

GRAMMAR WORKOUT

28 Lessons, Exercises, and Activities to Jump-Start Your Writing

TEACHER RESOURCE BOOK

Catherine DePino, Ed.D

J. WESTON
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To the Teacher

Grammar Workout offers grammar and writing instruction to on-level populations of middle-school students and to remedial high-school and adult learners—including ESL students and those with limited language proficiency. The book's approach is holistic in that every grammatical concept is linked with a writing assignment (which complies with local, state, and national standards guidelines) and to a sequence of learning activities that appeal to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Activities also target multiple intelligences; students are asked to write, draw, sing, and create skits and puzzles to reinforce grammatical concepts.

Some Key Features of the Student Activity Text

The Think About It section, in each lesson in the student activity text, introduces each point of grammar with short, simple explanations. A short poem included in this teacher resource book often accompanies each lesson and reinforces a key concept. After you introduce each unit and go over the examples, you can have students recite the poems individually or chorally. Use the poems to highlight the newly learned grammatical concepts and to test students' knowledge after presenting the information.

Listening skills are constantly reinforced in the activities; students are often asked to listen to and record information presented by their classmates during cumulative reviews and various activities contained in both the student text and this teacher book.

In the Web Connection segments of this book, students are asked to use the Internet in preparation for the homework assignments, both as a resource for documenting their writing and as a tool for prewriting and editing their assignments. Partners who work together in class on various activities will continue this relationship as e-mail partners; they will e-mail one another with ideas for writing and suggestions for revisions. (You will need to be sensitive to individual students' circumstances; for students with no computer at home, perhaps you can arrange for regular use of school computers.)

Picture It sections give partners and groups the opportunity to work together on the cumulative lessons. If most students have difficulty understanding the concepts in a lesson, you can continue to have them work together as partners or in groups on the Practice sections. However, if you find that students understand the grammar, you may want to count the Practices as quizzes or tests. Similarly, you may want to count the Relay Races (cumulative reviews which appear at the conclusion of each unit) as major assessments. The program is flexible—*you* decide what is best for your students, since you are most familiar with their needs and abilities. A note regarding scoring: all Practices and Relay Races are worth 10 points unless other-

wise stated. Because they are easy to score, the Practices and Relay Races readily lend themselves to testing situations.

Finally, the rubrics interspersed throughout the student activity text constitute an important part of writing improvement and assessment. You can use them to assess final drafts of homework assignments. Likewise, encourage students to use the rubrics as guidelines *before writing* and as a self-assessment tool *before revising their writing*. These rubrics will help students look at their own and one another's writing more objectively. If you want, you can also use them as models for creating your own rubrics that better meet your own classroom needs. Encourage partners and groups to create their own rubrics for homework assignments that don't list rubrics. Advise students to use the rubrics to give an overall impression of a piece of writing. They should be able to decide fairly quickly if the writing merits a certain score.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important role in *Grammar Workout*. Ask students to keep a *Grammar Workout* portfolio. Encourage them to decorate their portfolios with markers, glitter, drawings, photographs, or cartoons.

They can keep homework assignments and assessments in these portfolios. Also, have students purchase a slim notebook or a folder with pockets for their class notes, which they will store in their portfolios. One section of the portfolio can be set aside for students' questions that arise as they move through each lesson. You can also have students attach parent-teacher communication pages to their portfolios so that parents or guardians can monitor their children's progress and discuss concerns as they come up. Display portfolios during parent-teacher conferences.

Unit 1:

Spring into Action with Verbs

Lesson 1: Action Verbs

Introductory Procedure

A number of lessons in this teacher resource book begin with a simple poem geared to auditory learners. Have students listen to each poem and take turns reciting it aloud; this helps to introduce and reinforce the principles in each lesson.

Poem

Maria baked a cake.

Cindy painted the house.

Billy cooked a steak.

Miguel trapped the mouse.

Write the poem on the board. Have the class read the poem chorally, or ask a student to read the poem aloud while the class follows. As students identify the action verbs (*baked, painted, cooked, trapped*), underline them.

1. Ask students to act out other action verbs for the class. Although it may prove more of a challenge, some students may want to demonstrate action verbs that show mental action rather than physical action, using verbs like *think, remember, believe*.
2. Ask the students to identify which verbs their classmates are acting out.
3. Write the action verbs on the chalkboard. Have students copy them into their notebooks. Ask them to keep a list in their notebooks of actions they observe people doing in the next few days.

Introductory Poem: Writing Application

(Groups)

1. Have students form groups. Ask them to write short poems containing action verbs. The poems don't have to rhyme.
2. Students can recite poems to the class. Have them highlight the action verbs and illustrate the poems with drawings or pictures from magazines. Post the poems.

Picture It

(Groups)

1. After completing the Picture It, students can meet in groups to think of action verbs that describe things they have done in school or in an after-school activity. You can use the example in the student book of taking a test. Other examples students may want to use are participating in gym class, eating lunch in the cafeteria, playing on a team, going to a meeting, or watching a program in the auditorium.
2. Ask groups to compile a list of the action verbs related to the activities they choose.
3. Have individuals write short paragraphs using the action verbs. Group members can exchange papers to highlight action verbs.
4. Each group chooses the paragraph which they think exemplifies the best use of action verbs to read aloud to the class.

Answer Key

gave, sleep, growled, shook, wanted, run, passed, pointed, start, studied, show, do, answered, handed, worked, said, jumped, shouted, felt

Practice

(Partners)

1. After students complete the exercise, ask them to work with a partner to substitute other action verbs in the sentences. (A student might choose the verb *tossed* for number 5, for example.) Students with limited language proficiency can use a simplified thesaurus to help them find synonyms. Students who are on a more advanced level can use a regular thesaurus or one on the computer to help generate synonyms.
2. As a closing activity, have students tell the class the verbs they substituted.

Answer Key

1. drove 2. shared/ate 3. tasted/ate 4. ate 5. threw 6. feed
7. take 8. order 9. share 10. pay

More Practice

1. Before students begin this assignment, discuss the importance of choosing *the best answer*, a skill they'll need for standardized tests. Talk about what constitutes an appropriate choice when they're faced with making a decision about the advisability of choosing one word over another.
2. Help them get used to asking questions such as: *What fits here? What have you heard said before in similar situations? What sounds best?*
3. As you go over the answers, ask students to tell you which context clues prompted them to choose one answer over another. In number 1 considering the fact that "they couldn't wait," makes *raced* the best answer. In number 2 Mom's concern about the coming rain makes *urged* the best answer.

Answer Key

1. b 2. a 3. b 4. c 5. a 6. c 7. b 8. a 9. c 10. b

Additional Activities

Play Beat the Clock with Action Verbs

1. Compete in teams of two to four against another team.
2. The teacher sets the timer for ten minutes.
3. The teams that write the most action verbs win.

Follow-up (Partners)

Ask students to meet with partners to write stories using the action words they brainstormed for Beat the Clock. ESL students can dictate stories or tape them for later review.

See and Describe (Groups)

1. Have students bring a variety of old magazines to school. Work in groups of four. Each person in the group finds four pictures in magazines that show people engaged in an activity.
2. Students will brainstorm strong action words to describe actions portrayed in the pictures and compile a list of these verbs.
3. Groups will write a story using all the action verbs in their list. Then they will use pictures from the magazines or their own drawings to illustrate the story. They will highlight all the action verbs.
4. They will make decorative covers for their stories and read them to the class, who will record action verbs from the story as they listen to the reader.
5. As a follow-up, a group member will write all the action verbs from the story on the board in case the class missed any. The class will add all the groups' strong action verbs to their lists and keep them in their grammar portfolios.

Web Connection

A couple of days before assigning the homework, ask students to research information on the web about a hobby they have or one they'd enjoy having. Ask them to bring in one or two sources about their hobbies and to highlight at least five strong action verbs in each article. Ask students to list the sources of their information. Discuss the importance of citing sources even when they paraphrase information.

Writing Connection

1. Introduce the writing process, which students will use in this book and in all the different kinds of writing they'll do throughout their school years. These are the steps they'll follow: prewriting (thinking, brainstorming, using their imaginations); organizing and outlining (brief outline); writing a rough draft (getting ideas down on paper); proofreading and revising (looking at content and style to improve both); and publishing (sharing their writing with the class and others).
2. Explain that even though they won't always have a lot of time to follow all steps of the writing process in school and in state and local writing assessments, they can turn to this streamlined version of the process when the situation warrants it. Emphasize the importance of setting aside a few minutes at the beginning of a testing session to write a brief word or phrase outline and a few minutes at the end to revise for content and style. Those few minutes can make a big difference in the finished product.
3. Discuss how making a brief outline will help simplify the writing process. Before beginning to write, students will write a topic sentence and write three or four points related to it (supporting details) that they'd like to discuss. They can also jot down ideas for their conclusion. It's helpful to number each point at this stage. (They don't have to write a formal outline since in testing situations there often isn't enough time.)

To streamline the process further, they can also state their ideas in words or phrases rather than complete sentences. When they are ready to write, they can juggle the numbers of the ideas they wrote into a logical order. Mention the use of transitions, which tie sentences and paragraphs together.

4. Discuss the many ways to develop a topic sentence. Students can use sensory details to make the topic come alive for their readers. For an essay that requires research, they can back up their topic sentences with facts and statistics. One of the most common ways of developing a topic sentence is by using examples and anecdotes, short accounts of entertaining incidents.

Homework: Something I Enjoy Doing

Preliminary Activity (Entire Class)

1. In preparation for the homework assignment, ask your students how using strong action verbs makes writing more interesting and exciting. Also discuss how a paragraph must have a beginning, middle, and end like any good story they've read. To reinforce this skill, ask volunteers to tell a joke or to relate a short anecdote from their own experiences. Then have the class tell you what constitutes the beginning, middle, and end of each story told.
2. For homework, students will write a paragraph of four to five sentences using four or five strong action verbs. Tell students that they and you will use rubrics to revise and evaluate their writing throughout this course. Explain that a rubric gives teachers a fair way to grade student writing. More importantly, it helps students evaluate their own and each other's writing before the final revision.
3. Talk to students about the standards for each piece of writing before they begin the assignment so that they'll be mindful of the criteria for evaluation as they write and revise.

Follow-up

(Partners)

1. After using the overhead projector to explain the scoring rubric and demonstrating how to use it on a student paper, have students use the rubric to assess one another's papers.
2. The next day have the students read their paragraphs to the class. Have the class write down at least two strong action verbs as they listen to each story.

Lesson 2: Run-on Sentences

Think About It

(Entire class)

1. Have students read aloud all of the examples of run-on sentences in this lesson.
2. Ask those listening what impression they received hearing the run-ons read aloud. (Some possible answers are the reader sounded breathless, the sentences seemed to ramble on, the sentences didn't make sense.)

Picture It

(Partners)

1. After students complete the exercise, ask them to work with partners to correct the six run-on sentences in the Picture It in at least two ways.
2. Afterwards, have a class discussion in which students offer a variety of methods to correct the sentences.

Answer Key

1. S 2. RO (Ebenezer) 3. S 4. RO (Meatball) 5. S 6. RO (name—first one)
7. RO (chief) 8. RO (pretty—first one) 9. S 10. RO (different)

Practice

(Groups)

1. After scoring the Practice, ask students to work in groups to correct the run-on sentences in at least two additional ways for each sentence.
2. They will write the ways they corrected the error (*two separate sentences, conjunction, etc.*) in front of each sentence and include them in a booklet with a catchy title. They can illustrate their booklet covers and their answers using caricatures or cartoon figures related to sentence content.
3. After a class discussion about the different ways they corrected the run-ons, groups will hand in their booklets for a portfolio project grade.