

Introduction

Why DGP Plus?

I have put together this supplement because teachers often ask me what strategies I use to help students apply their understanding of grammar to their writing. Research and common sense tell us that a student will not miraculously be able to write better just because he knows the difference between an adverb and an adjective. There must be a transfer.

In the *Daily Grammar Practice Teacher Guide and Answer Keys*, I explain that students can't apply what they don't understand. Understanding grammar is important; if you didn't agree, you wouldn't be using Daily Grammar Practice. However, once students understand grammar, they need help learning to apply the concepts in order to improve as writers. When I teach workshops, I share lessons and suggestions regarding this transfer. However, since not everyone is privy to a workshop, I have compiled some tried-and-true ideas here.

How to Get Started

Some of the strategies I have included in this book are appropriate to use as one-time mini-lessons. Others are effective when used occasionally throughout the year, and still others are useful on a weekly or even daily basis. The chart on page three will show you which activities are geared toward which grade levels. However, if you teach students who are working above grade level, students who are working below grade level, or English Language Learners, you may want to look at activities above or below the grade level you teach. Many of the activities can be adapted for use at all grade levels.

If we really want to improve student writing, we need to help students understand grammar concepts, to teach students to apply grammar concepts, and to provide students the opportunity to practice writing every day for a variety of purposes and on a variety of topics. I hope you will find the activities in this book, used in conjunction with Daily Grammar Practice, to be helpful as you work toward building stronger writers.

Strategies at a Glance

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Sample Strategies from *DGP Plus: Building Stronger Writers*

Strategy #4: Words-in-the-box

Cut out words from magazines (or let students cut them out themselves), glue the words to tag board strips, and laminate each piece. Be sure to include words representing different parts of speech, and make cards with punctuation marks as well. Divide students into groups and give them some sentence formulas. Formulas can be as simple or complex as you deem appropriate for your students. Each group uses the formulas to create sentences with the words, punctuating each sentence correctly.

Examples:

- adjective, noun, verb, adverb: Funny birds sing loudly.
- article, noun, verb, conjunction, article, noun, verb: The boy ate, and the girl played.
- pronoun, present tense verb, plural noun: She likes flowers.
- helping verb, pronoun, action verb, proper noun, preposition, pronoun, noun: Will you help Ricky with his project?

Strategy #21: Sentence Combining

Give each student a pair of related simple sentences. (Example: *Jay will like that new shirt. Jay always wears stylish clothes.*) You can make up the sentences, get them from books, have students make them up, or pull them from student writing samples. Begin by having students identify the sentences as simple. Then students will combine the sentences in a variety of ways, according to your instructions. Here are some examples:

- two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction: Jay will like that new shirt, for he always wears stylish clothes.
- one independent clause with a compound verb: Jay always wears stylish clothes and will like that new shirt.
- an adverb dependent clause followed by an independent clause: Since Jay wears stylish clothes, he will like that new shirt.
- a sentence with a nonessential adjective clause: Jay, who always wears stylish clothes, will like that new shirt.
- a sentence with an introductory participial phrase: Wearing his new shirt, Jay looks very stylish.
- a sentence with a gerund: Wearing that shirt will make Jay happy since he likes stylish clothes.
- a sentence with an introductory prepositional phrase: In his new shirt, Jay looks very stylish.
- a sentence with an appositive: Jay likes his new shirt, a very stylish one.

Strategy #23: No Adjectives Allowed

Have students write a descriptive paragraph, but don't allow them to use any adjectives at all. Students will immediately insist that this objective is impossible, but help them to see that adjectives aren't the only descriptive words in a paragraph. Writing a paragraph without adjectives will force them to use more specific nouns and verbs as well as effective prepositional phrases. Adjective prepositional phrases don't have to be off limits unless you want them to be, nor do participles. You can also try paragraphs with no adverbs or with no articles.