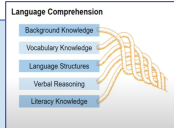


# The Role of Syntax in Helping Students Extract Meaning from Text

Christine Delmas



## Anticipation Guide

Before agree	Before disagree	Statement	After agree	After disagree
		Teaching syntax improves reading fluency.		
		Directly teaching grammar does not support sentence comprehension.		
		The function of each word or phrase in a sentence should be explicitly taught.		
		Syntax refers to the meaning of words in a sentence.		

## Objectives:



### Teachers will be able to:

- > Identify the building blocks of our language
- > Understand how phrases, clauses, and sentence structure contribute to meaning
- > Implement strategies for direct instruction of sentence comprehension using evidence-informed activities

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Why do we need to teach syntax and sentence composition?

### The Simple View of Reading

#### The Simple View of Reading



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfDEMhMRd8E>

### Breaking it Down Further: Scarborough's Reading Rope

#### Many Strands Are Woven into Skilled Reading

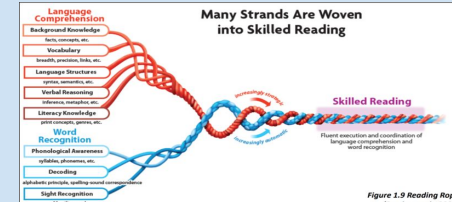


Figure 1.3 Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JR7GbAHnIQ4>

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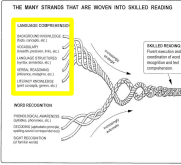
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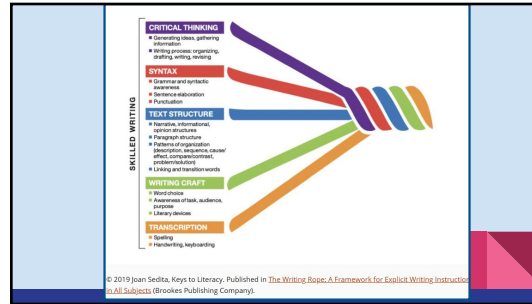
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# The Components of Reading Comprehension Instruction

Language Comprehension strand	Instructional component
Background knowledge	Background knowledge
Vocabulary	Vocabulary
Language structures (semantic and syntax)	Sentence comprehension
Verbal reasoning	Levels of understanding (ie: inference)
Literacy knowledge	Print awareness, text structures*



\*Once acquired, literacy knowledge is considered a part of background knowledge



STANDARD 4: STRUCTURED UTILITY INSTRUCTION IN LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION		
Content Standard	Essential of Framework Knowledge	Essential of Instructional Practices
4F.1 Know/apply in practice considerations for factors that contribute to deep comprehension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate a framework for comprehension instruction that addresses all major contributors to the domain, including background knowledge, vocabulary, verbal reasoning ability, sentence processing, knowledge of literary structures and conventions, and skills and strategies for close reading of text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and deliver comprehensive listening and/or reading comprehension lessons that address background knowledge, interpretation of vocabulary and academic language, and text structure using strategies that fit the text.</li> </ul>
4F.2 Know/apply in practice considerations for instructional routines appropriate for each major genre: informational text, narrative text, and argumentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrast the characteristics of the major text genres, including narrative, informational, and argumentation.</li> <li>• Identify text features that characterize each major genre, including logical organization, typical connecting or signal words, and style of language.</li> <li>• Match graphic organizers, files, and topic sentences to various text structures (e.g., description, compare/contrast, reason/evidence, time sequence).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach students the major differences between narrative and informational texts.</li> <li>• Teach and support students in using graphic organizers matched to specific informational text structures during reading and while planning written responses.</li> <li>• Teach students to recognize and interpret signal words associated with specific informational and narrative text structures.</li> <li>• Explicitly teach story grammar and use it to support comprehension and the retelling of narrative.</li> </ul>
4F.3 Know/apply in practice considerations for the role of sentence comprehension in listening and reading comprehension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and distinguish among phrases, dependent clauses, and independent clauses in sentence structure.</li> <li>• Know techniques of explicit instruction with sentences, such as sentence elaboration, sentence paraphrase, identifying the function of words within a sentence, and sentence combining.</li> <li>• Identify phrases, clauses, and sentence structures in any text that may pose comprehension challenges, such as figurative language, double negatives, passive voice, embedded clauses, anaphora, and distance between subject and verb.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach students how to construct and deconstruct simple, complex, and compound sentences.</li> <li>• Use techniques of explicit sentence manipulation, such as sentence elaboration, sentence paraphrase, identifying the function of words within a sentence, and sentence combining, to build syntactic awareness.</li> <li>• Teach students how to identify the basic parts of speech and to relate a word's meaning, spelling, and pronunciation to its grammatical role in a sentence.</li> <li>• Anticipate challenging language before text reading and prepare to decipher it with students.</li> <li>• During an oral reading of text, detect and provide appropriate feedback to students' confusions in comprehension.</li> </ul>

Source: [ELA Knowledge and Practice Standards](#)

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## Why? Reading & Writing are Reciprocal



"The relationship that exists between syntax and semantics cannot be overlooked as educators work at developing students' reading comprehension proficiency." –Hennessey (2013, p.1)



"Studies over the years have shown a clear relationship between syntactic or grammatical sophistication and reading comprehension; that is, students learn to employ more complex sentences in their oral and written language, their ability to make sense of what they read increases, too." –Shanahan (2013)



"If a reader cannot derive meaning from individual sentences that make up a text, that is going to be a major obstacle in text-level comprehension." –Scott (2009, p. 184)

## Sentence Comprehension

- The ability to make sense of sentences is a crucial contributor to how a reader builds a mental representation of meaning
- Requires deep understanding of syntax and its connection to comprehension

*Students need to understand differences between phrases, clauses, cohesive ties, connectives- teach explicitly!*

## Syntax



- How words combine into phrases, clauses, and sentences
- The **structure** of a **sentence**
- How **words** are **ordered** in a sentence
- How **phrases** are part of sentences (both independent and dependent)
- The set of principles that dictate the **function** and sequence of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning
- Includes **grammar** (how the parts of speech are used in a sentence), sentence variation, and mechanics

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## Syntactic Awareness

*Having the ability to monitor the relationships among the words in a sentence in order to understand while reading or composing orally or in writing. Students build syntactic awareness through exposure to oral language when they are young and particularly through exposure to written language that they hear through read alouds or independent reading (around grade 3).*

Source: Keys to Literacy/Syntactic Awareness: Teaching Sentence Structure Part 1

## slido Stop and Reflect



What words or phrases stand out to you in that description?

Click Present with Slido or install our [Chrome extension](#) to activate this poll while presenting.

## How do we teach this?



- Teach the grammatical building blocks explicitly
  - Nouns, pronouns, adjectives
  - Verbs, adverbs
  - Conjunctions, prepositions, interjections
- Each block serves a specific, meaning based **function**
- Together, they provide the foundation of all of the syntactic structures of English

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## Major Principles of Syntax Instruction



1. Oral language provides the foundation
2. Syntax overlaps with word meaning, sentence structure and reading fluency
3. A set of grammatical elements are the building blocks of syntax
4. Sentence construction reinforces students' ability to comprehend sentences

Source: Literacy how

## It all starts with Oral Language



- Children come to written language with syntactic knowledge in their oral language
- Oral language tasks help develop children's ability to produce and comprehend a variety of sentences.
- This strengthens both reading comprehension and written expression.
- Students benefit from explicit syntax instruction that builds their syntactic awareness

## The Building Blocks of Sentences

- A finite number of grammatical components make it possible to be an infinite number of sentence types
- Each "block" serves a function that influences the meaning of the sentence

(Gillis & Eberhardt, 2016)

*A 2005 study (Fear & Fernan), found that teaching students to focus on the function and practical application of grammar **within the context of writing** (versus teaching grammar as an independent study) produced strong and positive effects on students' writing.*

Writing Next, 2007

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### Focus on Function!

- 8 grammatical elements that serve a meaning-based function
- Together, they provide the basis for all of the sentence structure combinations



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The jobs of parts of speech

Question	Part of speech	Functional Term
Who, what, or whose?	Pronoun	Substitute Namer
Who or what?	Noun	Subject/Namer
Is or was doing?	Verb	Predicate/Action
Which one, how many, what kind?	Adjective	Subject Descriptor
When, where, how, why?	Adverb	Predicate Expander
What is the relationship between the words before and after?	Preposition	
What is connected or needs to be joined together?	Conjunction	Connector

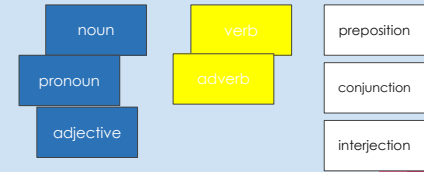
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### The Building Blocks of our Language



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## Choosing Quality Text

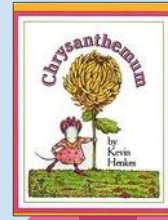
- Use quality reading materials that expose children to classical literature as well as rich content about geography, history, science, social studies, and other subjects.
- This means that you may need to use read alouds or technology to deliver the text **by ear until all students are able to read by eye**

### Ask yourself these questions when choosing a text:

- Will these readings provide opportunities to develop necessary language processes and skills?
- Do these texts provide opportunities to develop academic language?
- Do these readings represent different genres and disciplines and an integrated approach to learning?
- Have we considered access issues for struggling readers?

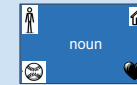
## Using Mentor Text

- Use quality reading materials that expose children to classical literature as well as rich content about geography, history, science, social studies, and other subjects.
- Try to choose titles centered on a theme or topic from the content areas (science or social studies)
- This means that you may need to use read alouds or technology to deliver the text **by ear until all students are able to read by eye**
- Choose texts that provide opportunities to develop necessary language processes and skills



## Noun/Subject/Namer

Cueing question(s): *Who or what did it?*



Names the person, place, thing, or idea of the sentence

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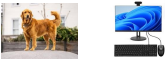



### Example from Text

**Chrysanthemum** wilted.

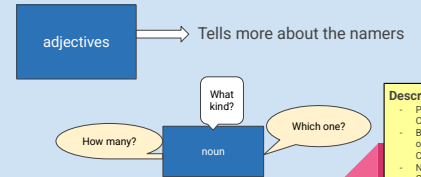
During naptime, **Victoria** stood up and told the class that **Chrysanthemum's** name has thirteen letters.

### Types of Nouns

<b>Person</b> 	<b>Place</b> 
<b>Thing</b> 	<b>Idea</b> 

### Adjective/Subject Describers

Cueing question(s): *What kind? How many? Which one?*



- Descriptors:**
- Physical Characteristics
  - Behavioral/Personality
  - Character Traits
  - Number
  - Ownership

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### Example from Text

**How many?:**

Three classmates laughed at Chrysanthemum's name.

**What kind?:**

The rude and boastful students made fun of Chrysanthemum's name.

**Which one?:**

The pregnant music teacher has a beautiful voice.

### Pronoun

Cueing question(s): Who or what did it?

pronouns



Takes the place of or substitutes for the namers

Use the same cueing questions as with nouns:

**Who?**

- He - him
- She - her
- They - them

**What?**

- It - it
- They - them

### Example from Text

"If I had a name like yours, I'd change it," Victoria said.

She completely forgot her lines as the dainty fairy queen.

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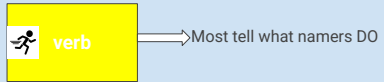
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### Verb/Predicate/Action

Function: Tells action      Function: links  
Cueing question: *Did what?*      Cueing question: *Is what?*

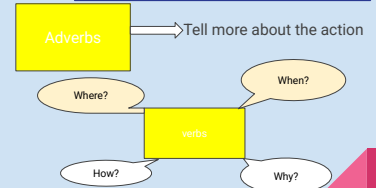


### Example from Text

*Chrysanthemum wilted.*  
*Chrysanthemum wore her outfit with seven pockets.*

### Adverb/Predicate Expanders

Cueing question(s): *Where? When? How? Why?*



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### Example from Text

**Where**- She dragged her feet **in the dirt**.

**How**- She walked to school **as slowly** as she could.

**When**- **During nap time**, Victoria raised her hand and told the class that Chrysanthemum is spelled with thirteen letters.

**Why** - Chrysanthemum wanted a new name **because** the kids made fun of it.

### Prepositions

Prepositions



Signal a relationship between words

Prepositions are the first word that start phrases that answer:

- Adverbial questions
- Adjectival questions

Prepositions



Signal a relationship between words

Adverbial Questions:

- **Where?** She dragged her feet **in the dirt**.

- **When?** **During naptime**, Victoria raised her hand and told the class that

Chrysanthemum has thirteen letters in her name.

- **How?** She walked to school **as slowly** as she could.

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**Prepositions** → Signal a relationship between words

**Adjectival Questions:**

- *What kind?* The teacher **with the beautiful voice** led the class.
- *Which one?* The student **in center stage** forgot her lines.

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**Conjunctions/Connector Words**

**Conjunctions** → Connect or join words, phrases, or clauses

**Types of Conjunctions:**

Coordinating- connecting equal parts	Subordinating - connect unequal parts
and	because after
or	although
but	since

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**Example from Text**

Jo, Rita, **and** Victoria looked at Chrysanthemum longingly.

Chrysanthemum loved her name before she started school, **but** after going to school she thought it was absolutely dreadful.

**Although** Chrysanthemum loved her name when she was young, she thought it was absolutely dreadful when she was in school.

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## Interjections

Interjections → Express emotion

- Wow!
- Ouch!
- Gee Whizz!
- Bam!

## Example from Text

Wow, the audience couldn't believe how great the musicale was!

## You're Turn! Dissect the sentence to identify the parts of speech.

**Hint:** Think about the question that each group of words answers.

when  
The next morning, Chrysanthemum wore her most comfortable jumper as she slowly walked to school.  
when/how where

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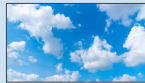
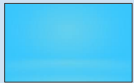
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### Word Order Affects Meaning

sky blue vs. blue sky

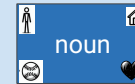


Sky changed from adjective to noun

### Understanding Basic Sentence Structure

### The Building Blocks of a Sentence

What is a sentence?



(namer/who)



(action/do)

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## Sentence Building

Two basic sentence structures:

- A simple sentence: subject + predicate
- A simple subject with an object: subject + predicate + object

### Let's Watch: Building Barebones Sentences: *Namers (Who) and Verbs (Do)*



Source: Literacy  
How

slido



Something I learned that squares with my beliefs:  
A question going around in my head:  
Three points I want to remember:

① Click Present with Slido or install our [Chrome extension](#) to activate this poll while presenting.

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## Sentence Level Activities

### Sentence Level Activities

**It all starts with the sentence!**

- Reading comprehension at the sentence level is an essential starting point.
- Sentence level activities are designed to teach students how to identify **what has happened** in a sentence, **who** was involved, **when** the event occurred, **where** the event took place, and **why** the event happened. It is a great foundation for comprehension activities using larger chunks of text later.
- Who, what, where, when, why, and how are the main focus of this exercise.
- A prerequisite skill for participation in the activity is the ability to repeat 5 to 7 word statements. If the student is unable to do so, it is unlikely they will be able to retain the information long enough to recall the information needed to answer the questions.
- Begin with **who** and **what** questions.

### Oral Sentence Level Activities

Step One:

**Teacher says:**

Model first: "Betty went to school."

"Who went to school? Betty."

"What did Betty do?" She went to school.

Student says:  
(just listens at this point)

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### Sentence Level Activities

**Step Two**

Teacher says:  
 "Listen to the sentence. The dog ate his food.  
 Repeat that sentence."  
 "Who ate his food?"  
 "What did the dog do?"

Student says:  
 "The dog ate his food."  
 "The dog"  
 "Ate his food"

Repeat Step 2 with more sentences and questions. If move on to similar procedure for when and where w

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### Sentence Level Activities

**Step One:**

Teacher says:  
 "I'll say phrases that tell when. For example, **tomorrow morning** tells when. **Last Friday** tells when. **After breakfast** tells when."  
 "Now I'll say phrases that tell where. **In the backyard** tells where. **At the pool** tells where. **On the sofa** tells where. **Under the bed** tells where."

Student says:  
 (just listens at this point)

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### Sentence Level Activities

**Step Two:**

Teacher says:  
 "I'll say a phrase. You say if it tells **when** or **where**."  
 "In the backyard"  
 "After breakfast"  
 "Tomorrow morning"  
 "On the sofa"  
 "At the pool"

Student says:  
 "When"  
 "When"  
 "When"  
 "Where"  
 "Where"

Students can hold up cards with when and where on them.

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### Sentence Level Activities

Step Three:  
Teacher says:  
"Jane played in the backyard yesterday afternoon."  
Repeat the sentence." → Jane played in the backyard yesterday afternoon."  
"Where did Jane play?" → "In the backyard"  
"When did Jane play?" → "Yesterday afternoon"

Student says:

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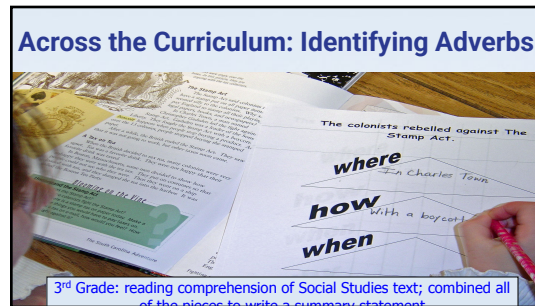
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### Across the Curriculum: Identifying Adverbs



3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: reading comprehension of Social Studies text; combined all of the pieces to write a summary statement.

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### List of Texts Used

SS Theme: Community

- *Chrysanthemum*, Kevin Henkes 
- *Frederick*, Leo Lionni 
- *All Our Neighbors*, Alexandra Penfold 

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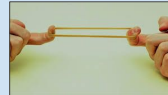
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### Sentence Level Activities

- 1) Sentence Expansion
- 2) Sentence Deconstruction/Sort
- 3) Sentence Anagrams
- 4) Sentence Combining

### Sentence Expansion Activities



### Sentence Expansion Activity

**Barebone Sentence:** Frederick sat.

**When:** day and night before winter began

**Where:** on the rock in the meadow

**Why:** to gather sun rays, colors, and words for the cold, dark winter days

**Expanded Sentence:** Before winter began, Frederick sat on the rock in the meadow day and night to gather sun rays, colors, and words for the cold, dark winter days.

Writing Revolution: Judith Hochman & Natalie Wexler, 2018  
**Source:** Frederick Leo Lionni

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## You Try! Sentence Expansion Activity

**Barebone Sentence:** Chrysanthemum was sad.

**When:** during naptime at school

**Where:** at school

**Why:** because Victoria and the other kids made fun of her name

**Expanded Sentence:** One day during naptime at school, Chrysanthemum was sad because Victoria and the other kids made fun of her name.

Writing Revolution, Judith Hochman & Natalie Wexler, 2018

## Sentence Expansion in Action



## Scaffolded Sentence Expansion

Simple sentence	Who/what?	is/was doing?	Whom/what ?	Where?	When?
	The archaeologist	found			
	The archeologist	found	a tattooed mummy,		
	The archaeologist	found	a tattooed mummy	in a pyramid.	
	The archaeologist	found	a tattooed mummy	in a pyramid	while digging for treasures.

Based on The Mystery of the Tattooed Mummy, Rattini, 2007

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### Scaffolded Sentence Expansion

Simple sentence	Who/what?	Is/was doing?	Whom/what ?	Where?	When?
	Chrysanthemum	loved.			
	Chrysanthemum	loved	the sound of her name.		
	Chrysanthemum	loved	the sound of her name		when her Dad called her to dinner.
<small>Based on Chrysanthemum, Herkes.</small>					

### Scaffolded Sentence Expansion

Simple sentence	Who/what?	Is/was doing?	Whom/what ?	Where?	When?
	Chrysanthemum	wilted.			
	Chrysanthemum	wilted		in school.	
	Chrysanthemum	wilted		in school	when the other kids made fun of her name.
<small>Based on Chrysanthemum, Herkes.</small>					

### Because But So Sentence Expansion Activity

#### Chrysanthemum was ashamed of her name...

Chrysanthemum was ashamed of her name **because** Victoria and the other kids in school made fun of it.

Chrysanthemum was ashamed of her name in the middle of the story, **but** learned to be proud of her name at the end of the story.

Chrysanthemum was ashamed of her name, **so** her parents tried to console her.

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## Because But So Sentence Expansion Activity

### A solid melts to form a liquid...

A solid melts to form a liquid **because** heat or pressure causes the ordering of molecules to break down.

A solid melts to form a liquid **but** it can also sublimate to form a gas.

A solid melts to form a liquid **so** a glacier is really water waiting to happen.

Resource: The Writing Revolution



## You Try!

Sentence comprehension requires deep understanding of syntax...

BECAUSE

BUT

SO

## Picture Prompted Generation

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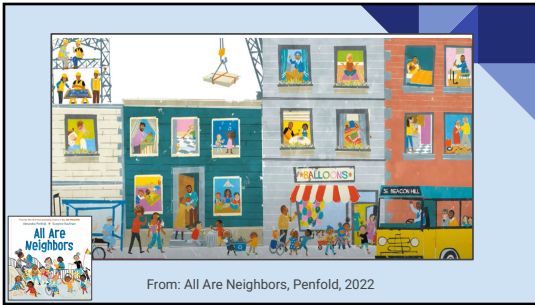
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 **What do you see?**

Who/what?	Is/was doing?	Which one, what kind, how many?	When, where, how, why?
Bus driver	waves	friendly, one	In the morning/when he sees his neighbors

**Challenge!**

- Have the students build a sentence based on the answers they provided
- This can be done orally or in writing depending on their level

Ex: *One friendly bus driver waves when he sees his neighbors in the morning.*

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## Sentence Deconstruction Activities



## Simple Sentence Sort

source	Sentence	Which one, what kind, how many?	Who or what?	is/was doing or happening?	what/whom?	When, where, why, how?
Frederick (Lionni, 1967)	<i>In that wall, not far from the barn and granary, a chatty family of field mice had their home.</i>	chatty family of field mice	family	had	their home	in that wall, not far from the barn and granary



## You Try: Sentence Sort

On the first day, Chrysanthemum wore her sunniest dress and her brightest smile.

Which one, what kind, how many?	Who or what?	Is or was doing?	What?	Where, when, how and why?

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## Key: You Try: Sentence Sort

On the first day, Chrysanthemum wore her sunniest dress and her brightest smile.

Which one, what kind, how many?	Who or what?	Is or was doing?	What?	Where, when, how and why?
sunniest; brightest	Chrysanthemum	wore	her dress; her smile	On the first day

## Taking it a Step Further: Adding Visual Symbols

Source	Sentence	Which one, what kind, how many?	Who or what?	is/was doing or happening?	what/whom?	When, where, why, how?
Frederick (Lionel, 1967)	<i>In that wall, not far from the barn and granary, a chatty family of field mice had their home.</i>	chatty; of field mice	family	had	their home	in that wall, not far from the barn and granary
Chrysanthemum (Henkes, 1991)	<i>On the first day, Chrysanthemum wore her sunniest dress and her brightest smile.</i>	sunniest; brightest	Chrysanthemum	wore	her dress and her smile	On the first day

Symbols from Framing Your Thoughts

## Oral Activity: How Words Work Together

Example:

On the first day of school, Chrysanthemum wore her sunniest dress and her brightest smile.

(from Chrysanthemum, Henkes, 2009)

### Structured Questions:

- Which word(s) answer the *who/whom*? **Chrysanthemum**
- Which word tells what she *did*? **wore**
- Which word(s) tell *what* she wore? **dress and smile**
- Which word tells *what kind of dress*? **sunniest**
- Which word tells *what kind of smile*? **brightest**
- Which word(s) tells *when* this happened? **On the first day of school**

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## Activity: How Words Work Together

### Model:

1. Teacher selects words/phrases/clauses from the current text for cards
2. Teacher distributes sets of cards with words or phrases or clauses from current text. Students are instructed to listen to the structured questions and stand if they have a group of words that answers the question.

### Structured Questions:

- Who word answers **who/whom**?
- Which word(s) tell **what** she did?
- Which word(s) tell **what** she thought?
- Which word tells **how** funny it was?
- Which word(s) tell **when** she giggled?

thought and giggled wildly

it was funny Chrysanthemum  
throughout the Dance of the Flowers

## Taking it a Step Further:

Distribute a set of cards with words from your current text and copies of the question organizer.

Students work in pairs or groups and use words cards to find answers to the questions.



## You Try: Sort the following Words

community	playground	work	friendly	greet
home	neighbors	shop	rescues	diversity
meet	share	help	school	firemen
teachers	friends	Police officers	bus	pets

### Structured Question Organizer

Who/what?	Is/was doing?	Which one, what kind, how many?	When, where, how, why?

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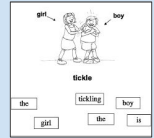
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**For non-readers:** Sort the following Pictures



Who/what?	Is/was doing?	When, where, how, why?

## Sentence Anagrams




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## Sentence Anagrams

Anagrams are scrambled sentences that provide the reader an opportunity to construct a sentence and derive meaning about the text.

### Activity:

1. Teacher selects or creates a sentence based on key ideas from the text. Each word is written on a separate card, and the cards are assembled into a set that represents the sentence out-of-order.
1. Students work together to build the sentence that tells them something about the text. The teacher can provide a hint- start with the verb.
1. Students share their sentences and discuss its meaning related to the text.

## Sentence Anagrams

**Frederik**  
by Leo Lionni

"The mice gather supplies and prepare for the long winter ahead."

prepare and long  
The gather mice the winter  
for ahead supplies

Hennessy & Solomone p 58 (2024)

## Sentence Anagrams

**Frederik**  
by Leo Lionni

T: Let's find the capital and ending punctuation first.  
Where do these usually go?"

The ahead.

Hennessy & Solomone p 58 (2024)

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## Sentence Anagrams

**Frederik**  
by Leo Lionni

T: Let's find the verbs. Which words connect those verbs?"

gather supplies  
prepare for

Hennessy & Solomone p 58 (2024)

## Sentence Anagrams

**Frederik**  
by Leo Lionni

T: Let's find the noun. Which are the words that describe the nouns?"

mice  
long winter

Hennessy & Solomone p 58 (2024)

## Sentence Anagrams

**Frederik**  
by Leo Lionni

T: Are there any conjunctions? How can they link ideas?"

gather supplies and prepare for

Hennessy & Solomone p 63 (2024)

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## Sentence Anagrams

Frederik  
by Leo Lionni

T: Are there any groups of words that go together?

The mice gather supplies

the long winter ahead.

Hennessy & Solomone p.63 (2024)

## Sentence Anagrams

Frederik  
by Leo Lionni

T: Finally, let's unscramble the sentence.

The mice gather supplies and

prepare for the long winter ahead.

Hennessy & Solomone p.63 (2024)

## You Try: Sentence Anagrams



our	Unscrambling	of	supports	how
understanding	words	sentences	make	and
arrange	authors	meaning.	select	to

### Remember to:

- 1) Look for capitalization and ending punctuation first. Where do these go?
- 2) Identify verbs. Which words connect those verbs?
- 3) Next, find the adjectives and the nouns they describe.
- 4) Locate conjunctions (and any mid sentence punctuation). How can they be used to link ideas?
- 5) Look for words that go logically together and group them together.
- 6) Finally, unscramble the sentence. This may take trial and error.

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**Answer:**

Unscrambling sentences supports our understanding of how authors select and arrange words to make meaning.

**Let's Watch: Anagrams in Action**



**Sentence Combining Activities**



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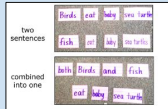
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## Sentence Combining

- Helps students to see the effect conjunctions have on sentence meaning; teach meaning of each explicitly
- Develops syntactic awareness for both sentence comprehension and written expression
- Provides practice with manipulating and rearranging words in sentences, expanding sentences, and clarifying sentence meaning
- Can be done orally for students who are not ready to read and write all the words
- Start with combining two simple sentences
- Use sample sentences from a text you are reading- find a complex sentence from the text and break it apart into smaller sentences for students to combine



Source: Keys to Literacy

## Ways to Combine Sentences

Targeted pattern	Question and Barebone Sentences	Combined sentence
Adjectives and adverbs	<p><i>How would you describe Frederick?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frederick spends his days collecting sun rays, colors, and words.</li> <li>He is a daydreamy mouse.</li> </ul>	Dreamy Frederick spends his days collecting sun rays, colors, and words.
Compound subjects and objects	<p><i>How do the other mice feel about Frederick?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mice think Frederick is lazy.</li> <li>The mice think Frederick is a dreamer.</li> </ul>	The mice think Frederick is lazy and a dreamer.
Compound sentences using coordinating conjunctions	<p>What did Frederick contribute to his community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frederick contributed poetry.</li> <li>Frederick brought great joy to his community.</li> </ul>	Frederick contributed poetry, and he brought great joy to his community.

## Conjunctions

for and nor but or yet so

For	since, because
And	combines things
Nor	combines two options that are denied
But	expresses exceptions
Or	choose between options
Yet	opposite
So	shows consequence




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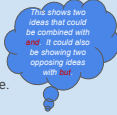


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## Example: Sentence Combining

Use a conjunction to combine the following sentences:

Victoria was chosen as the dainty fairy queen.  
Chrysanthemum was chosen to be the daisy in the class musicale.



### Possible Answers:

Victoria was chosen as the dainty fairy queen, **and** Chrysanthemum was chosen as the daisy in the class musicale.

Victoria was chosen as the dainty fairy queen, **but Chrysanthemum** was chosen as the daisy in the class musicale.



## You Try: Sentence Combining

Use a conjunction to combine the following sentences:

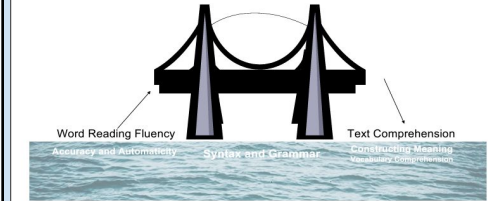
Chrysanthemum was named after a flower.  
Victoria was named after her grandmother.



### Possible Answers:

Chrysanthemum was named after a flower, **but** Victoria was named after her grandmother.

Syntax is a bridge between word reading fluency and text comprehension



Source: Literacy How

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## Using Sentence Structure to Teach Fluency

### Scooping:

Example: That night, the Velveteen Rabbit slept in the Boy's bed.

### Phrase-Cued Strategy:

Once upon a time, /a little boy/  
went to fly/ his kite/ in the open  
field. // As he ran/ with the kite,/  
it got caught/ in a tall, tall tree.  
He didn't know/ what to do.//

## How to Assess Sentence Comprehension in your Classroom

- Screening measures based on cloze tasks will help tap into students' knowledge of syntax.
- Informal Classroom-based assessments include:
  - Asking questions where students have to identify the "who" (subject) or "do" (predicate) in a sentence.
  - Activities requiring sentence completion and combining.
  - Asking students to identify connectives in a sentence



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## Stop and Reflect

- The thing that resonates with me most about sentence writing...
- One strategy I plan to implement right away...
- One comment and/or overall reaction to the activities for sentences...

Click Present with Slido or install our [Chrome extension](#) to activate this poll while presenting.

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## You Try: Applying Sentence-Level Activities

After reading the article, divide into 4 groups. Each group will be responsible for one sentence level activity:



Group 1: Sentence deconstruction with questioning

Group 2: Sentence combining

Group 3: Sentence expansion

Group 4: Sentence anagrams

## Valentine's Day and Chocolate:

When you think of Valentine's Day, you might also think of chocolate. Many people today share chocolate with loved ones on Valentine's Day. But this was not always the case. In fact, it took thousands of years for chocolate and Valentine's Day to get together.

People have enjoyed chocolate for as long as 4,000 years. Chocolate was very important to ancient civilizations like the Mayans and the Aztecs. They made chocolate drinks from cacao beans. Cacao beans were so important in those civilizations that some say they were as valuable as gold.

Spanish explorers brought chocolate back to Spain in the 1500's. Slowly, word of chocolate drinks spread across Europe. Royalty in countries like France and Great Britain thought that chocolate was a magical drink.

## Valentine's Day and Chocolate continued:

By this time, people in Europe were already celebrating Valentine's Day. They would write letters to each other to celebrate. They would share poems, songs, and roses. In all of these Valentines there was one thing missing: chocolate.

Finally, in the 1800s in Great Britain, Richard Cadbury had an idea. His family already made chocolates. He put the chocolates in boxes. He covered the boxes with hearts and cupids. Ever since, people have been sharing chocolate on Valentine's Day. You could say that chocolate and Valentine's Day are the perfect match!

Source: *Valentine's Day and Chocolate: A Love Story*, ReadWorks

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### Applying Sentence-Level Activities

- Tell us what activity you were assigned
- What sentence from the text you used
- What strategy would you use to deliver this activity (scaffolded graphic organizer, cut up sentence, etc.)



### Want to Learn More?

Scan the QR code to visit my Wakelet on Syntax and Sentence Structure!



### THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!



Christine Delmas

Certified Structured Literacy Dyslexia Specialist  
Reading Specialist/Orton-Gillingham TT

Literacy Consulting Services, LLP

[Christine@lcsnj.org](mailto:Christine@lcsnj.org)

[www.lcsnj.org](http://www.lcsnj.org)

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