SEND Bulletin NO.19

Grammar (syntax and morphology).

Syntax is about how words are sequenced to convey meaning. This meaning can be changed by rearranging the same words in a different order (eg 'I can run fast' can be changed to 'Can I run fast?').

Morphology refers to the grammar of words and how they are formed. A morpheme represents the smallest unit of meaning in a word. Some pupils with speech and language impairment have difficulties with using bound morphemes such as -ed, -ing, -s, and -es at the ends of words.

Grammar is organising words into sentences, using the correct grammatical word/sentence structure. Pupils who have difficulties with grammar tend to muddle verb tenses. They may find it difficult to pronounce -ed, -ing, and -s on the ends of words and their sentence formation tends to be immature.

Children with difficulties in this area may:
• use immature sentence construction (words may be in the wrong order or missing)
• have difficulty using pronouns correctly
• have difficulty using connectives and articles in both speech and writing
• use word endings (-ed, -ing, -s) incorrectly
• have difficulty with understanding when to use conjunctions and prepositions
• often muddle verb tenses
• have kinaesthetic strengths and learn better through using concrete materials and practical experiences
• have visual strengths and enjoy learning through using visual materials (charts, maps, DVDs, demonstrations).

Activities to develop grammar (syntax and morphology) skills
Tell me
Describe objects/pictures orally for others to guess; must give sentence clues (eg 'It is black. It is made of wood.').

Sentence completion (oral) Complete open-ended sentences (eg 'The dog ran into...'). These can be linked to topic/subject.

Sort a sentence
Reorganise given words into sentences.

Link up
Choose suitable conjunctions to link given sentences.

Sentence completion (written)
a) complete open-ended sentences;
b) complete sentences using simple information texts, (eg 'An insect has...').

Speech bubbles
Write sentences for characters in a comic strip story, card or poster.

Reorganise sentences
Devise a number of three-part sentences on cards (subject/verb/object) and place the separate parts face up on the table. Ask pupils to work in pairs to select three parts that they can put together in the correct order, to make a sensible sentence. See how many sentences they can make (eg 'The boy/was painting/a picture.').

Cloze
a) choice of nouns (eg 'A bus/boy/boat was playing football.');
b) open-ended (eg using spaces for verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or topic/ subject words).

Now and then (verb tenses)
Match sentences to the past or present board; link to topic/subject.

Did you know?
Research then write interesting/amazing information or facts in clear sentences; these can relate to topic/subject.

Who did that?
Match sentences (noun to pronouns), eg The boy ran down the road. (He) went into the toy shop.

Word change
Change an over-used word in a passage (eg big, said); use a simple thesaurus.

If you have any particular items you would like information on or any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin please e-mail them to me:
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Many thanks
Anne