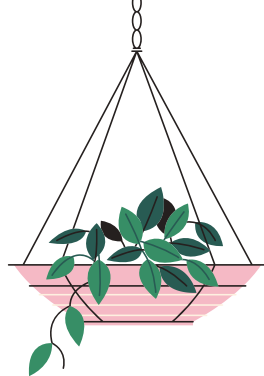


# TUTORS TALKING

November 2023



## How do you teach Grammar in ESL?

English fluency, but it can be challenging for tutors to engage learners in a topic that many perceive as monotonous or unappealing. Let's take a look at some ways to keep your ESL learners on their toes during a grammar class.

When it comes to learning nouns, verbs, and tenses, it's not uncommon for many English learners to yawn at the thought of sitting through grammar drills and filling out worksheets.

Mastering grammar is key to English fluency, but it can be challenging for tutors to engage learners in a topic that many perceive as monotonous or unappealing. Let's take a look at some ways to keep your ESL learners on their toes during a grammar class.

— Alison



## Why is it boring?

### ↳ Learners may not see the need.

While in class, they see their grammar activities as tasks they must complete, without realizing how useful grammar is for their communication skills.

### ↳ Textbook drills and exercises.

Although these have proven effective for learning a new language, learners tend to get bored with the same methods over time.

## How can I make grammar fun?

Knowing why learners don't get enthusiastic about grammar lessons gives us a chance to revamp our classes by making them interesting, interactive, and inclusive. But what do these characteristics mean, exactly? Let's see how we can make grammar ...

### ... interesting

This boils down to making your learner see the social relevance of the concepts they're studying. So, rather than simply making them construct sentences and choosing the correct word forms, help them better grasp the concept by teaching them how to use grammar in the real world.

For example, when learning past tenses, learners can practice by talking about their memories or their travel experiences. Now they are not only applying the rules of grammar, but also seeing how they can use past forms to describe events in their lives and exchange information with others.

### ... interactive

Spice up your grammar lessons by using a variety of activities that get learners actively involved.

- Go for ESL grammar games, tasks, or challenges that make learners talk more, listen carefully, and even get their creative juices flowing!
- Make use of digital tools like interactive whiteboards and quiz makers. See the additional links below.
- Incorporate speaking activities that will help learners use grammar in their daily lives. For example, role-play activities, improvisation exercises, mock interviews, and practice dialogues for what learners usually do at work or in the community.

### ... inclusive

Boost learner participation through materials and activities in which they can see themselves, their cultures, and their backgrounds represented. Base your lesson examples on a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Not only does this promote diversity, but it also makes grammar learning more relatable and significant for your learners.

For example, if you're role-playing job interviews, don't just stick to the most common professions. Practice for different jobs and in other industries.

## Additional Resources

### For Digital Tools:

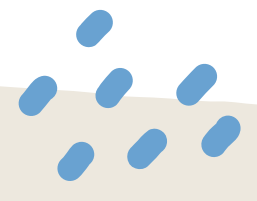
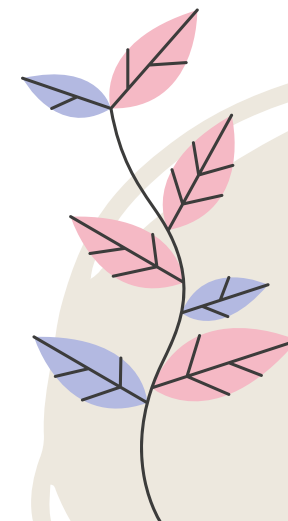
<https://bridge.edu/tefl/blog/tools-for-teaching-english-online/>

### For Speaking Activities:

<https://bridge.edu/tefl/blog/tefl-speaking-activities/>



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# ESL grammar lesson plans

## Key components

Below you'll find the key components that all ESL grammar lesson plans should have. Great grammar lesson plans are...

### Appropriate

Take into account the age, culture, skill and background of your learner. For example, don't use children's songs. You need to make sure you don't offend learners or put them off the lesson by providing materials with which they won't connect.

### Relevant

Spend time asking your learner why they are learning English and what their future plans are so that the grammar you teach will be relevant to their needs.

### Progressive

Use a generalized structure to guide your lesson planning. In general, experts recommend the following flow:



You can build on this to develop a structure that is most effective for your teaching, but once you establish a progressive template, you will be able to produce solid ESL grammar lessons more consistently, and efficiently.

### Quantifiable

How will you know when your learner has mastered the grammar point? A common error is asking, "Do you understand?" Chances are, true or not, learners will say "yes" because of social pressure, even when they don't understand.

Instead, write clear, quantifiable lesson objectives. Use this formula:

- "By the end of the lesson/unit/week, my learner will be able to ..."
- End the sentence with a clear goal, such as "identify at least five past participles in English."

Use this as a way to show yourself (and your learner) that they can master each step and move forward, building their grammar knowledge as they go.

### Enjoyable

**DON'T:** Say to your learner, "Memorize this list of verbs over the next ten minutes."

**DO:** Tell your learner that they have five minutes to look at a list of verbs, but then you'll be taking the list away while you use those verbs in a game. The slight shift from rote learning to a competitive memory game is subtle, but it's important.

## Appendix A

### Five Tips

Here are some additional tips to help make your ESL grammar class run as smoothly as possible.

#### 1. Teaching grammar should be fun!

Use games and simple tasks that connect to things learners already like, such as video games or music.

#### 2. Give yourself a refresher.

Review the basics of the grammar point before class. For example, a quick Google search to remind you what the present perfect is and where it is used.

#### 3. Keep it simple!

Don't stress your learner out by adding too many details or rules that have to be followed for a specific grammar point.

#### 4. Put the lesson in context.

Consider why learners would need to use a specific tense or understand a certain type of sentence structure. Make sure to incorporate this in the lesson.

#### 5. Nobody's perfect.

When a learner asks questions and you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to say, "Hmmm, you know what? I'm not sure about that. Can I write it down and we'll come back to it at our next lesson once I have more information?"

