

Unit Organizer—7th and 8th Grade English Grammar Launch

Subject Matter and Relationship to Core Knowledge Sequence:

- ❖ Rather than teach bits of grammar throughout the course of the entire year, 7th and 8th graders get *all* of the essential concepts/subjects of grammar in an intensive launch at the beginning of the year (about three to four weeks long). This allows the students to use and refine their knowledge of grammar all year long. Typically, in a “bits and pieces approach,” students learn parts of speech in September, subjects/predicates and other parts of sentence in October and November, prepositional phrases in December, but their parts of speech knowledge has rusted, and their parts of sentence competency has started to drift away. Why? Because they are getting bits month after month, when in reality grammar is a comprehensive area, with each area having an impact and being impacted on/by all other areas.
- ❖ This launch works through the four levels of traditional grammar: Parts of speech, parts of sentence, phrases, and clauses. All of the essential aspects of each area are covered (this includes all of the details outlined in the *Core Knowledge Sequence* for each grade).

Assessments:

- ❖ For each concept/area/level there are multiple worksheets done in class and for homework.
- ❖ There is a final test at the end of the launch for each grade level.
- ❖ Sentences will be analyzed from a four-level perspective both in class (usually sentences pulled from the current literature being studied) as well as out of class (through Michal Thompson’s *4 Practice, Vol. 2* which each student will possess).
- ❖ Grammar also finds its way on multiple literature tests throughout the year.

Standards for Achievement and Performance:

AFTER THIS UNIT THE STUDENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

- ❖ Know and identify the eight kinds of words (parts of speech) in the midst of sentences.
- ❖ Know and identify the main parts of a sentence.
 - Subjects
 - Predicates (action and linking)
 - Direct objects
 - Indirect objects
 - Subject complements (predicate adjective and predicate nominatives)
- ❖ Know and identify the types of phrases.
 - Appositive
 - Prepositional (adjectival and adverbial)
 - Verbal (participles, gerunds, and infinitives)
- ❖ Know and identify key aspects of clauses
 - Independent clauses

- Dependent/Subordinate clauses (noun, adverbial, and adjectival)
- Sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex)
- Sentence purposes (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative)
- ❖ Analyze completely any sentence from the perspective of all four levels of traditional grammar listed in the previous points.
- ❖ Recognize why knowing grammar is essential.
- ❖ See how grammatical competency can help with one's writing as well as literary interpretation/analysis (especially poetry).
- ❖ Be better prepared (both regarding terminology and syntactical analysis) to learn a foreign language.

Character Traits/Habits of Mind:

- ❖ Rigorous grammar training went out of a style for the last few decades, but it is reviving as people realize the vacuum grammatical incompetency has left when it comes to people's ability to write engagingly, read academically, and learn other languages fluently. Rigorous grammar study also helps develop another priceless habit: slowing down to appreciate an utterance's various gems and/or shortcomings. It helps answer important interpretive questions. It is indeed, as Michael Thompson (the author of our grammar and vocabulary curriculum) states, a *way of thinking about language*, and seeing as how linguistic communication is part of what makes us human, it is an indispensable discipline to learn and enjoy.

Next Unit

- **Note:** The reinforcement/practice of this unit's content is to take place all year long, including supplemental worksheets (especially regarding usage/common errors).
- *Call of the Wild* for 7th grade
- *The Good Earth* for 8th grade