

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching appropriate grammatical forms in communication - use of determiners

CLASS – VII

Unit Overview	Rationale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Additional Reading	
		Learning Outcomes	Learning Gaps to be addressed	Related Lessons	Unit Objectives	Introduction	Case Study 1 Activity 1	Case Study 2 Activity 2	Summary	Suggested Questions		Teaching resources, links & Ideas
<p>Overview of the language skill</p> <p>What the Gunotsav assessment shows us.</p>		<p>L.O.7.16 The learner uses appropriate grammatical forms in communication(e.g. noun, pronoun, verbs, determiners,time and tense, passivisation, adjectives, adverbs,etc</p>	<p>Sub- area 1. Help the learners to use determiners- indefinite article a/ an and definite the appropriately in communication. 2. Practise activities on use of article in sentences.</p>	<p>Unit-8. Fire: Friend and Foe Meadow Surprises. Unit-9. A Bicycle in Good Repair Garden Snake. Unit - 10. The Story of Cricket.</p>	<p>In this unit you will know about ways of helping learner to -</p> <p>1.to use determiners - article appropriately in communication,</p> <p>2.Practise activities on use of article in sentences.</p>	<p>What this unit will teach you</p>	<p>using real life knowledge to practise article use</p>	<p>Use articles through story completion</p>	<p>Learning article use through newspapers</p>	<p>articles in different contexts</p>	<p>What you learnt in this unit.</p>	

Overview

This block discusses strategies and activities that you can use in the classroom to teach use of articles appropriately during communication. To help the learners to attain the expected level, we have to plan activities for correct use of articles during the lesson transactions in Class VII. In this unit there are two case studies and two activities to help learners of Class VII to learn appropriate use of articles. These will help teachers to plan strategies for practice of using articles.

Rationale

The data of Gunotsav 2017 reveals that the learners of Class VII have not been able to perform well in the use of appropriate articles. It has been observed that only 33% of learners were able to use articles correctly. As articles are part of the 'backbone' of English, the ability to use them appropriately is necessary for effective communication.

Unit Objectives

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

1. use articles appropriately in communication
2. practise activities on the use of article in sentences

Introduction

Articles belong to a wider class of determiners. People who have learnt this language as a second language are often confused while selecting the appropriate article. In this unit you will read about some factors responsible for the selection of an article in a sentence and activities on appropriate use of articles. These will hopefully help students to make fewer mistakes in article use.

Case Study 1: Mr. Darpan Boruah uses real life knowledge to practise article use

Mr. Darpan Boruah teaches English in Class VII in Kamrup district. His students could not answer questions using articles correctly during the class test. So he decided to help them to learn articles.

Although the students knew the basic rules of article use such as

- (a) 'A' before initial consonant sound e.g. 'a book' and 'an' before initial vowel sound e.g. an ant
- (b) 'A' before words beginning with 'h' and not accented on the first syllable e.g. an hour
- (c) 'A' / 'an' as indefinite article
- (d) 'The' as definite article

they hardly used the articles correctly when they spoke or wrote English.

Darpan realised that teaching the rules without much practice in usage had not been a good strategy. So he thought of an activity which would make his learners learn to use articles naturally and correctly.

First he asked the students to make a list of household articles such as food items, kitchen items, bathroom items, garden items etc. Then he put the learners in groups of four and five, and gave each group a writing task: they had to choose one area (bedroom / kitchen / garden etc.) from their homes and describe it in five or six sentences.

Before making them write, however, he made them do an oral practice run. He gave an example first: In my kitchen I have *an electric stove*.

He made students say similar sentences. Students came up with sentences, and a few either did not use articles or used them incorrectly. Darpan rewrote their sentences correctly on the board so that they remembered the use, and then asked each group to complete their paragraphs.

After they had finished writing, Darpan made each group read out their paragraph. He noted the paragraphs that had mistakes in article use, and after the activity was over, he had a discussion on the mistakes, and made each group correct the sentences.

In this way, the students learnt the use of articles through a real life activity, without focussing too much on rules. Darpan was happy with the class, and kept doing similar tasks regularly for the students' practice.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Do you think teaching grammar rules through examples can help learners to understand the concepts better?
- ★ Do you think the examples given can help them improve their understanding of correct sentence structures?
- ★ Can adequate practice in grammar help the learners become better writers in the future? How?

Activity 1 : Helping the learners to use articles through story completion

While teaching grammar, it is important to engage students in classroom tasks that make them use the particular grammar point without memorizing rules. Here is an activity you can use to practise the use of articles.

Materials required: A set of short stories of seven to eight sentences. You can copy them from textbooks, story books, online sites etc., or write your own. Make sure the stories have both indefinite and definite articles, and these are used with a variety of nouns and noun phrases. Rewrite the stories in individual sheets of paper, with dashes in place of articles.

Procedure:

Put students in groups and give each group the story sheet. (For example, if you have five stories, make five groups, or ten groups, giving two groups the same story) Set a time limit for each group to do the task. Each group will have to fill in the blanks with correct articles.

After they finish, each group will read out their stories. Other groups will listen carefully, and make a quick note if they hear a sentence with a wrong use of articles.

Once all the groups have finished reading out their stories, give them grades: 10 for a completely grammatical story, 9 for a story with one mistake, etc.

Give the groups that have made mistakes to revise their stories and correct them. If the mistakes remain, give them the correct versions and also explain why there was a mistake.

In this way, through use and discussion of appropriate use, students will get practice in using articles appropriately.

You can do this task more than once, either by giving the stories to different groups, or changing one or two sentences in each story. The more practice students get, the better will be their grammar use.

Here is part of a sample story that you can use. It has been adapted from the website <https://storyweaver.org.in/> by Pratham books. Storyweaver has a wonderful collection of stories for children of all ages. You can read and use them in your class for activities.

For the activity on articles, you will have to insert dashes in place of the articles. This story will also help students understand in which phrases we do **not** need articles before nouns.

Tine and the Faraway Mountain

Today was a big day for Tine Mena. At the age of 25, she had become the first woman from Northeast India to climb Everest. At 8,848 metres, Everest is the highest mountain in the world. It is as high as five thousand men (who are six feet tall) standing on top of each other! This is the story of Tine's journey, a girl who loves to climb mountains.

Whooshoo! Whooshoo!

In the Mishmi hills of Arunachal Pradesh, Tine heard a wondrous call from the distant mountains. She was drawn to it, a sound only she could hear. To be close to her mountains, Tine applied to be a porter for an army expedition. She could carry heavy loads and march for days, shoulder to shoulder with others. But there was one small problem—women were not allowed to be porters. But did that stop her? Of course it didn't! Tine dressed as a boy and began working. She'd carry nearly 25 kilos every day. It took a week for everyone to realise that she was a girl disguised as a boy!

Let's stop and think

- ★ Do you think using stories is a good technique to help your students understand the use of articles?
- ★ In what ways do reading materials from real life help in teaching grammar?

Case Study 2 :Learning article use through newspapers

Ms Mausumi Das is an English teacher of Class VII in a tea-garden school. She found the learners making mistakes with article 'the' while communicating. She tried different activities to teach them appropriate uses of the definite article 'the' in speaking and writing.

This is what she says:

When I felt the learners were unable to use the definite article 'the' in a sentence, I tried to help them through an activity.

- ★ I made groups of five members.
- ★ I gave them a pile of newspapers and a few headlines cut outs.
- ★ Then I asked them to look at the headlines and the related details of the headlines mentioned and note down the phrases containing 'the'.
- ★ Students then wrote the words and phrases from the newspaper using the article 'the'.
- ★ Finally I gave the students another news item, with the articles left out, and instructed them to fill the gaps with appropriate articles. In this way they were able to practise the use of the definite and indefinite articles.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Apart from newspaper headlines, what kinds of texts from the real world can we use to teach articles?
- ★ How would you support the learning of those students who found the activity difficult?

Activity 2 : Familiarizing learners with articles in different contexts

As you know, teaching learners to use definite and indefinite articles is much more than teaching them to use 'a' before words with consonant sounds and 'an' before vowel sounds. For example, here are a few uses of the definite article in which learners need to be given practice in the class:

- ★ before proper nouns- river, mountain range, deserts hotels -when to use an article and when not to
- ★ before leisure activities/ forms of entertainment / travel e.g. the cinema, the pub, the piano etc.
- ★ when there is only one of something
- ★ when we have already mentioned what we're talking about
- ★ with defining relative clauses
- ★ with 'of'
- ★ In superlative expressions
- ★ In comparative expressions
- ★ With particular adjectives

For this activity, put the above points as a list on the blackboard. To help learners become familiar with these uses, use one of their lessons (e.g. *The Story of Cricket*). Divide the class into groups and give each group two or three paragraphs from the lesson. Ask each group to find and note as many examples of the different ways of using definite articles as possible. This is a *noticing* task, which is a useful step to learning a grammar use / rule.

Next, tell each group to write a short paragraph, using two or three different types of articles from the above list. When they finish, tell them to exchange their paragraphs with another group, and correct mistakes if any. You can then put up the paragraphs on a display board or chart and hang it for everyone to read.

In this way, students will get encouraged to notice the use of articles in long texts and begin using them correctly.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How long did the activity take to do in the class?
- ★ Did the students enjoy the activity? Were there any students who were unable to participate in the activity? How did you help them?

Unit Summary

In this unit we discussed some ways of teaching students to use articles appropriately in written and spoken forms. The case studies and the activities have hopefully given you an idea of a few activities that can be used to give students practice in using articles. By giving the learners regular practice in such activities, you will be able to help them to internalise ways of choosing the correct article while speaking or writing English.

Suggested Questions :

Complete the following sentences by filling in 'a' or 'an' or 'the' as may be suitable:

1. Sanskrit is ————— difficult language.
2. ————— Ganga is ————— sacred river.
3. Which is ————— longest river in India?
4. The children found ————— egg in ————— nest.
5. The world is ————— happy place.

Insert articles where necessary:-

1. While there is life there is hope.
2. Sun rises in east.
3. He likes to picture himself as original thinker.
4. May we have pleasure of your company?
5. I have not him since he was a child.

(Collected from High school English Grammar and Composition by Wren and Martin)

Additional Reading :

1. Grammar Practice Activities. By Penny Ur. CUP.
2. High School English Grammar and Composition. By Wren and Martin.