

SENTENCES OF THE WEEK: Using Mentor Sentences from Literature to Teach Grammar

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(Teacher grammar through the books you read. Substitute mentor sentences from the books you are reading. Use in grades 1, 2, 3 and perhaps 4.)

| Lesson | Skills | Mentor Sentences | Points to make |
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| 1 | Nouns and verbs; Identify subject and action verb in sentences. | Chrysanthemum grew. Chrysanthemum wilted. Chrysanthemum bloomed. (<i>Chrysanthemum</i>) | A noun is a person, place, or thing. Nouns can be proper or common. Proper nouns are names of specific people or places. Common nouns are not names. Action verbs are things you do. A sentence is a complete thought. |
| 2 | Identify subject and verb in sentences; nouns and proper nouns; verbs and linking verbs. | The students were speechless. Mrs. Twinkle was a wonder. My name is long. (<i>Chrysanthemum</i>) | A declarative sentence or statement tells you something. Statements start with a capital letter and end with a period. The subject is who or what the sentence is about; the subject is a noun. The verb , or predicate, tells something about the subject. A complete sentence has these two parts: a SUBJECT and a VERB. Linking verbs connect other words together. |
| 3 | Pronouns; say and write simple statements; identify subject and verb. | You are perfect. She started school. They said I look like a flower. I think it is absolutely perfect. (<i>Chrysanthemum</i>) | Have students write "S" over the subject and "V" over the verb (or verb phrase). One person makes a statement using proper nouns; another restates the sentence substituting a pronoun for the name(s). Notice subject-verb agreement. |
| 4 | Ask questions orally. Write questions. | What is so humorous? Will they give us a notebook? Will they give us a pencil? Will I learn to read? (<i>Chrysanthemum; Rain School</i>) | Questions or interrogative sentences ask something. Questions begin with a capital and end with a question mark. When you ask or read a question, your voice should rise at the end. Have students take turns saying either a statement or a question. Classmates put their hand on top of their head if it is a statement and gesture a question by shrugging and using arms. |
| 5 | Give commands orally. Write commands | Go to sleep. Don't worry. Chew your food thoroughly. | An imperative sentence or command gives a direction or an order. The implied subject of the sentence is "You". The ending punctuation of a command is usually a period. (Exclamation points are overused and annoying.) Have students identify oral sentences as statement/declarative by placing hand on top of head; question/interrogative by shrugging; and command/imperative by saluting. |

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| 6 | Make exclamations orally. Write exclamations. | Don't kill it! Oh, <i>look</i> at him! (<i>Charlotte's Web</i>) Help! Fire! | Exclamations or exclamatory sentences express urgency, surprise, or strong feeling. They are usually short. Have students identify oral sentences as statement/declarative by placing hand on top of head; question/interrogative by shrugging; and exclamation with a look of surprise with hands on cheeks. |
| 7 | Proper nouns and titles; capitalization rules. | We read <i>Sylvester and the Magic Pebble</i> by William Steig. Fern took Wilbur to Mr. Zuckerman's farm. We live in _____, _____ in the United States of America. | The first word of a title and all the important words in a title are capitalized. Names are capitalized. City names, days of the week, and names of months are capitalized. The word "I" is always capitalized. |
| 8 | Adjectives | The extraordinary pebble was flaming red, shiny, and perfectly round. Why did the cold rain stop? Put the magic pebble on the wet ground. (<i>Sylvester and the Magic Pebble</i> , adapted) | An adjective is a word that describes a noun. It tells you which one, what kind, or how many. Write statements and questions that include an adjective. |
| 9 | Plural nouns, both regular and irregular. Write statement, question, and command using plural nouns. Using items in a series (commas). | Jonathan loved birds, squirrels, mice, geese, bunnies, and deer. Jonathan and his mother used knives to cut cookie dough into stars, bells, and hearts. The aunts and uncles and their children came for dinner. (<i>The Bears on Hemlock Mountain</i> , adapted) | Plural means more than one. Many nouns are regular—you can make them plural by adding s or es . [Sort words into s or es columns: pigs, lunches, lamps, buses, boxes, tickets, brushes, quizzes, cows, farmers. What determines if you need es instead of s to change a noun into a plural?] When a word ends with y , look at the letter before y . If it is a vowel, add s ; if it is a consonant, change the y to i before adding es . Some nouns have irregular plural form. Examples: knife-knives; goose-geese; mouse-mice; child-children; person-people |
| 10 | Adverbs | Go quickly, for you must be back before it is dark. He shook the snow carefully from his boots. He stopped rocking and slowly, slowly, slowly, his eyes closed. Jonathan had to think quickly. (<i>Bears on Hemlock Mountain</i>) | Adverbs are words that describe a verb. Adverb sometimes describe other words. They can tell us how, when, and where. |

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| 11 | Review nouns and pronouns. Abstract nouns | Jonathan showed kindness to wild animals. Jonathan kept up his courage. He showed bravery as he climbed Hemlock Mountain. (adapted from <i>The Bears on Hemlock Mountain</i>) | Most nouns you can see, touch, hear, smell, or taste. A noun that can't be detected by your senses is an abstract noun. |
| 12 | Subject-verb agreement | I like my grandpa's house best. My friend Peter has a new glass house. Maggie lives next door in an old wooden house. They are fine houses. But Grandpa's house is my favorite. His eyes are sharp blue. Grandpa and I walk outside. (<i>Through Grandpa's Eyes</i> , ad) | Review pronouns. Practice replacing the subject [noun(s) and/or proper noun(s)] with the correct pronoun. Make sure the subject (noun or pronoun) agrees with the verb. Encourage students to use "I" instead of "me" where needed (in the subject of a sentence). |
| 13 | Pronoun-antecedent agreement | Lucy looked at the big sheet of white paper in front of ____, Grandpa has flowers like this in ____ garden. At recess Lucy was too busy to play. Instead ____ collected twigs, leaves, and two small feathers. (<i>Lucy's Picture</i>) | The pronoun must agree with the noun (whose place it is taking or to which it is referring) in gender, number, and person. |
| 14 | Conjunctions FANBOYS; Compound sentences: statement Review of statements or declarative sentences. | Amos had a lot to do at the zoo, but he always made time to visit his good friends. The Shoemaker stared in surprise, for there on the table stood a little pair of shoes. The elf picked up a little pair of trousers, and he looked at them. I am well now, so we can work for ourselves. (<i>A Sick Day for Amos McGee; The Elves and the Shoemaker</i>) | Conjunctions connect words and sentences. FANBOYS: for, and nor, but, or, yet, so. Use FANBOYS to combine two complete sentences into one compound sentence. Using compound sentences in your writing will keep it from sounding choppy and will add variety and fluency. Find compound statements in personal and group reading. |
| 15 | Compound sentence: deciding which of the FANBOYS to use. | Her mother kept picking blueberries, but Little Sal sat down. Little Sal's mother slowly backed away, for she was old enough to be shy of bears. Little Sal and her mother went down the other side of Blueberry Hill, and they drove home with food to can for next winter. (<i>Blueberries for Sal</i>) | Conjunctions connect words and sentences. FANBOYS: for, and nor, but, or, yet, so. Use FANBOYS to combine two complete sentences into one compound sentence. Using compound sentences in your writing will keep it from sounding choppy and will add variety and fluency. Find compound statements in personal and group reading. |

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| 16 | Prepositions and various sentence types with prepositional phrase. | <p>The home of the Little family was a pleasant place near a park in New York City. Are you the owner of the schooner, <i>Wasp</i>? I'm looking for a berth in a good ship. No more of this! Take care of yourself. Come back here and get on my boat. (<i>Stuart Little</i>)</p> | <p>Prepositions create a relationship between words. They often tell us WHERE or WHEN. Prepositions are used at the beginning of a prepositional phrase. [If you're not sure if a word is being used as a preposition, know that prepositions are not followed by a verb. The sentence, " I'm going to the store to get milk." has only one preposition; to get is a verb.]</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfExXGMX2JM&noredirect=1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byszemY8PI8</p> |
| 17 | Complex sentences | <p>When the people in Central Park learned that one of the toy sailboats was being steered by a mouse ins a sailor suit, they all came running. Before the two boats had gone many feet, an accident happened on shore. (<i>Stuart Little</i>)</p> | <p>Join a complete sentence with a dependent clause (sometimes an incomplete sentence) using a subordinator like: <i>because, since, after, although, or when</i>; or with a relative pronouns like <i>that, who, or which</i>.</p> |
| 18 | Commas in address, date, and after yes, no, or a name. | <p>Look out, Stuart! Well, you've got more self-control than I have. No, that's the trouble. (<i>Stuart Little</i>)</p> <p>My address is I was born on</p> | <p>Use a comma when addressing someone by name. When you start a sentence with an interjection (like: yes, no, well, oh), set it apart by using a comma. Use a comma to separate a city or town from the state. Use a comma to separate the date (day of the month) from the year or any other groups of numbers.</p> |
| 19 | Verb tenses; regular, irregular verbs. | <p>She was a happy little train, for she had such a jolly load to carry. She thought of the good little boys and girls on the other side of the mountain. I think I can. She tugged and pulled and pulled and tugged and slowly, slowly, slowly they started off. I thought I could. (<i>The Little Engine That Could</i>)</p> | <p>Verbs reflect time: present tense means now or today; something that is happening now. Past tense means yesterday or before now; it already happened. Future tense means tomorrow; it is something that is going to happen.</p> <p>Most verbs are regular; they follow a pattern of adding ed to make them past tense. Some verbs are irregular—their past tense is different or not ed. am—was; do—did; draw—drew; sing—sang; go—went; run—ran; say—said; see—saw; sit—sat; think—thought</p> |

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| 20 | Possessives; possessive nouns. | She set out to seek her fortune. Then she was Doctor Grace and their lives were in her hands. One day Grace’s teacher said they would do a play. When it was Grace’s turn to be Peter Pan, she knew exactly what to do. (<i>Amazing Grace</i>) | Possessive pronouns (like: my, mine, your, yours, her, hers, his, its, our, ours, their, theirs) show ownership. To show that something belongs to a certain person, add an apostrophe and s. Which of these sentences is complex? |
| 21 | Quotation with end attribution (statement) | “I can’t sit on your egg,” said the elephant. “Very well,” said the elephant. “This isn’t much fun,” the poor elephant grumbled. | Double quotation marks are used to surround what someone says. When the thing that someone says is a statement, instead of using a period inside the quotation marks, use a comma. The period goes after you have identified who was speaking. |
| 22 | Quotation with end attribution (question) | “Why is Horton the Elephant up in a tree?” they asked. “Does Horton the Elephant think he’s a bird?” they yelled. | Double quotation marks are used to surround what someone says. When the thing that someone says is a question, put a question mark inside the quotation marks. Place a period at the end of identifying who was speaking. |
| 23 | Quotation with end attribution (command and exclamation) | “How absurd!” they yelled. “Come play,” they said as they ran away. “Shoot if you must, but I won’t run away!” said Horton. | Double quotation marks are used to surround what someone says. When the thing that someone says is a command, instead of using a period inside the quotation marks, use a comma. Or when the thing that someone says is an exclamation, put an exclamation point inside the quotation marks. In either case, place a period at the end of identifying who was speaking. |
| 24 | Quotation with front attribution (all 4 types of sentences) | They all shouted, “Look!” They said in surprise, “Can such a thing be?” One hunter said, “Don’t shoot him.” Another hunter said, “We’ll catch him.” (adapted from <i>Horton Hatches the Egg</i>) | You may identify the speaker before you quote what they say. When you do this, regardless of what type of sentence the quotation is, you set apart the identifier from the quote with a comma. The correct punctuation for the sentence quoted is placed inside the ending quotation mark. |
| 25 | Sentence combining and fluency | There were sure to be foxes in the woods. There were sure to be turtles in the water. She was not going to raise a family where there might be foxes or turtles. There were sure to be foxes in the woods or turtles in the water, and she was not going to raise a family where there might be foxes or turtles. (<i>Make Way for Ducklings</i>) | Writers vary the length of their sentences to make reading them more smooth or fluent and to give variety. Practice combining short, choppy sentences into fewer sentences. Read them out loud to see what you like best. |