Language Builders Classroom Library Collection
Norwood House Press

Collection Description

Language Builders helps readers learn the parts of speech by following the lives of fictional characters who realize their writing improves when they understand how words work together to express ideas. Activities in the back of each book review the parts of speech and offer suggestions for additional practice.

The Parts of Speech

The parts of speech are labels given to all words based on their function within the structure of language. The basic parts of speech are:

Adjectives: words that describe a noun or pronoun
Adverbs: words that describe an action or verb
Conjunctions: words or sets of words that help connect and combine words and sentences
Interjections: words that show emotion
Nouns: words that name a person, place, thing, or idea
Prepositions: words that describe how words in a sentence relate to each other; they may show a time or a place relationship
Pronouns: words that take the place of a noun
Verbs: words that show action

A word can be more than one part of speech, depending on how it is used. For example, the word *ships* can be a noun that names a group of large watercraft or a verb that names an action taken to send items from one place to another.

The *ships* left the harbor at daybreak.
This factory *ships* computer parts around the world.

Understanding the parts of speech helps people edit what they've written more effectively. Choosing the right word is important, but so is using that word correctly. Creating an effective piece of writing is like building a house: if you want the structure to look good and stand the test of time, you have to know what you're doing when you build it.

If you want to build an extraordinary house, most people have to hire an architect. An architect has learned how to put the component parts of a building together in such a way that it serves as both shelter and creative expression. In order to do that, an architect has to know the names and uses of all kinds of building materials. That

knowledge combines with the architect's purpose and creativity to enable the creation of a plan. The architect's plan can only become an actual house if he or she knows how to communicate that vision to others.

The same is true for writers: a writer who knows how to use words, which are the raw materials of writing, will be better able to evaluate how well a particular piece of writing is structured. And the only way to do that is to understand how words function and how they work together. Learning the parts of speech teaches writers how words function and gives them terminology to use when talking about language with other writers that enables the discussion to take place in a more specific and coherent way.

Titles in the Writing Builders Classroom Library Collection

1. *Austin and Alex Learn about Adjectives*
2. *Andrew and Allen Learn about Adverbs*
3. *Cailyn and Chloe Learn about Conjunctions*
4. *Iris and Ian Learn about Interjections*
5. *Nathan and Nicole Learn about Nouns*
6. *Patrick and Paula Learn about Prepositions*
7. *Phillip and Penny Learn about Pronouns*
8. *Vivian and Victor Learn about Verbs*

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy emphasize the importance of knowing and correctly using conventions of standard English as an important part of college and career readiness. The standards include understanding the function of and correctly using nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language 3-5

Grade 3 Students	Grade 4 Students	Grade 5 Students
Conventions of Standard English		

1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences. b. Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns. c. Use abstract nouns (e.g., childhood). d. Form and use regular and irregular verbs. e. Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk) verb tenses. f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement. g. Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. h. Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. i. Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.	1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Use relative pronouns (who, whose, whom, which, that) and relative adverbs (where, when, why). b. Form and use the progressive (e.g., I was walking; I am walking; I will be walking) verb tenses. c. Use modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, may, must) to convey various conditions. d. Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., a small red bag rather than a red small bag). e. Form and use prepositional phrases. f. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons. g. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., to, too, two; there, their).	1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences. b. Form and use the perfect (e.g., I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked) verb tenses. c. Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions. d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense. e. Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., either/or, neither/nor).

Tips for Teaching the Parts of Speech in Your Classroom

1. The most important thing about writing is to share ideas with a reader. However, if a reader cannot understand what a writer has written, that writer's ideas will not find an audience. Readers expect text to be written following certain rules and conventions, which includes the parts of speech. It is important to find a balance in your language arts instruction between teaching the craft of writing and the rules of language usage. This will vary depending on what you are required to teach, the needs of your students, and your own particular philosophy of teaching writing.

2. Research shows that teaching grammar does not make for better writers. There have been many brilliant writers in the world with no idea what the parts of speech were called. Conversely, there have been many people who could expertly identify parts of speech but who could not write well at all. However, many education standards and student tests require mastery of the parts of speech. Once again, you will need to find a balance in your instruction so that you are preparing students for testing success without taking away from their willingness, ability, and desire to express themselves in writing.

3. Having a common vocabulary for discussing language can help writers talk to each other about the craft of writing. Knowing the parts of speech and how they work together also makes for more competent and effective editing.

4. The more students write, the more comfortable and confident they will be as writers. It takes confidence in yourself as a writer to be willing and able to edit your own writing or anyone else's writing. Create a classroom where students are encouraged to share their ideas in writing often and where feedback is constructive and purposeful.

5. Help children notice the conventions of writing as readers. Talk about how a writer's facility with language affects a reader's experience with text. Look for examples of effective and ineffective usage in literature, textbooks, newspapers, and everywhere print occurs and share these with students.

6. Learning how language works takes a long time. Learning the parts of speech will not be accomplished in a single lesson or in a single class or during a single year. Expect to review the definitions of the parts of speech and how to use them many times before students will have mastery over them.

7. Teach the parts of speech within a meaningful context, including during mini lessons as part of a writing workshop, in guided writing instruction, or as part of one-on-one conferences.

Additional Resources on Teaching Grammar

Annenberg Learner: Best Practices in Teaching Writing
http://www.learner.org/workshops/middlewriting/images/pdf/HomeBestPrac.pdf

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986.

Fountas, Irene C. & Pinnell, Gay Su. *Guiding Readers and Writers: Grades 3-6.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

National Council of Teachers of English: NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing
http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs

ACTIVITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL BOOKS:

Language Builders: Austin and Alex Learn About Adjectives

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun.

Brilliant, scary, green, small, and *delicious* are examples of adjectives.

1. Make a list of adjectives. Write a word that is an adjective on each line below.

2. Write a paragraph that uses all 12 of the adjectives you listed above. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

3. Circle, underline, or highlight each adjective in your paragraph. (You might have used more adjectives than those you listed in step 1, so check carefully.)

4. In the chart below, list each adjective from your paragraph in the left column. List the noun or pronoun it describes in your paragraph in the right column.

Adjective	**Noun or Pronoun It Describes**

Language Builders: Andrew and Allen Learn About Adverbs

An **adverb** is a word that describes an action or verb.
Gracefully, enthusiastically, frequently, always, and *faster* are examples of adjectives.

1. Make a list of adverbs. Write a word that is an adverb on each line below.

2. Write a paragraph that uses all 8 of the adverbs you listed above. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

3. Circle, underline, or highlight each adverb in your paragraph. (You might have used more adverbs than those you listed in step 1, so check carefully.)

4. In the chart below, list each adjective you used in your paragraph in the correct column.

Adverbs that tell how	**Adverbs that tell when**	**Adverbs that tell where**	**Comparative adverbs**	**Superlative adverbs**

Language Builders: Cailyn and Chloe Learn About Conjunctions

A **conjunction** is a word or set of words that helps connect and combine words and sentences.
All of the words in the box below are conjunctions.

after
although
and
because
before
both
but
either
for
neither
nor
or
since
so
unless
whenever
wherever
yet

1. Write a paragraph that uses as many of the conjunctions from the box as possible. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

2. Circle, underline, or highlight each conjunction in your paragraph.

3. How many conjunctions did you use in your paragraph? _____

Language Builders: Iris and Ian Learn About Interjections

An **interjection** is a word or set of words that shows emotion.

Read each interjection below.
Then write a sentence that goes with each interjection.

Example: **Oh dear!** I just dropped my ring down the drain!

1. Hey!
2. Zap!
3. Ouch!
4. That hurt!
5. Run!
6. Yikes!
7. Um,
8. Cool!
9. Phew!
10. Achoo!
11. Boo!
12. Eek!
13. Hi!
14. Oops!
15. Wow!
16. Yay!
17. What?
18. Bravo!
19. Ha!
20. Drat.

Language Builders: Nathan and Nicole Learn About Nouns

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea.
Child, kitchen, stocking, jealousy, and *Alaska* are examples of nouns.

1. Make a list of nouns. Write a noun on each line below.

2. Write a paragraph that uses all 12 of the nouns you listed above. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

3. Circle, underline, or highlight each noun in your paragraph. (You might have used more nouns than those you listed in step 1, so check carefully.)

4. In the chart below, list each noun you used in your paragraph in the correct column. (Hint: Some nouns might belong in more than one column.)

Proper Nouns	Singular Nouns	Plural Nouns	Concrete Nouns	Abstract Nouns	Possessive Nouns	Compound Nouns	Collective Nouns	Irregular Nouns

Language Builders: Patrick and Paula Learn About Prepositions

A **preposition** is a word that describes how words in a sentence relate to each other.
All of the words in the box below are prepositions.

above
about
across
against
along
among
around
at
before
behind
below
beneath
beside
between
beyond
by
down
during
except
for
from
in
inside
into
like
near
of
off
on
since
to
toward
through
under
until
up
upon
with
within

1. Write a paragraph that uses as many of the prepositions from the box as possible. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

2. Circle, underline, or highlight each preposition in your paragraph.

3. How many prepositions did you use in your paragraph? _____

Language Builders: Phillip and Penny Learn About Pronouns

A **pronoun** is a word that takes the place of a noun.
You, me, he, it, and *them* are examples of pronouns.

1. Write a paragraph on any topic you choose. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

2. Circle each noun in your paragraph. Draw a box around each pronoun.

3. In the left column of the chart below, list each noun you used in your paragraph. In the right column, list the pronoun you would use to replace that noun. Add more rows to the chart if needed.

Noun from my paragraph	Pronoun that would replace it

Language Builders: Vivian and Victor Learn About Verbs

A **verb** is a word that shows action or being.
Learn, agree, clap, drive, and *love* are examples of verbs.

1. Make a list of verbs. Write a word that is a verb on each line below.

2. Write a paragraph that uses at least all 8 of the verbs you listed above. Write on the lines below. Use the back of this paper if you need extra space.

3. Circle, underline, or highlight each verb in your paragraph. (You might have ended up using more verbs than those you listed in step 1, so check carefully.)

4. In the chart below, list each verb you used in your paragraph in the correct column. (Hint: Some verbs might belong in more than one column.)

Action verbs	**Being (or linking) verbs**	**Progressive verbs**	**Past tense verbs**	**Present tense verbs**	**Future tense verbs**	**Progressive tense verbs**