

Fun Ways to Teach Conventions and Sentence Fluency

Punctuation-dialogue

You could have the characters in the pictures carry on a conversation. You could write the conversation in speech bubbles and have the students write the conversation correctly. This would cover capitalization, comma use, quotation marks and many other things - especially if you threw in things like book titles!

Example:

Speech Bubble 1: What are you looking for?

Speech Bubble 2: My umbrella.

Speech Bubble 3: Why?

Speech Bubble 4: Do you hear the rain?

Students Write:

Henry asked, "What are you looking for?"

James answered, "My umbrella."

Henry asked, "Why?"

James answered, "Do you hear the rain?"

You could also reverse this where you give the conversation and the students write what belongs in the bubbles.

Punctuation Sentence Strips

Write sentences on sentence strips, without punctuation marks. The amount of sent. depends on the length you are willing to let the game go on.

Assign teams (2).

Assign one student to be the display 'patrol' (the person who holds up the sent. strip)

Make 2 sets of punctuation marks on 8 x 10 const. paper.

Place one set of punct. marks in front of each team, (on the floor, board (mag.), desks or where ever the team can get access to it fast).

Have the student patrol display one sent. strip at a time. The teacher, patrol or monitor can say, "Ready, set, Go!"

One student from each team has to quickly pick the correct punctuation mark and race to the end of the sentence, displaying their end mark. Then they have to explain why they chose the punctuation mark.

Daily Language Editing...

I've tried various language practice activities with mixed results. Many of my sixth grade students struggle with grammar and punctuation, run-ons and fragments... This past year, I've focused on what my students need to know (State Standards) and what they do and do not know (based on their writing).

I've pulled various completed papers of my students (without identifying them) and written sentences on the overhead. After explaining the purpose of the language practice (no more than two

corrections regarding spelling pattern, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), I would let the students know that I've noticed many papers with the same challenges. The students are required to write the sentences correctly in their Literacy binders, and then I randomly choose students to come to ...

7-up Sentences

You start by telling students that from now on every sentence they write must have at least 7 words in it and be perfect. Then you pair students and give them a boring, short sentence like: The snake moved. The pairs add adjectives, prepositional phrases, and replace boring verbs to make a new sentence with 7 words or more. Ex. The striped, poisonous cobra slithered through the tall grass. They write it on the bottom of a large piece of white construction paper and draw a picture above it that matches the sentence. The next day, the teacher puts their papers up on the board and the class evaluates each sentence using a checklist like: Correct spelling, capitals, etc..

Group Sentences—a fun way to teach sentence fluency and grammar

Place students in groups of 4 or 6.

Give each student an envelope.

Have each student write a short sentence (4 – 6 words) with no capitalization or punctuation and tear their paper so each word is separate; place words in envelope.

Students pass envelopes clockwise within their group. Students figure out the original sentence and then add words. You can do this any way you wish to teach any grammar skill you wish. For example, tell students to add two adjectives or an adverb, or ask them to add a prepositional phrase. As the sentences get longer, have them create a compound or complex sentence.

Students keep adding words and passing envelopes until each student has received his/her original sentence.

Once the envelopes have come full circle, the originator of the sentence tries to construct a correct sentence from all the words in their envelope. Groups read and discuss sentences. They then choose the best sentence to read to the whole class.

It works best to transcribe the sentences, so students can see them. Discuss each, correcting them if they are not what you asked for.