of grammar strategies.
- Students will recognize and identify capital letters.
- Students will determine when to use capital letters.
- Students will correctly order sentences.
- Students will correctly use capitalization and proper nouns.
- Students will use a map to answer questions.
- Students will correctly capitalize days of the week, months of the year, and special days.

CAPITALIZATION

Objectives

- Students will locate capital letters.
- Students will identify words that should be capitalized.
- Students will capitalize words in writing.

Vocabulary

capital letters – uppercase letters used in certain situations

Suggested Activities

Introduce the rules for capitalization by writing sentences on the board. Use a different color for any letter that is capitalized.

Write a list of common and proper nouns on the board. Have student volunteers come up to the board to circle the capital letters.

Have students look through the yellow pages. As they read ads, have them determine why some of the words in each ad are capitalized.

Have students read short books in small groups. Ask them to pay attention to the capital letters in the story as they read. After they finish the story, students should determine the reasons those words were capitalized.