

# **English Connects**

## **Professional development for teachers**

### **Unit 9: Teaching Grammar**

**Participant  
Book**

## Learning outcomes

The aim of this module is to equip teachers with approaches and activities to teach use of language (grammar) to students in their classes.

This unit complements the professional practice of 'Planning Lessons and Courses' from the CPD Framework for teachers <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/planning-lessons-courses>

By the end of this module the participants will be able to:

- Identify a number of techniques, approaches and activities to give meaningful grammar practice to their students.
- Understand better the rationale behind the techniques and approaches mentioned.
- Analyse techniques used by the teachers in the video footage.
- Compare the approaches shown with their own classroom practice.

## 1 Lead-in

### 1.1



Work in groups.

First, you are going to compare your own experience of learning English grammar. Discuss these questions.

- What have you found most challenging about learning English grammar in your own education?
- What factors or experiences have helped or motivated you?

Notes:

## 1.2



Watch and listen to the first part of the commentary. Think about how you teach grammar to your students. Then discuss with a partner and make notes about:

- **Which techniques and tasks have worked successfully for you in class?**
- **What challenges have you faced?**

Notes:

## 1.3



Work in pairs.

Listen to the next part of the video, introducing Anderson's lesson.

**Can you predict the order of the stages of Anderson's grammar focus?**

- 1 Focusing on the form of the target language
- 2 Introducing the target language
- 3 Free practice
- 4 Choral drilling
- 5 Controlled practice
- 6 Establishing a context (how the language is used)

Notes:

As you are watching the section of Anderson's lesson, see if your predictions match the order of the stages.

## 2 Establishing a context

### 2.1



Listen to the next part of the commentary and complete the gaps. Compare your answers with a partner.

Anderson starts off with the most <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ stage of all – establishing a <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ for the grammar item. This means that he gets his students to understand first how to <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the grammar by presenting a <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ they can relate to.

Notes:

### 2.2



Watch the first part of Anderson's grammar presentation in the video. While you're watching, think about:

- What context or situation does Anderson use to introduce 'should' and 'shouldn't'?
- Do you think this is a suitable context? Why? Why not?

Notes:

## 3 Introducing the target language: Choral drilling

### 3.1



Watch the next section. After watching, discuss these questions in a small group.

- How do students benefit from choral drilling?
- What other choral drilling techniques do you practise in class? Make notes of useful techniques.

Notes:

## 4 Focusing on the form of the target language

### 4.1



Watch the next part of the video, then discuss the question in your group.

- Why do you think Anderson focuses on the form of the grammar now and not before?
- How does this approach benefit the students?

Notes:

## 5 Controlled practice

### 5.1



Watch the section and listen to the commentary. Answer the questions with your partner.

- Identify **2 verbs** (used by the narrator) that are important to this stage?

   (to become stronger)

   (examine differences)

- How are these techniques important in controlled practice?

Notes:

## 6 Free practice

### 6.1



Listen to the commentary. Then discuss the questions with your partner.

- What 'free practice' task does Anderson give his students?
- How do students benefit from this type of task?

Notes:

## 6.2



Watch what Anderson's students produced in the free practice task. After watching, discuss these questions with your group.

- How did the students respond to the task? Why do you think this was?

## 6.3



Think back to the lesson stages from the beginning of Anderson's class. Compare your answers with a partner. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

**Note:** Refer to the video, Unit 3 Observing Anderson's Lesson, for a closer look at Anderson's whole lesson.

# 7 Grammar timelines

## 7.1



Before you watch the next section, discuss the questions with your group.

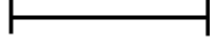


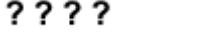


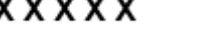
- What is a grammar timeline?
- Have you ever used ones in your classes?
- Can you give your group any examples?

**7.2**



Look at these timeline symbols with your group. Match them to a description.

**Timeline symbols**

1 A single event or action		A
2 A repeated action or habit		B
3 A permanent state or situation		C
4 A temporary state, situation or repeated/continuous action		D
5 Exact time of event is unknown		E
6 A point in time		F
7 A period in time		G



7.3

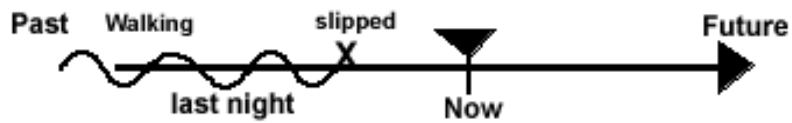


Look at the timeline examples. Match each one to the correct verb tense.

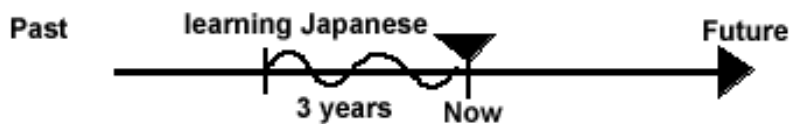
**Timeline examples**

- a) Present perfect simple
- b) Present simple
- c) Present perfect continuous
- d) Past continuous

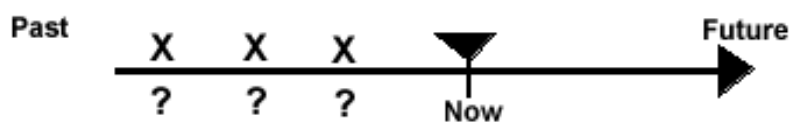
1 Last night, I was walking home when I slipped on the path.



2 I have been learning Japanese for three years.



3 I have been to New Zealand, Iceland and Taiwan.



4 I get up at seven o'clock every day.



Source: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/timelines>

## 7.4



Watch the next section, where you will see a teacher using a timeline to help her students understand the present perfect continuous tense. Think about:

- Why is a timeline effective in checking understanding of the present perfect continuous tense?

Notes



Compare your answers with your group. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

## 7.5



Your trainer will give you some example sentences. Working with your group, draw a timeline to demonstrate the sentences. Then share your timeline with other groups.

# 8 Highlighting language patterns

## 8.1



Before you watch the next section, discuss the questions with your group.

- Do you teach any younger learners? Which age groups do you teach?
- How might teaching grammar to younger learners be different to older age groups?

## 8.2



Listen to the commentary for the next section. As you listen, complete the key words in the transcript below. Then check your answers with a partner.

Younger students can find technical grammar terms too <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ to understand.

The answer is to set up an interesting <sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ for the target language,

then present the language so that the students start to notice <sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ in the

language.

## 8.3



Now watch the next section. Think about:

- What target language is the focus of this clip?
- How does the teacher highlight the pattern?

Notes



Compare your answers in pairs. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

## 8.4



Work in a small group.

Look at the techniques for helping students to notice patterns in language. Tick (✓) the techniques that you have tried and put a question mark (?) next to ones you would like to try in the future. Can you think of any more to add to the list?

- Sorting the words in jumbled sentences.
- Highlighting different parts of speech on the board or worksheets (eg. circling or colouring)
- Highlighting specific parts in choral drilling.
- Songs and chants, emphasising target language and parts of speech.

## 9 Reflection

### 9.1



Work individually first, then compare your responses in a small group. Look at the list you made at the beginning of the video when considering the first question.

- 1 Which approaches to teaching grammar have worked well in your lessons? Which similar approaches did you see in the video?
- 2 Which approaches seen in the video did you like? Why? Compare your views with your colleagues.
- 3 Which approaches are you going to try in your next grammar class?

Notes:

## 9.2 Action plan



Adjust your CPD Action Plan to include a specific action point about teaching grammar.





Notes:







## 10 Explore










In this video you saw several approaches to **teaching grammar**.

In this section you can follow up on the video by accessing a number of **articles**, **activities**, and **videos** on the BBC and British Council's **TeachingEnglish website**. These should provide you with further ideas, activities, knowledge, skills and techniques to fully maximise opportunities for teaching grammar in your classes. You may also be interested in looking at Unit 6 in this series: *Observing Elsie's grammar lesson*.

Sub-topic:	Title:	Link:	Type of Resource:	Summary:
Teaching language/ grammar	"Raymond Murphy"	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/raymond-murphy-visits-russia">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/raymond-murphy-visits-russia</a> (08:18 – 56:00)	<b>Video</b> Raymond Murphy 	How much grammar terminology do your students need to know? In this talk the author of <i>English Grammar in Use</i> questions some of the terms used by grammar books, textbooks and teachers, and talks about 'unhappy terminology', 'unnecessary terminology' and 'really unnecessary terminology'!
	"Analysing language"	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/analysing-language">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/analysing-language</a>	<b>Article</b> Steve Darn 	What do you and your students need to know about a new language item? This article looks at form, phonology, meaning, function and register (or appropriacy). There is also a downloadable analysis form to use when you are planning a language lesson.
	"Jazzing up grammar"	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/jazzing-grammar">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/jazzing-grammar</a>	<b>Article</b> Jo Budden 	In this article Jo presents some ways of making your grammar lessons meaningful: finding real situations where particular grammar structures are used; ways of personalising the topic; using time-lines to clarify different tenses. She also looks at the use of metalanguage (linguistic terminology) and suggests asking your students how they like to learn grammar.
	"One good way to practise grammar in speaking"	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/alexei-kiselev/one-good-way-practise-grammar-speaking">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/alexei-kiselev/one-good-way-practise-grammar-speaking</a>	<b>Article</b> Alexei Kiselev 	One of the most effective features of Anderson's lesson is the way he personalises the topic. Many textbooks include "Now speak about yourself" exercises, but this short article builds on the principle of personalisation to encourage students to go beyond the textbook and make grammar practice really meaningful.

<b>Teaching language/ grammar</b>	<b>“Teaching grammar”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/B127c%20A1%20TE%20Staff%20Room%20Posters%201.pdf">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/B127c%20A1%20TE%20Staff%20Room%20Posters%201.pdf</a>	<b>Poster</b> 	If you find teaching grammar rather dry, you might like this poster for teachers – three lively and motivating game-like activities for practising grammar.
<b>Providing clear language models</b>	<b>“Integrating pronunciation into classroom activities”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/integrating-pronunciation-classroom-activities">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/integrating-pronunciation-classroom-activities</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Barry Griffiths</b> 	The author of this article believes that there are opportunities in every lesson to work on pronunciation by using student talk. Barry gives examples of simple activities to practise word stress, vowel sounds, diphthongs, weak forms, and sentence stress.
	<b>“Developing pronunciation through songs”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-pronunciation-through-songs">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-pronunciation-through-songs</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Balbina Ebong &amp; Marta J. Sabbadini</b> 	Songs can provide memorable ways for students to notice and get to know features of pronunciation. In this article two teachers from British Council, Cameroon give examples of using songs to focus on individual sounds, word stress, and features of connected speech.
<b>Checking understanding and getting feedback</b>	<b>“Checking comprehension”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/checking-comprehension">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/checking-comprehension</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Clare Lavery</b> 	If you ask students, “Do you understand?” they may answer ‘yes’ to avoid losing face, or they may just <i>think</i> they have understood. In this article Clare suggests some practical ideas for you to check comprehension, or get students to do the checking themselves.
	<b>“What are some of the best or most effective ways you've found of giving feedback to your students or doing error correction?”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/rebeccawicker/what-are-some-best-or-most-effective-ways-youve-found-giving-feedback-your">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/rebeccawicker/what-are-some-best-or-most-effective-ways-youve-found-giving-feedback-your</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Rebecca Wicker</b> 	An engaging activity that involves all the skills and makes students responsible for feedback. The activity is based on ‘dictogloss’ (sometimes called grammar dictation) a classroom dictation activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for them to reconstruct the text.
	<b>“Giving learners feedback on their writing”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/loli-iglesias/giving-learners-feedback-their-writing">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/loli-iglesias/giving-learners-feedback-their-writing</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Loli Iglesias</b> 	Feedback is not just correction! It’s important to see students’ writing as part of a learning process rather than an imperfect product. This article suggests some excellent principles to keep in mind when you’re setting written work and giving students feedback and recommends some practical ways of making your feedback constructive and supportive.



<b>Checking understanding and getting feedback</b>	<b>“Feedback on writing”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/feedback-writing-0">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/feedback-writing-0</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Nina MK</b> 	How can you correct students’ written work without discouraging them? The writer of this article suggests some useful <i>dos</i> and <i>don’ts</i> for correcting and responding to students’ writing, which will work with learners of all ages.
	<b>“Writing correction code”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/writing-correction-code">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/writing-correction-code</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Paul Kaye</b> 	Instead of correcting students’ writing, you could use a ‘correction code’ to get students to think about their language and try to correct their mistakes. You can design your own correction code, or you can use the one provided (link at the end of the article).
<b>Further Professional Development / observing other teachers</b>	<b>“Classroom-based Teacher Development”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/willy-cardoso-classroom-based-teacher-development">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/willy-cardoso-classroom-based-teacher-development</a> (from 04:01)	<b>Webinar</b> <b>Willy Cardoso</b> 	In this webinar, Willy talks about four approaches to teacher development: observation (whether by a colleague or through recording); involving your learners in the process; the validity of bottom-up knowledge; and what he calls critical teacher development. The key feature that these approaches have in common is that they are not imposed by anyone else – they all come from teachers and learners inside the classroom.
	<b>“Transformer teachers”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/tim-phillips-transformer-teachers">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/tim-phillips-transformer-teachers</a> Presentation 0:01 – 24:30 Q&A 24.30 – 30:10	<b>Webinar</b> <b>Tim Phillips</b> 	In this interactive presentation, which includes the voices of teachers from different parts of the world, Tim asks how you can develop as a teacher. He uses the British Council CPD framework for teachers to build a profile of the “transformer teacher”.
	<b>“Peer observation: How can we make it work?”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/andy-hockley-peer-observation-how-can-we-make-it-work">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/andy-hockley-peer-observation-how-can-we-make-it-work</a>	<b>Webinar</b> <b>Andy Hockley</b> 	Another interactive presentation in which Andy reports on his own investigation of teachers’ attitudes to observation, discusses some of the challenges and apparent obstacles, and proposes some practical ways of making it happen.
	<b>“Successful teacher collaboration – Two teachers – Two roles – One class”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/neil-t-millington/successful-teacher-collaboration-two-teachers-two-roles-one-class">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/neil-t-millington/successful-teacher-collaboration-two-teachers-two-roles-one-class</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Neil T. Millington</b> 	This article describes a highly original approach to peer observation, when the writer and a colleague put their classes together, with one of them teaching and the other working with the students and observing the lesson ‘from the inside’ as a participant-observer.
	<b>“Observing others and being observed”</b>	<a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/observing-others-being-observed">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/observing-others-being-observed</a>	<b>Article</b> <b>Nina MK</b> 	Reflections by a teacher in this article on some of the things she has learned about her classroom, her teaching and her students from her experiences as both observer and observee.

## Answers

1.3: 6, 2, 4, 1, 5, 3

2.1: 1 important; 2 context; 3 use; 4 situation

2.2: Anderson uses the context of the practice of using skin bleaching products to introduce 'should' and 'shouldn't'. He introduces the context with realia (skin bleaching products).  
+ Participants' own answers.

3.1: **Choral drilling** can be very effective in helping students to consolidate the target language. The act of 'voicing' the language helps them to memorise the forms and patterns within it.

There are numerous approaches which can make choral drilling into an effective, fun and animated activity, eg:

**Back chaining:** repeating the target sentence from the last word backwards to the first word, building the sentence with each repetition. This can be very effective in helping students memorise language patterns.

**Choosing different groups** (rather than the whole class at once) to perform the repetitions (eg. boys and girls, back / front row etc. Anderson does this with the football teams in his class.

**Clapping or finger clicking** the rhythm of the sentence.

**Using Gestures:** highlighting key components with fingers or hands.

4.1: It is important to focus first on the context of the target language first before looking at how it is formed. This approach makes the language more memorable and relatable for students. Once they understand how language is used (the context), they can look at the more technical aspects of how it is formed.

5.1: 2 verbs: consolidate / compare.

**'consolidate':** Important because controlled practice reinforces the language that has just been presented, helping students to become more familiar with its use and form.

**'compare':** controlled practice activities are good opportunities for students to compare their answers and gain a greater understanding through mutual support.

+ Participants' own answers

6.1: **Free practice task:** The students must write advice for a sister who is under pressure to bleach her skin.

**Benefits for students:** It is a context which allows students to practise the target language in a natural, authentic way, and give a personal individual response to the task. This makes the language practice much more motivating and relatable for the students.

**6.3: Order of stages for the grammar focus:**

- 6 Establishing a context (how the language is used)
- 2 Introducing the target language
- 4 Choral drilling
- 1 Focusing on the form of the target language
- 5 Controlled practice
- 3 Free practice

**7.1:** Definition of a grammar timeline: Timelines are diagrams that illustrate the reference to time made by a given piece of language. They are used to show how a particular language item (often a verb in a particular tense and aspect) places particular events or situations in time and in relation to other events.

(Source: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/timelines>)

Participants' own answers.

**7.2:**

1 A single event or action	X	B
2 A repeated action or habit	X X X X X	G
3 A permanent state or situation	—————	E
4 A temporary state, situation or repeated/continuous action	~~~~~	F
5 Exact time of event is unknown	????	D
6 A point in time	↓ —————	C
7 A period in time	—————	A

**7.3:** 1=d (past continuous); 2=c (present perfect continuous); 3=a (present perfect simple); 4=b (present simple).

**7.4:** The present perfect tense covers both the past and present time. This can be a difficult concept for students to grasp. The timeline gives a simple visual to show an action starting in the past and continuing in the present time.

**8.1:** Suggested answer: Younger learners need to be encouraged to notice simple common patterns within the grammar sets they are learning, eg. the use of the auxiliary verb, *don't* or *doesn't* in present simple negative sentences or the use of the auxiliary verbs, *am/is/are* and the *-ing* form of the verb in present continuous sentences. This approach is preferable to using lots of technical terms to explain grammatical structures.

**8.2:** 1 abstract; 2 context; 3 patterns

**8.3:** Focus: Wh-questions

The teacher elicits the questions from the students using picture prompts. She writes them on the board and highlights the Wh-word at the beginning of each question.

To highlight the effectiveness of this approach, draw participants' attention to the moment in the clip where one student starts to notice more patterns in the examples with 'is'.

Back page design

CODE for module

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