

GRAMMAR DEVELOPMENT

In this section, you will learn about:

1. principles of teaching grammar within a learner-centered, whole language, lifeskills instructional system,
2. how grammar is integrated into the REEP Curriculum, and
3. resources for teaching and assessing grammar.

1. REEP Grammar Principles: The following principles guide the integration and implementation of grammar instruction and evaluation in the REEP Curriculum:

What is grammar?

- Grammar is **a tool for communicating more effectively**, not an end in itself.
- "Grammar is a process of choosing forms and constructing language in response to communicative demands. It essentially involves the learner's **creative response to context and circumstance.**" (*New Ways In Teaching Grammar*, p. vii)
- **Grammar knowledge includes knowing how to recognize** structures when spoken, how to **identify** when written, how to **understand** in context, and how to **produce** meaningful sentences. (*Grammar Practice Activities*, p. 6)

How much grammar should be taught?

As learners progress through the instructional levels, the language needed to effectively communicate ideas becomes increasingly more complex, and hence more emphasis is placed on **communicative grammar instruction, practice, and evaluation.** (Go to *Grammar Integration in the REEP Curriculum* for structures to be taught and reviewed at each REEP instructional level).

How should grammar be taught? For resources, see links on the **REEP Grammar Home Page.**

- Grammar lessons and activities should be **learner-centered**, based on learner needs and priorities.
- Grammar should be meaning based and **practiced in context.**
- Grammar should be taught using **all four language skills.** Students need to produce structures for written and oral communication and comprehend structures when listening and reading.
- Grammar instruction should address different learning styles. Some students derive little or no benefit from direct grammar instruction. Others want and need direct instruction.
- A variety of activity types should be incorporated. Instruction should include activities that focus on form and communication.
- Students should have an opportunity to develop fluency in English **without focusing on grammar.**

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How should grammar be assessed? (Also see Learner Assessment for ideas on assessing learners.)

- Grammatical **errors should be corrected when grammar is the focus** of an activity or when the errors affect comprehensibility. Overcorrection of errors discourages students and impedes communication.
- Students should be assessed on their ability to use structures effectively **within the context of real-life tasks**.
- Students should only be assessed on their **ability to use structures identified for their instructional level**. (Go to Grammar Integration in the REEP Curriculum)
- The **assessment activity should match the instructional focus**. If the focus has been on oral communication, the assessment should be oral. If the focus has been on written communication, the assessment should be written.

2. Grammar Integration in the REEP Curriculum

How do I know what grammar to teach?

The grammar structures to be taught, practiced, and assessed are indicated in each lifeskill unit. Additionally, priority structures for each level have been identified. Read on for more information.

How do I plan for grammar integration in the Lifeskills Levels (100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 450)?

The curricula for the lifeskills levels (100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 450) are organized around lifeskills topics such as work, health, consumerism, etc. Grammar structures are integrated in each lifeskills topic. The grammar to be taught, practiced, and assessed is driven by the language needed to communicate effectively within the topic areas and/or specific performance objectives.

The following example is from the Level 100 Getting Started Unit.

LIFESKILLS PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE	FUNCTIONS AND SAMPLE LANGUAGE	RESOURCES	INTEGRATION
1. Ask and answer questions about self and others (name, birthplace, etc.)	Seek/report info: What's your name? My name is Ana Mendez. Where are you from? I am from Peru.	(Lifeskills and grammar resources)	Structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple Present• Possessive Adjectives• Subject Pronouns• Wh-questions

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The first column states the lifeskills performance objective. The second column identifies sample language that a student at this level needs to produce in order to achieve the lifeskills objective. The integration column identifies the grammar structures that students need to use to produce the sample language to achieve the lifeskill objective. In this way, the grammar to be taught, practiced, and assessed for a particular objective is directly related to the structures found in the sample language.

So, when planning lessons with the REEP Curriculum, it is necessary to consult the integration column for grammar structures to teach or review. In the 100 Getting Started Unit example above, the structures: "simple present", "possessive adjectives", "subject pronouns", and "wh-questions" are taught, practiced, and assessed within the context of the lifeskill objective: "Ask and answer questions about self and others."

What about written grammar?

The majority of lifeskill objectives involve mostly speaking and listening skills. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate activities that develop grammar competence in writing and reading as well. This can be done through integrating writing and reading into the lifeskills topic. Topic related resource suggestions are included in each unit. Also, see Reading Development and Writing Development on the side bar.

What about grammar at levels 400 (intermediate writing) and 550 (academic preparation)?

These levels do not have a lifeskills focus. See 400 and 550 curricula for information about integrating grammar into those levels.

What are the priorities for grammar instruction?

It is important not to try and teach every single grammar structure in the English language. Therefore, two major grammar priorities essential to effective communication have been identified: **Verb Tenses** and **Sentence Structure**.

The structures within each of the priorities are divided into three categories:

- structures to teach, (T)
- structures to review, (R) and
- structures to maintain (M).

These categories reflect the degree to which students are expected to know and be able to use frequently occurring grammar structures. These categories:

- give teachers a benchmark for what to expect of new students in their level,
- help teachers plan instruction, and
- assist teachers in promotion/retention decision at the end of the cycle.

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Teach (T):

These are the structures that need to be taught from scratch. No prior knowledge on the part of the student should be assumed. These structures should be taught within a lifeskills context, whenever possible.

Review (R):

These are the structures that students have been introduced to and have practiced at lower levels or through prior English study. In other words, they have been exposed to the structures and have had some practice with them. Students are not expected to have already mastered these structures. The teacher's task is to reintroduce the structure and provide additional practice within a lifeskills context. The extent of review needed will depend on the particular class.

Maintain (M):

These represent structures that students should be able to use correctly much of the time. That is, these should not require much (if any) explicit instruction or review. However, the necessity of instruction and/or review will depend on a particular class.

What structures should be the focus at the various levels?

-  **Verb Tenses**
-  **Sentence Structures**

3. Additional resources for teaching and assessing grammar:

-  **Teacher Reference Texts** ("how to" textbooks for teaching grammar)
-  **REEP Grammar Favorites** (collection of activities with grammar focus)
-  **Student Texts** (indexed by REEP level)

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