

Teacher's Implementation Guide: Grammar for Writers

A 3-Week Instructional Unit for Secondary English & Cambridge IGCSE Classrooms

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Unit Overview & Philosophy

Grammar is too often taught as a set of isolated, punitive rules that students memorize for a test and promptly ignore when writing. **Grammar for Writers** flips this paradigm.

Instead of teaching grammar as *error-correction*, this unit frames grammar as a **craft tool for construction**. Students learn that understanding parts of speech, clause structures, and sentence types gives them deliberate control over pacing, mood, imagery, and reader impact (Writer's Effect).

Key Pedagogical Anchors

1. **The Construction Mindset (LEGO® Analogy):** Words are building blocks that snap together to create meaning.
2. **Show, Don't Tell:** Mechanics directly serve imagery—replacing weak verb + adverb combinations with single, evocative verbs.
3. **Intentionality Over Rules:** Teaching students *why* rules exist so they know when and how to break them strategically (e.g., intentional fragments for effect).
4. **Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR):** Direct modelling -> Guided analysis -> Peer review -> Independent execution.
5. **AI Literacy as an Editorial Tool:** Explicit instruction on using AI (Scribo) as a thinking partner rather than an author.

3-Week Unit Map at a Glance

Week	Unit Phase	Core Focus Areas	Assessment / Output
Week 1	Foundations & Anatomy	Sentence dissection, direct objects, prep phrases, fragments, run-ons, comma splices	Google Forms Quiz & Diagnostic Review
Week 2	Craft & Precision	Verb aspects/economy, 4 sentence structures, 4 openers, agreement traps, verb tense consistency	Formative Peer Reviews, Verb Spectrums, Sentence Labs
Week 3	Editorial Synthesis	Three-Pass Editing Process, comparative draft analysis, AI feedback evaluation, narrative continuation	Google Docs Annotations, Scribo Practice & Minor Assessment

Daily Lesson Architecture

Every presentation deck in this unit follows an identical, predictable 5-part structure to minimize cognitive load and maximize student engagement:

1. **Bellringer (Vote First, Explain Later):** A high-contrast comparison prompt designed for instant engagement. Have students vote non-verbally before revealing or discussing the reasoning.
2. **Direct Instruction & "Writer's Effect":** Short, visual teaching slides linking mechanical structures to tone, pace, and imagery.
3. **Grammar Lab / Notebook Challenge:** Hands-on application where students write or repair sentences under strict constraints.
4. **Peer Review & Defence:** Partner calibration where students evaluate each other's work using specific grammar vocabulary.
5. **Exit Ticket:** Individual proof-of-concept check requiring both a solution AND a written justification.

Tech Stack & Materials Setup

Before starting the unit, ensure the following digital resources are ready:

- **Presentation Decks:** Slides for Lessons 1–15 (available as .pptx or imported into Google Slides).
- **Google Classroom / Google Docs (Lesson 12):** Assign the 3-draft comparison document (*Lastname_Firstname_EditorsEye*). Set permission to **"Make a copy for each student."**
- **Scribo AI Writing Platform (Lessons 13–15):**
 - **Lesson 13 & 14:** Enable AI Suggestions (Feedback/Grammar Mode).
 - **Lesson 15 (Assessment):** **DISABLE AI Suggestions** and **DISABLE Copy & Paste** in Scribo settings to ensure genuine student performance.

Week-by-Week Teaching Tips & Pitfalls

Week 1 Teaching Notes

- **Lesson 1 & 2 (Sentence Anatomy):** Emphasize the "Sentence Surgery" slides. Physically crossing out verbs or subjects on the whiteboard helps students visualize why clauses collapse.
- **Lesson 3 (Sentence Errors):** When teaching fragments, run-ons, and comma splices, insist that students give the **three ways to fix a comma splice** (Period, Comma + FANBOYS, or Semicolon) rather than relying only on periods.

Week 2 Teaching Notes

- **Lesson 6 (Strong Verbs):** Push students to eliminate "adverb crutches" (*walked slowly* → *stalked*). Enforce the rule: *Say more with less*.
- **Lesson 9 (Agreement Traps):** Teach the **"Cross Out the Prep Phrase"** routine. Students must mentally ignore intervening phrases (*"The basket [of apples] is..."*) to locate the true subject. Watch out for the **Proximity Rule** on *either/or* and *neither/nor*.

Week 3 Teaching Notes

- **Lessons 11–15 (The Three-Pass Process):** Enforce strict boundaries between passes:
 - **Pass 1:** Logic & Story Meaning ONLY (No grammar editing yet!)
 - **Pass 2:** Style, Verbs, Variety, & Showing
 - **Pass 3:** Grammar, Agreement, Tense, & Mechanics
- **AI Literacy (Lessons 13 & 14):** Reinforce that AI is an assistant, not the author. Reward students who justify **rejecting** an AI suggestion when it alters authorial intent or tone.

Cambridge IGCSE English 0500 Alignment

This unit directly supports students preparing for **Paper 1** and **Paper 2 (Directed Writing & Composition)**:

- **AO2 Writing Objectives (W1–W5):** Targets technical accuracy, punctuation precision, subject-verb agreement, and tense consistency.
- **Paper 2 Composition (Narrative & Descriptive Writing):** Teaches participial phrase openings, deliberate pacing via sentence length, sensory "showing" detail, and seamless narrative extensions.
- **Writer's Effect Analysis (Paper 1 Q2):** By learning how word choices and structures manipulate reader emotion in their own writing, students become significantly better at analyzing an author's craft in reading extracts.