

Teaching Language Structures with Reading For All Learners Sets 4+

Teaching language structures in early literacy through connected text passages allows young learners to see language in context, making it more meaningful and easier to understand. This approach helps students not only decode words and read fluently but also develop a deeper understanding of how language works in communication. Research consistently supports the use of integrated, contextualized instruction over isolated grammar lessons for language acquisition.

This guide outlines a **specific instructional sequence** that teachers can follow to teach language structures using the Reading For All Learners connected text practice passages.

Why Use Connected Text Passages?

- **Contextualized Learning:** Students see language structures used in real-world contexts.
- **Increased Engagement:** Authentic texts (stories, poems, informational texts) capture students' interest and motivate learning.
- **Better Retention:** Language features are better remembered when students encounter them repeatedly within rich, meaningful text rather than in isolation.
- **Enhanced Comprehension:** Teaching structures within context helps students understand how different language elements (e.g., word order, punctuation, clauses) contribute to meaning.

Evidence-Based Practices for Teaching Language Structures

- **Explicit Instruction:** Clearly define and model each language structure.
- **Scaffolded Support:** Provide gradual support as students move from teacher-guided activities to independent practice.
- **Repetition and Practice:** Frequent opportunities to encounter and manipulate language structures in various contexts.
- **Interactive Activities:** Engage students in collaborative tasks (e.g., sentence construction, peer editing) to reinforce learning.
- **Feedback:** Offer constructive feedback, both corrective and reinforcing, to help students internalize structures.

Instructional Sequence for Teaching Language Structures Using Connected Text

This sequence breaks down key language structures and the evidence-based steps to teach them in context. **These steps should be followed using passages the learners have completed reading for accuracy and fluency at least one time. Prior to instruction teachers should review the connected text passages and select examples pertinent to the specific skill being taught. Teachers do not have to use the same passage for each day's instruction.**

Writing for All Learners provides lesson parts that can be integrated with the below suggested writing practice.

1. Sentence Types and Word Order

Objective: Students will recognize and produce different types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative) and practice proper word order.

Text Selection: Choose a text with clear examples of different sentence types.

Instructional Sequence:

1. Introduction (Day 1)

- **Model:** Read a passage aloud. Point out the sentence types. "This is a statement: 'The dog is playing.' This is a question: 'Is the dog playing?'"
- **Demonstration:** Display a sentence on the board and ask students to identify the type. "This is a question because it starts with 'is.'"

2. Guided Practice (Day 1)

- **Interactive Read-Aloud:** Read a short passage and ask students to raise their hands when they recognize a sentence type. "What kind of sentence is this? Why?"
- **Sentence Sorting:** Provide sentences from the text and ask students to sort them into categories: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, or imperative.

3. Independent Practice (Day 2)

- **Sentence Creation:** Have students write their own sentences in different categories, using sentence starters (e.g., "Tell me something about a cat" for declarative sentences).
- **Partner Work:** In pairs, students exchange sentences and identify sentence types in each other's work.

4. Review and Reinforcement (Day 3)

- **Sentence Expansion:** Start with a simple sentence and ask students to expand it into a different type (e.g., "The dog plays." → "Does the dog play?").
 - **Discussion:** Review the key sentence types and their purpose in writing.
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2. Parts of Speech: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs

Objective: Students will recognize and use nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in sentences.

Text Selection: Choose a short narrative or descriptive text with rich vocabulary, such as a picture book or a short story.

Instructional Sequence:

1. Introduction (Day 1)

- **Model:** Read aloud a passage and highlight nouns (e.g., "dog, cat"), verbs (e.g., "run, jump"), adjectives (e.g., "big, red"), and adverbs (e.g., "quickly, slowly").
 - **Explicit Instruction:** Define each part of speech. Show how each one functions in a sentence: "Nouns name things, verbs show action, adjectives describe things, and adverbs describe how things happen."
2. **Guided Practice (Day 2)**
- **Sentence Dissection:** Provide sentences from the text and ask students to identify parts of speech. For example, "The large dog runs quickly."
 - Students will circle nouns, underline verbs, highlight adjectives, and mark adverbs.
 - **Interactive Practice:** Have students work in pairs to write sentences using specific parts of speech. "Write a sentence with a verb and an adverb."
3. **Independent Practice (Day 3)**
- **Sentence Creation:** Ask students to write a sentence using a noun, verb, adjective, and adverb.
 - **Peer Review:** Have students exchange sentences and identify the parts of speech in each other's work.
4. **Review and Reinforcement (Day 4)**
- **Storytelling:** Have students create a short story or describe a scene, ensuring they use a variety of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
 - **Class Discussion:** Reinforce the function of each part of speech in making the story interesting and clear.

3. Subject-Verb Agreement

Objective: Students will recognize and apply subject-verb agreement in sentences.

Text Selection: Choose a text with simple and compound sentences (e.g., short stories or informational text with clear subject-verb pairs).

Instructional Sequence:

1. **Introduction (Day 1)**
 - **Model:** Read sentences aloud, emphasizing subject-verb agreement. "The dog runs. The dogs run."
 - **Explicit Instruction:** Explain that singular subjects take singular verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs.
2. **Guided Practice (Day 2)**
 - **Interactive Read-Aloud:** As you read, pause to check for subject-verb agreement. "Does this sentence make sense? 'The cat run'—is that correct?"
 - **Corrective Teaching:** Write incorrect sentences on the board and have students correct them. "The girl play." → "The girl **plays**."
3. **Independent Practice (Day 3)**
 - **Sentence Correction:** Provide students with incorrect sentences and ask them to correct the subject-verb agreement. "The birds flies in the sky."
 - **Sentence Creation:** Ask students to write their own sentences, paying attention to subject-verb agreement.
4. **Review and Reinforcement (Day 4)**

- **Sentence Creation in Pairs:** Students work in pairs to write short dialogues or sentences that demonstrate subject-verb agreement.
 - **Class Sharing:** Have students share their sentences and discuss how subject-verb agreement works in each case.
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4. Using Conjunctions to Create Compound Sentences

Objective: Students will use conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or) to connect simple sentences into compound sentences.

Text Selection: Choose a text with a mix of simple and compound sentences (e.g., narrative stories or short expository texts).

Instructional Sequence:

1. Introduction (Day 1)

- **Model:** Read aloud a passage, highlighting sentences connected with conjunctions. "The cat is black, **but** the dog is brown."
- **Explicit Instruction:** Teach students how conjunctions link ideas. Show examples of "and," "but," and "or" in sentences.

2. Guided Practice (Day 2)

- **Sentence Combining:** Provide students with two simple sentences. "The cat is sleeping. The dog is barking." Ask them to combine the sentences using a conjunction. "The cat is sleeping, **but** the dog is barking."
- **Interactive Practice:** Have students work in pairs to combine sentences using different conjunctions.

3. Independent Practice (Day 3)

- **Sentence Creation:** Ask students to write their own compound sentences using conjunctions.
- **Peer Review:** Have students swap sentences and check each other's use of conjunctions.

4. Review and Reinforcement (Day 4)

- **Storytelling with Conjunctions:** Ask students to write a short story, making sure to use conjunctions to link ideas.
 - **Class Discussion:** Discuss how using conjunctions helps make sentences more complex and interesting.
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5. Punctuation

Objective: Students will use basic punctuation marks (periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas) correctly in sentences.

Text Selection: Select a short narrative or descriptive passage with varied punctuation.

Instructional Sequence:

1. Introduction (Day 1)

- **Model:** Read a passage aloud, emphasizing punctuation marks. "The cat jumped! Did you see that? The cat jumped quickly."
- **Explicit Instruction:** Explain the purpose of different punctuation marks (e.g., periods for statements, question marks for questions, exclamation points for excitement).

2. Guided Practice (Day 2)

- **Sentence Marking:** Provide sentences from the text and ask students to identify and mark punctuation marks. "The dog barked loudly, but no one heard."
- **Interactive Writing:** As a class, write sentences on the board, inserting punctuation marks.

3. Independent Practice (Day 3)

- **Punctuation Practice:** Provide students with unpunctuated sentences and have them add the correct punctuation.
- **Peer Review:** Students exchange writing and check each other's punctuation.

4. Review and Reinforcement (Day 4)

- **Punctuation Game:** Play a punctuation bingo or matching game where students match sentences with the correct punctuation marks.

Conclusion

Teaching language structures through connected text passages allows students to internalize grammar and syntax rules within authentic contexts. By using this instructional sequence—starting with simple structures and progressively introducing more complex ones—you will help students develop a comprehensive understanding of language use that will support their reading, writing, and oral communication. Through modeling, guided practice, independent work, and regular review, students can master these foundational skills and become confident, effective communicators.

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