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INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH

People who love the English language often lament the loss of grammar knowledge and the disappearance of systematic grammar instruction. We wince at emails with errors, such as when the noun *advice is* is used instead of the verb *advise*. We may set aside a résumé with the incorrect placement of an apostrophe. And some of us pore (not pour) over entertaining punctuation guides such as *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* by Lynne Truss (2003). We chuckle over collections of bloopers such as *Anguished English: An Anthology of Accidental Assaults upon Our Language* by Richard Lederer (1987).

Even though we worry about grammar, our students arrive at school with a complex set of grammar rules in place—albeit affected by the prevailing dialect (Hillocks and Smith 2003, 727). For example, while students may not be able to recite the rule for where to position an adjective, they know intuitively to say *the yellow flower* instead of *the flower yellow*. All this knowledge comes without formal instruction. Further, young people easily shift between articulating or writing traditional patterns of grammar and communicating complete sentences with startling efficiency: IDK (I don't know), and for the ultimate in brevity, K (okay).

So, if students speak fairly well and have already mastered a complex written shorthand, why study grammar? Researchers provide us with three sound reasons:

1. the insights it offers into the way the language works
2. its usefulness in mastering standard forms of English
3. its usefulness in improving composition skills (Hillocks and Smith 1991, 594)

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH (cont.)

Studying grammar also provides users—teachers, students, and parents—with a common vocabulary to discuss both spoken and written language. The Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar states, “Grammar is important because it is the language that makes it possible for us to talk about language. Grammar names the types of words and word groups that make up sentences not only in English but in any language. As human beings, we can put sentences together even as children—we all *do* grammar. But to be able to talk about how sentences are built, about the types of words and word groups that make up sentences—that is *knowing about* grammar.”

With the publication of the Common Core State Standards, key instructional skills are identified, such as identifying parts of speech, using prepositional phrases, capitalizing, and correctly using commas. Writing conventions such as punctuation serve an important function for the reader—setting off syntactic units and providing intonational cues and semantic information. Capitalization provides the reader with such cues as sentence beginnings and proper nouns (Hodges 1991, 779).

The Need for Practice

To be successful in today’s classroom, students must deeply understand both concepts and procedures so that they can discuss and demonstrate their understanding. Demonstrating understanding is a process that must be continually practiced in order for students to be successful. According to Marzano, “practice has always been, and always will be, a necessary ingredient to learning procedural knowledge at a level at which students execute it independently” (2010, 83). Practice is especially important to help students apply their concrete, conceptual understanding of a particular language skill.

Understanding Assessment

In addition to providing opportunities for frequent practice, teachers must be able to assess students’ comprehension and word-study skills. This is important so that teachers can adequately address students’ misconceptions, build on their current understanding, and challenge them appropriately. Assessment is a long-term process that often involves careful analysis of student responses from a lesson discussion, project, practice sheet, or test. When analyzing the data, it is important for teachers to reflect on how their teaching practices may have influenced students’ responses, and to identify those areas where additional instruction may be required. In short, the data gathered from assessments should be used to inform instruction: slow down, speed up, or reteach. This type of assessment is called *formative assessment*.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

With *180 Days of Language*, students receive practice with punctuation, identifying parts of speech, capitalization, and spelling. The daily practice will develop students' writing efforts and oral reading skills.

Easy to Use and Standards-Based

These activities reinforce grade-level skills across a variety of language concepts. The questions are provided as a full practice page, making them easy to prepare and implement as part of a classroom morning routine, at the beginning of each language arts lesson, or as homework.

Every practice page provides questions that are tied to a language standard. Students are given opportunities for regular practice in language skills, allowing them to build confidence through these quick standards-based activities.

Question	Language Skill	Common Core State Standard
1	capitalization	Language Standard 2.2a —Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names.
2–3	punctuation	Language Standard 2.2b —Use commas in greetings and closings of letters. Language Standard 2.2c —Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives.
4–5	parts of speech	Language Standard 2.1a — Use collective nouns. Language Standard 2.1b —Form and use frequently occurring irregular plural nouns. Language Standard 2.1c —Use reflexive pronouns. Language Standard 2.1d — Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs. Language Standard 2.1e — Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.
6	spelling	Language Standard 2.2d —Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words.

Note: Because articles and possessive pronouns are also adjectives, they are included in the answer key as such. Depending on students knowledge of this, grade activity sheets accordingly.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK *(cont.)*

Using the Practice Pages

Practice pages provide instruction and assessment opportunities for each day of the school year. Teachers may wish to prepare packets of weekly practice pages for the classroom or for homework. As outlined on page 5, every question is aligned to a language skill.

Practice pages provide instruction and assessment opportunities for each day of the school year.

Each question ties student practice to a specific language skill.

DAY 1

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS Read and answer each question.

1. Circle the word that needs a capital letter.
My family went to virginia.

2. Circle the correct contraction.
ca'nt di'dnt shouldn't

3. Which is the proper way to write a greeting in a letter?
Dear John-- Dear John: Dear John,

4. Circle the adjectives in the sentence.
The warm cake was cooling on the rack.

5. Write the correct verb to complete the sentence.
The dog _____ under the tree.
(sitting, sat, sitted)

6. Circle the correctly spelled word.
flight
flite
flite

SCORE

1. (Y) (N)

2. (Y) (N)

3. (Y) (N)

4. (Y) (N)

5. (Y) (N)

6. (Y) (N)

____ / 6
Total

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Using the Scoring Guide

Use the scoring guide along the side of each practice page to check answers and see at a glance which skills may need more reinforcement.

Fill in the appropriate circle for each problem to indicate correct (Y) or incorrect (N) responses. You might wish to indicate only incorrect responses to focus on those skills. (For example, if students consistently miss items 2 and 4, they may need additional help with those concepts as outlined in the table on page 5.) Use the answer key at the back of the book to score the problems, or you may call out answers to have students self-score or peer-score their work.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS Read and answer each question.**SCORE**

1. (Y) (N)

1. Write the name of where you live using correct capitalization.

2. (Y) (N)

2. What is another way to write *the party of a friend*?

3. (Y) (N)

a friend's party a friends party a friend,s party

4. (Y) (N)

3. How might you close a letter to your friend?

Your friend Your friend, Your friend...

5. (Y) (N)

4. Circle the adverb in the sentence.

The turtle moved slowly along the path.

6. (Y) (N)

5. Which is the correct plural word?

sheep sheeps sheepes

___ / 6
Total

6. Circle the correctly spelled word.

fixture
fixter
fixtcher



NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS Read and answer each question.

1. Circle the words that need capital letters.

The boat sailed on the indian ocean.

2. Rewrite the sentence with two contractions.

The cat does not see that she is sitting on a toy.

3. Use an apostrophe to write *the roof on the house* in another way.

4. Circle the adjectives in the sentence.

The happy man smiled at his young child.

5. Write the plural noun to complete the sentence.

Sam's _____ were hurting.
(foot)

6. Write a word that has the same *-sk* spelling pattern as in *mask*.



SCORE

1. (Y) (N)

2. (Y) (N)

3. (Y) (N)

4. (Y) (N)

5. (Y) (N)

6. (Y) (N)

___ / 6

Total

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS Read and answer each question.

1. Which word is always capitalized?

Vacation Utah To

SCORE

1. (Y) (N)

2. What is another way to write *the mother of your friend*?

2. (Y) (N)

3. (Y) (N)

3. Add commas to the letter.

Dear Dad
I am sorry you broke your leg. May I sign
your cast?
Your daughter
Alice

4. (Y) (N)

5. (Y) (N)

6. (Y) (N)

4. Write an adverb to complete the sentence.

Max yelled _____ so that his friends
could hear him.

___ / 6

Total

5. What is the past tense of *make*?

maked maken made

6. Circle the word that is spelled correctly.

pitty pity pitey

CONTENTS OF THE DIGITAL RESOURCE CD

Teacher Resources

Resource	Filename
Diagnostic Assessment Directions	directions.pdf
Practice Page Item Analysis	pageitem.pdf pageitem.doc pageitem.xls
Student Item Analysis	studentitem.pdf studentitem.doc studentitem.xls
Standards Chart	standards.pdf

Student Resources

All of the 180 practice pages are contained in a single PDF. In order to print specific days, open the PDF and select the pages to print.

Resource	Filename
Practice Pages Day 1–Day 180	practicepages.pdf