



# GRAMMAR SKILLS

New Tutor Training #6



# READ TO LEARN

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# GRAMMAR

Grammar is a challenge to many native English speakers as well as English language learners. There are so many rules to remember, and let's not forget the number of exceptions to those rules! There are also many types or categories of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other grammar basics (Remember common vs. proper nouns, countable vs. noncountable nouns, and just how many verb tenses are there anyway?) In spite of its complexities, however, grammar is a key skill needed for speaking, reading and writing in English.

Now, here's the good news – **You do not need to be a grammar expert in order to help your adult learner!** It is not necessary to know all the rules and all the exceptions. The focus is on basic skills - those skills that will enable your learner to communicate with others simply, clearly, and effectively.

As you work with your adult learner, keep in mind the importance of modeling correct grammar. This should really take no additional effort on your part – it just comes naturally. Here are some other key points to remember:

- 🎬 Let your common sense lead you. Trust your intuition.
- 🎬 Focus on only one concept at a time. Don't overwhelm your learner with all the exceptions!
- 🎬 Focus on exceptions ONLY when they actually run into one!
- 🎬 Learners do not need to know the “whys” of grammar. The focus is not where the rule came from but how and when to use it correctly.
- 🎬 Minimize the use of worksheets and labels (“past perfect tense”). **Mastery of a concept is demonstrated through independent application.** For example, if you are working on simple past tense verbs, have your learner demonstrate their understanding by writing their own sentences showing correct usage. **If they cannot apply it, they haven't learned it!** Most of our learners (and tutors!) like worksheets because that is what they used in the past to learn grammar. Completing worksheets has a place in the

teaching/learning process, but that activity itself is not the final proof that learning has taken place.

### **Examples of ways to help your learner with grammar**

- While reading, point out the use of articles. Articles are difficult for many, as some languages do not contain them. Address this while reading, writing, or talking, so they have real examples to think about. Then have your learner practice using articles in their daily journal writing or in their spoken communication.
  
- Verb tenses can be confusing. **DO NOT** try to label them beyond “past, present, and future”. **DO** give several examples of the correct use of the tense you are working on. Take notes while they are speaking or writing to see where they need additional help. Then have them talk about something that happened in the past (or will happen in the future) to practice using the correct verb tense. For homework, have them write the story out for you.

Remember, stay focused on the basics!