 Teaching grammar in Years 7-10

Through the NSW English K-10 syllabus

Implementing new curriculum – building capacity

Welcome

Welcome to the Teaching grammar in Years 7-10 through the NSW English K-10 syllabus resource.

This resource is designed to assist teachers to:

* develop an understanding of how to contextualise the teaching of grammar through the study of key English concepts and texts
* learn about the new and changed content of the English K-10 Syllabus relating to grammar and its ability to assist their students’ engagement with and appreciation of the English language
* build your understanding of grammatical terms such as embedded clauses, nominalisation and cohesion using resources found within this professional learning resource.

Overview

This resource explores grammar in the NSW K-10 English syllabus (7-10). It is organised into three main sections.

Grammar tool-kit

This section gives you the chance to familiarise yourself with the grammatical features specified in the 7-10 English syllabus. You will become equipped with your own ‘grammar toolkit’.

You will engage with definitions of key grammatical features, watch videos explaining how to teach these in context and complete online quizzes to consolidate your knowledge.

Grammar in context

This section looks at strategies for embedding the teaching of grammatical features to improve responding and composing in English.

You will access documents with suggested strategies for the teaching of grammatical features in the context of teaching with texts and concepts.

Your turn

This section gives you the opportunity to consider how you will embed the teaching of grammatical features in your Stage 4 and 5 programs.

You will put the new skills and knowledge regarding the teaching of grammar into practice.

Rationale

The purpose of this resource is to build secondary teachers’ capacity to engage deeply with grammar in a meaningful context as required by the English K-10 syllabus. This will provide you with the skills, strategies and knowledge to confidently embed the teaching of grammar in the English classroom to enable students to understand, use and appreciate the English language.

Grammar tool-kit

As teachers we all have varying experiences with grammar. The appropriate use of grammar is a powerful tool in assisting composers to shape and create meaning in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretative and critical. Whilst there are more explicit references to grammar in the English K-10 Syllabus, it is important to keep in mind that the function of grammar is to help students effectively respond to and compose a variety of texts. The syllabus does encourage the contextualised teaching of grammatical features in English.

Watch

[Beverly Derewianka explaining the importance of contextualising the teaching of grammar](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/29afd5ad-ccca-4be7-ac64-a617753bc8e2/1/01_teaching_grammar.wmv) (WMV – 04:38 – 31.9MB)

Grammar continuum

Explore

Activity 1 – Grammar continuum

The purpose of this activity is to familiarise yourself with the new and changed syllabus content relating to the teaching of grammar. The first thing you need to do is engage directly with relevant parts of the syllabus.

The document [Grammar continuum](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/6a4802e1-da67-4d78-b1d2-e999b2bfb6ca/1/grammar_stages_3-5.pdf) will be useful for you as it shows the Stages 3-5 English syllabus outcomes relating to grammar as a continuum. Read through this continuum to familiarise yourself with these outcomes but remember that it is best to always return to the complete syllabus when planning your programs.

KWL grammar

Use the [KWL table](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/d42e9737-ac15-4fee-8cd0-9f78b0f9e018/1/KWL-grammar.doc) to identify the prior knowledge of you and your students (Know) as well as areas of need for you and your students (Want to know) for the new and changed grammar content.

Download

Grammar definition toolkit

In the previous task you used a KWL table to identify what you want to know about the syllabus outcomes relating to grammar. Download [the grammar definition tool-kit](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/36da47ff-ecc3-4a99-a986-8f4517c1b3a3/1/grammar-tool-kit-definitions.pdf) document which is a list of definitions for grammatical terms explicitly referred to in Stages 3-5 of the English K-10 syllabus.

Resource tip

A good resource to develop a complete appreciation for grammar and the integral role it plays in meaning-making is ‘A new grammar companion for teachers’ by Beverly Derewianka. This book is full of clear definitions and examples of all key grammatical features and gives insight into how an appreciation of grammar helps students become better writers and readers. Beverly Derewianka’s previous book, ‘A grammar companion for primary teachers’ (1998) is also a very useful resource. ‘Conversations about text: teaching grammar using literary texts’ (2010) and ‘Conversations about text 2: teaching grammar using factual texts’ (2011) by Joanne Rossbridge and Kathy Ruston provides practical examples of how to use grammar in an English lesson or classroom.

Secondary teachers might find ‘Working grammar: an introduction for secondary English’ teachers by Sally Humphrey, Kristina Love and Louise Droga useful as it uses texts and activities that are more appropriate for high school classrooms.

Grammatical features in context

It’s now time to engage with resources and complete activities designed to strengthen your capacity to help your students understand the new and changed grammatical features specified in the English syllabus for Stages 4 and 5.

Over the next few pages you will watch videos of Beverly Derewianka as she explains how to teach key grammatical features in context.

Clausal relationships

A clause is a complete message or thought expressed in words. A clausal relationship is how these thoughts and messages relate to each other within and between sentences.

Watch

[Beverly Derewianka explaining clausal relationships](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/29afd5ad-ccca-4be7-ac64-a617753bc8e2/1/02_Clausal_Relationship.wmv) (WMV – 01:29 – 12.4MB)

Complex sentences

A complex sentence contains a main (or independent) clause and one or more subordinate (or dependent) clauses.

Watch

[Beverly Derewianka explaining complex sentences](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/29afd5ad-ccca-4be7-ac64-a617753bc8e2/1/03_Complex_sentences.wmv) (WMV – 01:41 – 12.5MB).

Ellipsis and extended reference

Ellipsis is the omission of words often replaced by three dots. However, in its broadest sense, ellipsis can simply be the omission of word/s or phrase/s e.g. “Can I have one?” (of them).

Watch

[Beverly Derewianka explaining ellipsis and extended reference](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/29afd5ad-ccca-4be7-ac64-a617753bc8e2/1/04_ellipses_extended_reference.wmv) (WMV – 02:08 – 16.4MB).

Understanding the complexity of language

To understand the complexity of language you need to know how different elements of grammar work together within texts to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Watch

[Beverly Derewianka explaining how elements of grammar communicate meaning](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/29afd5ad-ccca-4be7-ac64-a617753bc8e2/1/05_understand_complex.wmv) (WMV – 03:09 – 22.1MB).

Online resources and quizzes

Online resources

* The University of Sydney has an excellent website called [The Write Site](http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/m1/m1u1/index.htm) which includes a module on grammar that has a very good range of exercises and explanations suitable for teachers.
* Online Writing Lab, [The Learning Centre at D’Youville College](http://depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/grammar_topics.htm) has an extensive range of quizzes and excercises to test your knowledge of key grammatical features.

Further resources

* Derewianka, B. (2011) A new grammar companion for teachers, e:lit, PETAA, Sydney.
* Humphrey, S., Droga, L., S. Feez (2012) Grammar and meaning, PETAA, Sydney
* Humphrey, S., Love, C. & Droga, L. (2011) Working grammar: an introduction for secondary English teachers, Pearson, Melbourne
* Rossbridge, J. & Rushton, K. (2010) Conversations about text: teaching grammar using literary texts, e:lit, PETAA, Sydney.
* Rossbridge, J. & Rushton, K. (2011) Conversations about text 2: teaching grammar using factual texts, e:lit, PETAA, Sydney.

Discuss

Reflection of KWL

Reflect on the statements you added to the ‘W’ column of your KWL chart. Add what you have learned from the last two activities to the ‘L’ column.

Grammar in context

Now that you have familiarised yourself with the grammatical features specified in the Stage 3-5 English syllabus it is time to consider the different ways in which the teaching of grammatical features can be embedded into your teaching with texts and concepts.

The following PDFs provide you with strategies and examples for the teaching of grammatical features in the 7-10 English classroom.

Explore

Read through the following three PDFs:

* [Grammar and Informative Texts](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/08465588-5f4c-4368-8644-e1eb17085f70/1/Grammar-and-Informative-texts.doc)
* [Grammar and Imaginative Texts](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/79774454-0083-45c0-a383-3f9fbb3b2b7d/1/Grammar-and-Imaginative-texts.doc)
* [Grammar and Persuasive Texts](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/2f35d369-5843-4d86-960a-c0fcf51b78ca/1/Grammar-and-Persuasive-texts.doc)

Food for thought

Discuss

Having read the PDFs, discuss these questions with one or more of your English teacher colleagues (if you are working through this resource independently you can write your own personal response to the questions below):

How might we embed the teaching of grammatical features to enhance students’ imaginative, persuasive and informative compositions?

How might we embed the teaching of grammatical features to enhance students’ responses to imaginative, persuasive and informative texts and/or key English concepts?

Download

Download the doc [Grammar Planning](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/5e93f1e2-181c-453f-8ed2-5f05a53083b7/1/Grammar-Planning.docx). Write a brief reflection on the above discussion questions.

Your turn

Summary

During the last two sections you have:

* looked closely at the new and changed Syllabus content relating to grammar
* strengthened your understanding of grammatical features and
* discovered some strategies to help contextualise the teaching of grammatical features.

It is now time to put these skills and knowledge into practice in your classroom.

Explore

1. Select two or three of the grammatical features you earlier identified as weaknesses for your students.
2. Rework one of your existing lessons or a series of lessons to contextualise these new grammatical features within the study of a key English concept or text in Stages 4 or 5.
3. Implement this lesson with one of your classes.
4. Reflect on the success of this lesson using the Your Turn: Lesson Reflection document. Using this insight, modify your lesson/series of lessons to reflect your new knowledge of how to teach grammar in context.