

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching How to Use Appropriate Grammatical Forms In Communication

CLASS – VII

Unit Over- view	Rati- onale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Addi- tional Reading		
		What this unit is about Gunotsav / NAS performance	Learning Outcomes	Learning Gaps to be addressed	Related Lessons	Unit Objectives	Introduction	Case Study 1	Activity 1	Case Study 2		Activity 2	Summary
Overview of the language skill What the Gunotsav assessment shows us		LO 7.16 : The learner uses appropriate grammatical forms in communication (e.g. noun,pronoun, verbs, determiners, time & tense, passivization, adjective, adverb etc.	Sub Area i. use few, a few, little, a little, very much, a lot, a little and not..at all grammatically in speech and writing Sub Area ii. practise appropriate use of determiners through classroom activities	Unit 3 Gopal in the Hilsa Fish The Shed Unit 4 The Ashes That Made Trees Bloom Chivvy Unit 5 Quality Trees	In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to- a) pronounce words with consonant clusters with ease. b) identify silent letters in words and pronounce them appropriately.	What this unit will teach you	"I like adverbs a lot"	Fun with determiners	His, her or its?	Fun with pronouns	What you learnt in this unit	Sample Questions : Fill in the blanks with the right answer given in brackets. 1. They live in a very small flat because they have -----money. (little, a little) 2. I Really need to see him. I 've got ---- questions to ask him. (few, a few).	↔ www.tess-india.edu.in

Overview

Teaching English in Class VII does not only mean making learners able to read lessons and write answers to comprehension questions. By this class, students are expected to be able to compose paragraphs on their own, carry out a conversation in English, and write texts for both official (e.g. leave applications) and personal purposes (describing their day etc.) This means that students need to be motivated to speak and write English without hesitation.

One thing that stops children from using English to speak and write is the fear of making mistakes. As teachers, we often focus too much on their grammatical mistakes while they are speaking or writing, which makes them lose confidence. There are, however, ways of improving their grammar and vocabulary without correcting every mistake or teaching grammar rules. We must remember that no one corrects our grammar when we start speaking our mother tongue, because everyone knows these mistakes are only temporary.

If students are allowed to speak and write regularly in the class, even with mistakes, there is a good chance that they will become confident. After that, they will realize if they are making mistakes, and will be able to correct themselves.

Rationale

The recent performance of Class VII students in Gunotsav 2017 has not been very encouraging. The analysis of the results has shown that students of Class VII are unable to write grammatically. Their compositions not only have spelling mistakes, the students have little or poor control over nouns, tenses, determiners, the use of adjectives and adverbs, and other grammatical categories.

Somehow, in spite of teachers' best efforts, students are not achieving the stated learning outcomes. Special efforts are needed from us teachers to help the students develop their English skills.

Introduction

Are your Class VII students confident to speak and write English? When they do speak and write English, do they write grammatically? Where does the problem lie? How do we help them to overcome these problems?

These are questions teachers keep asking one another, and there is never any easy answer.

Most often, we realize that our students understand English when they listen or read, but are unable to speak or write without making grammatical mistakes. We have to reflect on and think of our own classroom practices and find ways of making them become better at English. This can be best done by making them practise their English on a regular basis, through interesting and useful activities. Such activities may be based on the textbook, on outside material such as story books, magazines or even product labels, or based on their own lives. The more students get an opportunity to practice, the more confident they will be. This, in turn, will make them better users of English. Their vocabulary and grammar will also increase and improve.

In this unit, you will read two case studies of teachers like you who have tried out various techniques in the class to improve their students' grammar. You will also read about activities that you can yourself try out in the class. The unit will hopefully make you reflect and find what makes students learn easily, or not learn. You will also read some information on what can be considered factors of a good grammar class.

Unit Objectives

In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:

- (a) use few, a few, little, a little, very much, a lot, a little and not .. at all grammatically in speech and writing
- (b) practise appropriate use of determiners through classroom activities

Case Study I : "I like adverbs a lot"

Ridip Phukan is a teacher in Manikpur M E School. He teaches English in Class VII. His students say that they love to study English, but they are unable to speak or write English confidently. He tries to correct their grammatical mistakes all the time, but they still cannot seem to be able to write English correctly. Last week, a former Headmistress visited the school. After talking to the students and teachers, she called Ridip Phukan aside. Gently, she told him that rather than correcting his students' mistakes all the time, he should make them practise English through regular language exercises. She told him how she used to teach English to middle school children.

So he decided to try out some activities suggested by the Headmistress. One evening, he bought some toffees, collected some magazines and found a poster of different sports goods such as a cricket bat, a football, a hockey stick, a pair of table tennis racquets, and so on. He brought these to the class the next day and asked them which things they liked the most. Taking their responses, he wrote some sentences on the blackboard:

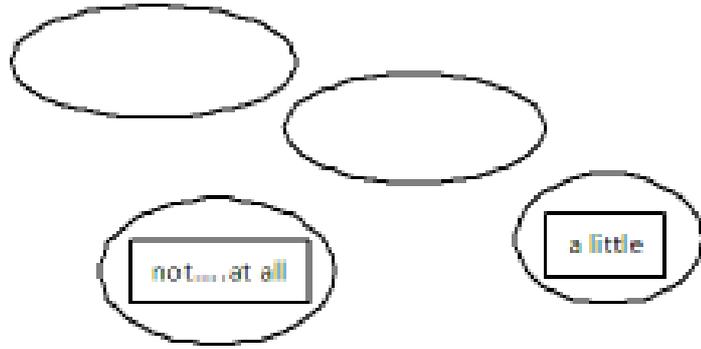
I like to eat toffees.

I love to play football.

I like reading magazines.

Then, on the free side of the board, he wrote these phrases (very much, a lot, a little, not at all) in circles, like this:

I like to eat toffees.
I love to play football.
I like reading magazines.



Then he asked the students to say which things they liked very much, which they liked just a little, and so on. There were a lot of different answers from the excited children. He also asked them to show with gestures (hand and face movements) how they felt. For example, if they liked something a lot, they had to open their arms wide and shake them. If they liked something just a little, they had to open their thumb and forefinger and show it, like this:

A lot



A little



Then Mr Phukan made the students come up with other sentences using these phrases. The students gave him many sentences, which he wrote on the board, such as:

- I like school very much.
- I don't like mathematics very much.
- I do not like reading books at all.
- I love Dhoni a lot.

Finally, Mr Phukan explained to them that all these phrases are called adverbs, because they tell us something more of the verb like and love. He ended the class by asking for more adverbs and supplying some himself. For homework, he asked the students to make one sentence each with the adverbs they had learnt that day.

Let's stop and think

- (1) What are the advantages of teaching different grammatical forms through such activities?
- (2) Should we teach student grammar rules first or the use of grammar first? Does memorization of grammar rules help a person speak a language with confidence? What other grammar categories can you teach with pictures and students' own language? What preparations would you need to make?

Activity 1: Fun with determiners

Very often we find that students are confused when they have to express quantity or amount using determiners such as few and a few, little and a little. Although teachers teach students that few and little have a negative meaning while a few and a little have positive meanings, students still make mistakes while using these. They also do not realise that few and a few are used with countable nouns while little and a little are used with uncountable nouns.

Here is an activity that can help students learn the appropriate use of these common determiners.

Tell students that they will play a grammar game today. Make all the students stand up, and tell

them that they will have to follow your instructions carefully. Remember to give instructions that will help you demonstrate the use of the four determiners. You can start the game by saying sentences like:

- "All the students who like cricket - please go and stand near the door".

If most of the students go and stand near the door, tell the ones who remain "There are few students in their seats now." Write the sentence on the board, and make them repeat it. You can also ask prompt questions like "Are there many students in their seats now?" "Encourage students to respond "No, there are few students in their seats now."

Now call the children back and say, 'There are a few students in the class who like other games.' Ask prompt questions like "Do all the students of this class like cricket?". They should respond "No, there are a few students who like other games."

You can also use the blackboard to illustrate this. Draw a big group of stick figures on one side of the board and write 'Cricket' under it. Then draw a smaller group on the other side and write under it 'Other games'.

Now write on the board the following sentences to illustrate the difference between few and a few:

1. A few students like other games.
2. Few students like other games.
3. Ask them if they know the difference in meaning between the two sentences 1 and 2 by matching the correct options 3 and 4 to each sentence. Give them a clue: a few has a positive meaning, while few has a negative meaning: Some students like other games besides cricket.
4. Not many students like other games; most like cricket.

Now give them a few sentences on the board for practice, and ask them to fill in the blanks with either few or a few:

1. Radhika has some beautiful pictures of animals. Today she brought of them to class. We loved looking at the pictures. Most of the pictures were of wild animals, but there were of birds too. Milan asked Radhika if he could take some of the pictures. But Radhika said she had extra ones. She also said her cousin had extra pictures with her and would ask her cousin to bring some. (Answers: *a few, a few, few, a few*)

Once this practise session is over, continue the game with little and a little. You can use their water bottles for the game, using phrases like a little water in my bottle, little time left for the game etc. remember to end with a practice session, preferably with a paragraph with blanks for little and a little.

Let's stop and think

1. Do your students have similar problems with determiners?
2. What do you think are the advantages of using games to teach grammar?
3. Apart from the blackboard, can you think of using pictures and objects to teach grammar? What grammar points can you teach with common objects in the classroom?

Case study 2 : His, her or its?

Gohin Basumatary teaches English at the Upper Primary level In a school in Udalguri district. This year, after the Gunotsav results of his class showed that their grammar needs improvement, Mr Basumatary checked up some grammar teaching tips on the internet. He especially liked the simple and step-by-step lesson plan given in the website <https://www.education.com/lesson-plan/pos->

sessive-pronouns/and decided to try out the activity he read there. He knew that he would have to change the activity a bit to make it appropriate for his students, but he liked the idea and decided to try it out.

In the next English class, Mr Basumatary took out a cloth bag and went around the class, picking up things from his students' desks and bags and putting them in the cloth bag. The children looked, surprised and puzzled at his actions! Then he brought the cloth bag - full of things- back to his desk, and told the students to help him identify which thing belonged to whom.

Mr Basumatary started taking out one thing at a time and showed it to the class. He said 'Whose pencil box is this? Is it mine? No, it is hers' and pointed to a girl in the first bench.

"No!" shouted another girl, and responded in her mother tongue, "It is mine". Mr Basumatary then translated for her. "This pencil box is not Lata's, it is hers."

He took a book out of his bag this time, and asked "Is this book yours?" to Lata. 'No', said Lata. "Is this his?" Mr Basumatary asked, pointing to a boy called Hiren. "Yes!" said Hiren. Mr Basumatary then prompted Hiren to say 'The book is mine'

Then Mr Basumatary told the children to respond with 'It is mine' if he showed them their object. He told them to say 'It is hers' if it belonged to a girl, and "It is his" if it belonged to a boy. He told them to point out the rightful owner. He also wrote down the sentences on the blackboard:

It is mine.

It is hers.

It is his.

Mr Basumatary played this game with the students until all the objects came out of the bag and were on his table. Then he asked them to notice the words mine, his and hers on the board. He asked them what class of words these were. He was very happy when his students said they were Pronouns. Then he explained that pronouns such as these that are used to show to whom something belongs, are called Possessive pronouns.

He wrote the term Possessive Pronouns on the blackboard and asked the students to tell him all the possessive pronouns they had heard him saying during the game. The students were able to recall the pronouns mine, his and hers. Then Mr Basumatary turned to the board wrote the sentences

"Is this yours?"

" Yes it is mine."

"No it is not mine."

"No, it is Hiren's."

He told them to play another game, this time with their benchmates. One student would have to pick up something from their desk, and ask 'Is this yours?' to the bench mates. Each of them would have to reply correctly, using "Yes, it is mine" or 'No, it is not mine.' If they knew whose it was, they would have to say 'It is Hiren's/Rita's' etc.

The students enjoyed playing the game, and once they finished asking their benchmates, they started picking up things from the desk behind/in front of them and kept asking "Is this yours?Mr Basumatary had to stop them because time was running out.

Then he wrote a few common possessive pronouns on the board: mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs. He also wrote a paragraph and asked students to copy it down. They had to fill in the blanks with possessive pronouns from the list on the board.

In the next class, he made the students practise other possessive pronouns such as her, their, your, my, one's and its. He showed them different sentences in which these occurred, and made them practise using the sentences with their own objects. He also explained the use of apostrophe to show possession, such as one's , Hiren's and Rita's, but made them remember that they are never used with other pronouns except 'one'.

At the end of the second class, Mr Basumatary was happy to see that his students were able to use possessive pronouns correctly in their speech and writing.

Let's stop and think

1. Why is it helpful to make students practise a grammar rule before telling them about it?
2. Mr Basumatary realised that practising sentences with students' own objects made them see how grammar is used in real situations. Do you think your students will enjoy learning grammar this way?
3. Why is it important to teach students the difference between the use of the apostrophe in words like its and it's? is that a common mistake your students also make? How do you help them understand where to use the apostrophe and where not?

Activity 2 : Fun with pronouns

Have you tried grammar games in your class? Here is a game that you can use with your Class VII students to help them learn the possessive pronouns yours, hers, his, ours, its and theirs and the use of the apostrophe and s with nouns. As you know, students often make mistakes while using possessives, especially confusing possessives with plurals. Once they are familiar with the correct use and forms of possessive pronouns, they will not confuse the use of apostrophe and s.

Start by reviewing personal pronouns with your students. You can use the blackboard for this. Draw some circles all around the blackboard. Inside each circle, draw simple pictures of one boy, one girl, two people, a bigger group of people and a ball. Draw a circle/square/bag/box in the middle of the blackboard and put the personal pronouns I, me, he, she, it, we and they in it. Ask the students to come to the board and write, under each picture, all the personal pronouns that match the picture. This exercise will help them review the pronouns and use them when they practise possessives. Remind them that one picture might match more than one pronoun. Your board will probably look like this:



Now check their understanding of possessives and plurals by putting up some sentences on the board. Tell them that there are some correct and some incorrect sentences on the board. They will have to take a piece of paper and rewrite it correctly, without showing it to anyone else. Tell them that you will read out all the sentences correctly. If they have been able to identify the wrong sentences and rewritten them correctly, they should give themselves 1 mark for each sentence. After this self-evaluation exercise, discuss their mistakes and show them why these are incorrect. Draw their attention particularly to sentences where there is confusion between plural and possessive Here are some sentences you can put up. Note that sentences 1, 2, 5 and 6 are correct, and the rest are wrong:

1. This is the ball I bought for my brother.
2. Their books are all new.

3. We saw our pencil's near Robin's school bag.
4. This is her school bag, not your's.
5. The people are all walking to their library.
6. She is doing her exercises.
7. My mother and her's mother are friends.
8. Now they are going to sing theirs song.
9. One should keep ones books in order.
10. They are taking away the dog's ball because it's leg is broken.

Here are the correct sentences:

3. We saw our pencils near Robin's school bag. (pencils = plural, not possessive; so no apostrophe needed)
4. This is her school bag, not yours. (yours is never written with an apostrophe)
7. My mother and her mother are friends. (hers is never written with an apostrophe. Also, it is only used as a possessive when it is not followed by a noun, as in This is her book; This book is hers.)
8. Now they are going to sing their song. (Like hers, theirs is used only when it is not followed by a noun)
9. One should keep one's books in order (One's is the only possessive that is always written with an apostrophe)
10. They are taking away the dog's ball because its leg is broken. (When used as a possessive, its is written without an apostrophe. Using the apostrophe init's means you are writing the short form of It is.)

Now rub out the personal pronouns from the circle on the board, and write the possessive pronouns there. Ask the students to make at least three sentences using the possessive pronouns and the pictures.

Let's stop and think

1. Have you ever been confused about the use of the apostrophe? How did you correct your mistake?
2. Making students do error correction helps them see mistakes for themselves. Do you agree? Can you give reasons for your answer?
3. What other grammar items can you teach using a grammar game?

Unit Summary

In this unit we discussed ways of improving students' grammar skills through a few grammar games and activities. We learnt why it is important to teach the use of correct grammar before teaching rules. We also discussed what other teachers have done to teach their students the use of determiners such as possessives. By making students work with pictures and games, you can help them get over their fear of making mistakes. Apart from what you already know, the Internet is full of good lesson plans that you can adapt to fit your class. By giving students regular practice, you will be able to make them internalize grammar rules without making them memorize the rules. This is how we learn a language 'naturally'. By making learners understand that mistakes are a part of learning a language, you will be able to help them become confident users of English.

Suggested Questions

Fill in the blanks with the right answer given in brackets.

1. They live in a very small flat because they have ————money. (little, a little)
2. I really need to see him. I've got ————questions to ask him. (few, a few).
3. We have got ————time at the weekend. Would you like to meet? (a little, little).
4. This boy is not very popular at school. He's got very ————friends. (a few, few).
5. There is ————hope of finding them alive. (little, few).

6. The car belongs to him. It is———car. (his, her, my).
7. The house has a red roof. ———— roof is red.. (Your, Its, His).
8. We have a dog and a cat. They are —— pets .(my, it's, our).
9. Nandita has a new car. She washes —— car every week. (their, her, his).
10. Ramen and Ramala have three children. —— children are very nice. (Their, His, Her).
11. The bike belongs to you. It is ——- bike. (her, his, your).
12. Dogs love to play so it is a favourite activity of ——- .(their, theirs,his).
13. This car is ——— .(my, mine, me).
14. My sister bought that new car last month. That car is ——- .(his, hers, her).
15. Some relatives of ——— are arriving soon. (their, theirs, there's).
16. Are you sure this is ——— .(your, yours).
17. These shoes are not —— .(her, hers).
18. Don't take all the strawberries. Just have —— .(a little, a few, few).
19. Do you mind if I sit here? “ ———”.(At all, Not at all).
20. I like basketball ——— .(a lot, a lot of).
21. I like your dress ——— (many, very much).

