

The parts of speech in 21 weeks!

Background information

What is literacy?

Literacy is the ability to read **and** write. Put simply: knowing how to *read* lets you understand what it is that *others* have to say. Knowing how to *write* lets others understand what it is that *you* have to say. Writing is your voice.

What is grammar?

Grammar is the established rules for speaking and writing a language. **Punctuation** is used in writing to separate words and sentences and to clarify meaning. **Syntax** is the correct order of words. However, to start the journey you must first begin with the basics – **the parts of speech**. The parts of speech are the core of the English language; every word, whether written or spoken, falls within one of the nine categories of the parts of speech, i.e. *prepositions, articles, interjections, adverbs, verbs, conjunctions, adjectives, pronouns, nouns*. Herein lies the stumbling block for many children; they are trying to learn the rules of grammar and punctuation without first having a solid understanding, or comprehension, of the parts of speech.

Why is grammar important?

At the most basic level grammar makes your written work comprehensible. Mastering grammar gives you the power and command of the language and the ability to express your thoughts clearly and positively. During high school you are expected to develop an argument and present your point of view in the most convincing way possible. You will not be able to do this if you have not mastered English, particularly in its written form.

What is the aim of *the parts of speech in 21 weeks*?

The aim of *the parts of speech in 21 weeks* is to reinforce and to practise the basics of grammar at home, much like you do with reading, spelling and times tables. When it comes to teaching children the basics of grammar, both parents and teachers need to be reading from the same page. Parents cannot help if they don't have a simple method they can use at home. This program creates that platform. Children are no longer confined by geographical location or state syllabus, but are now free to practise the basics of grammar anywhere - just like they do with reading, spelling and times tables.

Why can't I rely on grammar and spell check?

You can – but at your own peril. Computers cannot comprehend or interpret a subject; therefore, they are not always reliable. If you were to type the following sentence into a computer, it would accept it as correct. *I insist on eating grandfather before we begin our journey*. Computers will often accept the bizarre – teachers won't. It is important to remember that grammatical errors can lead to clarity errors, which lead to loss of marks. Also, you can't use grammar or spell check during a written exam, so it's best not to become too reliant upon either one in the first place.

How is grammar related to freedom of speech?

There are 7 billion people in the world and less than half of those can read; even fewer can write. In many countries, freedom of speech is not a fundamental right for all, but instead is left in the hands of the educated elite. Democracy is based on freedom of speech for all. It is the essence of any free society. To allow illiteracy to flourish is to squander that right; therefore, as parents, teachers and citizens we each have a duty of care to ensure that all children are literate, and that all children can both read **and** write.

And finally ...

Reading has become the darling of politicians and a media favourite; everyone wants to be associated with reading programs. Writing on the other hand is considered the ugly duckling – the one that no one wants to know about or be associated with. It's time we started to support the ugly duckling, because **knowing how to write is just as important as knowing how to read!**

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The 3 Step Program

Step 1 – The Mnemonic (1 week)

Begins with learning the mnemonic: ***Penny And Isaac Are Very Clever At Playing Nintendo****. It is important that you repeat this saying with your child each day, and as often as possible (especially good for short car trips, e.g. on the way to school or sports etc). When reciting the mnemonic pause after every three words, that way you are emphasising that there are a total of nine words to remember, e.g. ***Penny And Isaac ... pause ... Are Very Clever ... pause ... At Playing Nintendo***. To encourage you to repeat the mnemonic as often as possible you should place it somewhere central in the house, e.g. refrigerator door, study or bedroom. During this time, it is important that children carry around the yellow *parts of speech card* as a prompter for learning the mnemonic.

Step 2 – The Parts of Speech (2 weeks)

This step focuses on learning only the names for each part of speech. Transpose each word in the mnemonic for its partner in the parts of speech, starting off with prepositions, i.e. '***Penny means prepositions***'. It is important that you don't transpose all nine words at the one time but instead learn one a day. By Grade 5 children are already familiar with *adverbs, verbs, conjunctions, adjectives, pronouns and nouns*. These aren't new words – they're ones they already know; and it helps if you point this out to them. The remaining three words; *prepositions, articles and interjections* are less familiar than the other six and may require an additional day in which to learn them. However, don't be tempted to change the order of operation. *Prepositions, articles and interjections* are at the beginning so that children learn the less familiar words first, and then finish off on a strong note with the more familiar words such as nouns. It's a bit like eating the brussel sprouts first to get them over and done with! Again, the yellow *parts of speech card* should be carried around as it helps to transpose the word in the mnemonic for its partner in the parts of speech.

Step 3 – Their Meaning (18 weeks)

Download the free parts of speech screensaver from www.pocketbasics.com (schools participating in the program are also encouraged to download the screensaver). In Step 3 each part of speech is allocated a two-week period (i.e. 9 x 2). During those two weeks recite the definition for that part of speech as often as possible. On cardboard write up and cut out examples for the part of speech you are focusing on and stick them on the walls of the bedroom or study (classroom and library). The parts of speech screensaver is colour coded to aid memory, therefore it is important to use the same corresponding colour for each part of speech, i.e. use pink cardboard for prepositions etc. After a week you may be tempted to rush the program and move on to the next part of speech - don't. The whole purpose of learning the definitions over an 18-week period is to remember them. The key here is *repeat, repeat, repeat!* You wouldn't expect a child to learn all 12 times tables in a short period, so why expect the same when learning the basics of grammar? For those schools and parents jointly participating in the program it is important that schools monitor the progress and remind parents what week they're up to. This can be done via the weekly newsletter or website, e.g. *a reminder to parents, this week we are up to week 11 – adverbs!*

Using the yellow parts of speech card

It is important that you tear out and give to your child the yellow *parts of speech card* in *The Pocket Basics for English and Maths*. The card is small, non-intimidating and has Steps 1 and 2 printed on it. It is integral to the program as it is needed in the first three weeks to help children learn the mnemonic and its partner in the parts of speech.

* Nintendo does not endorse nor is it associated in any way with *the parts of speech in 21 weeks*. The Nintendo name was chosen because of its universal appeal to children. The challenge was to write a mnemonic based on nine letters and one which could be understood by children the world over. It also had to appeal to both boys and girls of different ages, and from different cultures; hence the use of the Nintendo name.

Step 1 – The Mnemonic

Penny

And

Isaac

Are

Very

Clever

At

Playing

Nintendo[®]

Step 2 – The Parts of Speech

Prepositions

Articles

Interjections

Adverbs

Verbs

Conjunctions

Adjectives

Pronouns

Nouns

Step 3 – Their Meaning

Prepositions: tell you where somebody or something is in relation to something else.

Examples: above, before, except, from, in, near, of, since, through, upon, with

Articles: There are only three articles, ‘the’, ‘a’ and ‘an’.

‘The’ is the definite article. ‘A’ and ‘an’ are indefinite articles.

Interjections: are interruptions or words used to express strong feelings.

Examples, aha!, eh?, gosh!, great!, hey!, hi!, hooray!, oh!, oops!, ouch!, phew!

Adverbs: add more detail to a verb. They often end in ‘ly’ and nearly always tell you how something is done.

Examples: almost, badly, completely, entirely, fully, hardly, nearly, never, well

Verbs: are ‘doing’, ‘being’ or ‘having’ words. Verbs describe some form of action; they tell you what is happening.

Examples: agree, be, go, have, invite, laughed, listen, playing, singing, walk

Conjunctions: Are joining words. They are used to connect words or sentences together.

Examples: although, and, because, but, however, if, or, since, unless, when

Adjectives: are words that describe nouns. Adjectives tell you what somebody or something is like.

Examples: angry, brave, Canadian, healthy, handsome, little, old, red, smart

Pronouns: takes the place of nouns.

Examples: anyone, he, I, its, me, my, she, that, this, those, us, who, whom, you

Nouns: are the names of people, places and things. The four types of nouns are: common, collective, abstract and proper.

Examples: ability, Texas, cat, hope, idea, Claire, kindness, milk, sunlight

Test your knowledge

What is a preposition? _____

Examples: _____

What is an article? _____

Examples: _____

What is an interjection? _____

Examples: _____

What is an adverb? _____

Examples: _____

What is a verb? _____

Examples: _____

What is a conjunction? _____

Examples: _____

What is an adjective? _____

Examples: _____

What is a pronoun? _____

Examples: _____

What is a noun? _____

Examples: _____