

# Ten-Minute Grammar Grabbers



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# Introduction

Although the study of grammar goes in and out of fashion, most accomplished writers and editors agree on this: **understanding grammar is a vital step in language mastery.**

The reason is simple: English is like a game. As with chess, basketball and other activities, players must know the rules and the jargon so that they can interact with the other players. This knowledge also makes possible self-evaluation.

What has this got to do with grammar? Everything! *Grammar* is the name we give to the rules and definitions of language.

## Learning to love grammar

No-one would enjoy studying the rules of tennis but never playing the game. Likewise, studying grammar outside the context of reading and writing is a bore. But integrating grammar within the humanities can be interesting and even fun.

That's the idea behind *Ten-Minute Grammar Grabbers*. Through quick and easy projects, students learn sentence basics while using language creatively. These real-world applications include:

- composing mini autobiographies
- inventing titles
- giving directions
- hunting for language patterns in literature
- using the dictionary as a research tool
- writing stories that reinforce grammar concepts

## How to use this book

*Ten-Minute Grammar Grabbers* is divided into two sections:

- The first section, **Parts of speech**, covers the basic terminology needed to analyse words as used in sentences. Students will discover how nouns, adjectives, verbs and other forms of expression capture meaning.
- The second section, **Sentences**, introduces the three main uses of sentences (stating information, asking questions, giving commands) and the various forms of sentences such as simple and compound sentences.

Throughout the book, each lesson features an activity that takes only minutes to learn. You'll find a brief introduction plus step-by-step directions. In most cases, the only materials needed are paper and pencil.

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Frequently, the work can be done cooperatively in groups of two or three. If time permits, students can share their efforts in small groups or with the class.

Follow-up pages provide additional resources, for example, a sample dictionary page that prepares students for exploring real dictionaries. You'll also find models of the assignments, e.g. a verb-focused biography.

### **Beyond ten minutes**

Accompanying each quick activity is an extension project designed to expand student understanding of the given concept. These enrichment challenges lead to picture books, stories, reports and other creations.

### **Additional resources**

At the end of the book, you'll find a variety of materials used in many activities, for example, a list of sentence patterns, plus a simple method for diagramming sentences. The section features a reproducible 'Grammar guide' that students can refer to throughout the year. This guide includes definitions, examples, rules and advice.

The resources section also suggests strategies for teaching students learning English as a second language.

### **Where to begin**

The study of grammar doesn't have a clear beginning or ending. To understand verbs, you need to encounter nouns. To grasp sentence structure, you must be aware of sentence function.

This means that you can start anywhere. That's why these activities are listed in alphabetical order. However, those projects that appear early in the book introduce basic terms. Thus, if grammar learning is new to your students, you might wish to start with the first few activities.

A final hint: each part of the book begins with a noticeboard that defines terms. If you put up such a board ahead of time, you'll find it handy for introducing concepts and later reinforcing them.

# Part 1.

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## Parts of speech

English is a melting-pot language, enriched by people and cultures from around the world. One of the language's great strengths is its vast vocabulary, estimated at about a million words!

Amazingly, all of these words – from 'a' to 'antidisestablishmentarianism' – fit into just nine basic categories. These are known as the 'parts of speech'. Each category represents a different way words are used to convey meaning. Once students grasp the nine fundamental parts, they'll be better prepared to incorporate new words they encounter.

The activities that follow are designed to make the nine parts of speech concrete. The noticeboard on the next page can set the stage for these activities. The idea is to represent visually the eight linguistic categories. You might point to the board when introducing one of the parts or when reinforcing the concept.

## Parts-of-speech noticeboard

