

Course Topic: Teaching Grammar**Course Instructor**

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Course Synopsis

Explanation is the grammar presentation technique typically used in the ESL classroom when new language structures are introduced. While there is a time and a place for explanations, there are many other techniques with which teachers can present grammar more effectively and memorably. In this course, we will look at demonstrations of grammar presentation techniques that go beyond the explanations provided in textbooks. We will then compare and contrast the different techniques, based on criteria such as preparation time, challenge for the student, and appropriateness for particular grammar structures.

Course Agenda

1. Lesson Demonstrations
2. Analysis

1. Lesson Demonstrations

We will be going through five quick grammar presentations. Each one uses a different technique to introduce the grammar. At the end of the demonstrations, you will have a number of different presentation techniques to work with, as well as the strategies for when to use or NOT use each technique.

Technique #1: Explanation on the Board

Objective: Students will be able to make and ask subject and object questions about events in the past using the simple past verb tense.

Time	ESA	Procedure
5 min	SF	Write the following sentence on the board: George Bush phoned Jennifer Lopez. Ask students to identify the verb, the subject, and the object, one by one. Remind students that typical word order in English is S-V-O.
5 min	SF	Erase 'George Bush' and substitute with a blank line. Elicit and write the question 'Who phoned Jennifer Lopez?' Write the answer below the question. Return to the original and erase 'Jennifer Lopez', substituting with a blank line. Elicit the question 'Who did George Bush phone?' and write the answer below the question. Ask students to reflect on the difference between subject and object questions.
5 min	SF	Explain the difference, pointing out that subject questions require no change in word order, whereas predicate questions (here, object) require inversion. Show these two visually by labeling columns S-V-O and presenting the two patterns, unpacking 'phoned' (to did phone) in the object case and inverting it as the object occupies the first place in the question.

Technique #2: Using Realia

Objective: Students will be able to use the third person singular, simple present to make statements about habits and routines.

Time	ESA	Procedure
5 min	E	Show the class a collection of objects (cd case, book, ticket stub, trinkets etc.) you have 'found' left in a bag in your classroom. Have students work in pairs to examine objects to identify characteristics of the owner, so you can return the bag.
5 min	SF	Ask the class if the owner is a man or woman? Elicit sentences about the owner from students based on deductions. Provide vocabulary as needed, and 'shape' sentences as you write them on board to display target form: the present simple, 3 rd person singular, habits/routines. Keep one section of the board for the habits and routines sentences you get and one section for all the other sentences you get.
5 min	SF	Direct learners' attention to the section with the habits and routines sentences on it. Direct them to the verb forms, asking what tense it is, highlighting final -s. Concept check time reference: "Is this past, present...?"

Technique #3: Minimal Sentence Pairs

Objective: Students will be able to correctly select either simple past or present perfect to talk about past experiences.

Time	ESA	Procedure
3 min	SF	Write the following pairs of sentences on the board: 1a. I have seen the last Lord of the Rings movie. 1b. I saw the last Lord of the Rings movie last month. 2a. He has worked for Microsoft. 2b. He worked for Microsoft in 1999. 3a. Have you ever been to Vancouver? 3b. When were you in Vancouver?
5 min	SF	Elicit from the students the following rules of form: The 'a' sentences use the present perfect verb tense. It is made with have + past participle. The 'b' sentences use the simple past verb tense. It is made with the past form of the verb.
5-10 min	SF	Elicit from the students the following differences in use: The 'a' sentences are unspecified time. The 'b' sentences are specified time. To confirm, have learners create a timeline.
10 min	SP	Provide a written exercise that asks learners to choose between two forms in context. Confirm as a class.

Technique #4: Generative Situation

Objective: Students will be able to use 'should have' to express hindsight in a personal situation.

Time	ESA	Procedure
5 min	E	Introduce a character called 'Bob' through picture/drawing. Draw a map of Australia, and a vehicle. Elicit connection (Bob takes drive across Australian desert). Elicit necessary preparations (map, extra gas, water, food, first aid kit) in column on board.
5 min	SF	Presentation of the situation: Explain that Bob made none of these preparations. He didn't take a map; he didn't ..., etc. Ask students to imagine what happened. Using the ideas, construct the story (got lost, had an accident, etc.). Check story by having a student or two recount.
5 min	SF	Present or elicit target language orally: Ask, "What do you think of Bob?", eliciting that he is not too bright. Elicit why: he didn't bring a map, etc. Establish concept of disapproval of past actions, model target: he should have taken a map. Have students repeat in unison a few times. Concept check: did he take a map? (No). Was that a good idea? (No). So...? (He should have taken a map.) Repeat the process for several more points. Write nothing on board.

5 min	SF	Present target language visually: Clear the board and create a table of three columns: He – should have/shouldn't have – taken water/travelled alone etc. Ask students to add further examples to the table. Have individual students read sentences aloud; confirm reduced pronunciation of 'should of'.
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Technique #5: Using a Written Text

Objective: Students will be able to use the passive voice to differentiate between new and known information in a written text.

Time	ESA	Procedure
5 min	E	Present the title of the text on the board (Crocodile Attack Down Under) and have students work in groups to think of vocabulary items they would expect to see. Write these on the board, feeding in and concept checking <i>afraid, bandage, infected, bloodstain, etc.</i>
5 min	A	Use the text for comprehension: Ask class to read the text silently to answer the following questions: Who was attacked? Where? How badly? Who was to blame? Check in pairs, then as a class. Ask further questions: How long was she off work?
5 min	SF	Use the text for language focus: Write two sentences on the board: 1. A small crocodile attacked her. 2. She was attacked by a small crocodile. Ask class which was in text. Elicit the difference in form, using appropriate metalanguage to describe. Ask why passive is used.
10 min	SF	Consolidate the language focus through further text work: Ask the students to find other examples of the passive in the text, underline them, and discuss with a partner why the passive was chosen in each case. Check as a class, establishing the typical uses of the passive, as above.

Crocodile Attack Down Under

Margo O'Neale was out walking with her husband on a beach near Cairns, Australia, when she was attacked by a small crocodile. The crocodile was subdued by Margo's husband but not before Margo's leg was bitten. She had to have over thirty stitches. Two days later, because the wounds had become infected, Margo was admitted to the hospital again. Even after she was discharged, she needed further treatment. She was told to stay off her leg for two weeks. Margo is self-employed and her business was affected while she was recovering. Margo told us, with a laugh, "I would love to sue the crocodile, but it was just doing what crocodiles do."

2. Analysis

Presentation Technique	Strengths	Watch out for...
Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast • direct • easy to prepare • students used to it, comfortable with this approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be predictable • can be boring if you don't choose example sentences carefully • build in check points to ensure students are retaining information
Using Realia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • real objects are engaging, interesting • allows students to work with language in context • find out what students know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have to shape the sentences you get, don't always get what you want • if students don't know anything at all, difficult
Minimal Sentence Pairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly establishes contrasts between troublesome tenses or language structures • focuses on <i>use</i>, rather than <i>form</i> • find out what students know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow enough time to carefully think up sentences, can't just pull any two sentences out of a hat • must make sentences as similar as possible
Generative Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interesting, engaging • places language in context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must carefully plan story to fit language structure • must shape the language you get from students
Using a Written Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • places language in context • has a story, so engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must carefully select text • usually have to use adapted text, not authentic, in order to get exact language use you want

Putting it into Practice:

Think about a language structure that you have recently taught or are going to be teaching in the near future. Select the most appropriate grammar presentation technique from the five options presented in the video and create a lesson plan using the technique you have chosen.

Thanks for participating!

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