Parts of Speech Puppetry



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Background

For more than 22 years, I have been an educator, special education teacher, and lifelong learner committed to making learning come alive. My journey began with Miami Dade County Public Schools in 2000 and has taken me from Miami to Kenya, The Gambia, Liberia, and Ghana. These experiences have profoundly shaped how I teach, connect, and inspire.

In 2004, I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, teaching at Ziwani School for the Deaf in Mombasa. I returned to Miami to teach at Carrie P. Meek/Westview Elementary School and later served as a Peace Corps teacher trainer in The Gambia in 2010. I continued my educational work in Liberia and Ghana before returning to Miami in 2017.

I hold a Master's degree in Special Education from the University of Central Florida as a Peace Corps Fellow and an Education Specialist degree from Florida Memorial University as a S.C.I.S.S.O.R.S. Fellowship Scholar.

I believe great teaching is about more than delivering a curriculum. It is about creating experiences that spark curiosity, honor culture, celebrate individuality, and expand what students believe is possible. I bring my love of culture, the arts, and storytelling into my practice to help students see the world differently and recognize their place within it.

Goals and Objectives

Parts of Speech Puppetry is an engaging, hands-on literacy workshop that combines puppetry, storytelling, movement, and interactive activities to help students develop a deeper understanding of grammar concepts. Participants will learn creative strategies for teaching nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and other parts of speech through the use of student-created puppets and dramatic expression. This workshop promotes active participation, collaboration, and multisensory learning, making grammar instruction more meaningful and accessible for diverse learners. Educators will leave with practical ideas, ready-to-use activities, and adaptable resources that can be implemented across grade levels to increase student engagement, language development, and confidence in literacy skills.

- Students create and use puppet characters such as Nancy Noun, Victor Verb, and Addie Adjective to dramatize parts of speech in engaging mini-performances and storytelling activities.
- Students participate in "Grammar Theater," where puppets interact in short skits and students identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and other parts of speech through dialogue and movement.
- During interactive storytelling, students use puppets to retell stories while focusing on sequencing events, describing characters, and using targeted vocabulary words in context.
- Students play collaborative literacy games such as "Verb Charades" and "Noun Hunts," where puppets guide them through identifying and sorting words into categories.
- Learners write simple scripts and dialogues for their puppet characters, strengthening sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, and written expression skills.
- Teachers model multisensory instruction by combining speaking, listening, movement, visuals, and hands-on puppet interaction to support diverse learning styles and increase student engagement.
- Students build confidence in communication and self-expression while practicing collaboration, creativity, comprehension, and critical thinking skills in a fun and supportive environment.

Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards

ELA.4.C.3.1 – Participate in collaborative discussions about grade-level topics and texts.

ELA.4.V.1.2 – Apply knowledge of academic vocabulary to demonstrate understanding of words and phrases in grade-level texts.

ELA.4.C.1.4 – Write expository texts about a topic, using appropriate structure and organization.

ELA.4.F.1.3 – Use knowledge of grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills to decode and encode words accurately.

ELD-SI.4-5.1 – English learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Course Overview

Get ready to bring grammar to life with Parts of Speech Puppetry! In this fun, interactive workshop, learners will create unforgettable puppet characters like Nancy Noun and Victor Verb while exploring creative ways to teach grammar through storytelling, movement, and dramatic play. Participants will learn hands-on strategies that transform parts of speech from "boring grammar lessons" into exciting literacy adventures students will love. This workshop is packed with engaging activities that support vocabulary development, comprehension, communication, and student confidence while appealing to multiple learning styles. Teachers will leave with ready-to-use ideas, hand crafted puppets, puppet activities, and creative tools that can easily be adapted for inclusive classrooms and different grade levels. Students won't just learn grammar, they'll perform it, act it out, and remember it!



Lesson Plan

Title: Parts of Speech	
Instructor: Linda Telfer	Email: l.lubin@dadeschools.net
Level of Lesson: Elementary	Lesson length: 60 minutes
Essential Questions: ➢ How do different parts of speech work together to create a complete and meaningful sentence? ➢ How can we identify and explain the job of each part of speech in a sentence.	
Objectives: ➢ Identify and define key parts of speech (Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, and Conjunctions). ➢ Create a physical puppet representing a specific part of speech character.	
Materials: ➢ Puppet Bases: Clean old socks or standard brown paper lunch bags. ➢ Crafting Supplies: Googly eyes, colorful yarn (for hair), felt sheets, construction paper, markers, pipe cleaners, and child-safe glue or glue dots. ➢ Grammar Props: Index cards and markers.	
Procedures: ➢ Introduce the character using a whiteboard or projector. Have the class act out what each puppet would sound like. ➢ Have each student write 3–5 words on index cards that match their assigned puppet's job. ➢ Hand out the socks or paper bags. Allow students to use yarn, felt, glitter, fabric, googly eyes etc. to build their character.	
Assessment: Meet my puppet worksheet	
ESOL Strategies: Hands-on Activities / Model Task / Visual Cues / Cooperative Learning/Realia	
Reflection:	

❖ This lesson plan is to be used to introduce each part of speech/character.

Lesson Plan

Title: The Sentence Stage	
Instructor: Linda Telfer	Email: l.lubin@dadeschools.net
Level of Lesson: Elementary	Lesson length: 15-20 minutes

Essential Questions:

- Why is it important to understand the job of each part of speech when speaking and writing?
- How can changing one part of speech affect the meaning or clarity of a sentence?

Objectives:

- Collaborate to construct grammatically correct sentences using the puppets in a short performance.
- Identify and define key parts of speech (Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, and Conjunctions etc.).

Materials:

- Parts of Speech Puppets
- Index cards
- Paper

Procedures:

- Put students into groups of 3 to 5 (making sure each group has a mix of different characters).
- Groups must physically line up their puppets (themselves) to build a complete sentence using their index cards.
  Example: Addy Adjective ("Silly") stands next to Nancy Noun ("monkey"), who stands next to Victor Verb ("danced"), followed by Abner Adverb ("happily").
- Each group performs their sentence for the class. When their puppet's word is read, the student must make their puppet act out its personality.
- For added enjoyment allow students to randomly choose words to create silly sentences

Assessment: Complete The Sentence Lab worksheet

ESOL Strategies:
Hands-on Activities / Model Task / Visual Cues / Cooperative Learning/Realia

Reflection:

Lesson Plan

Title: The Great Sentence Jam	
Instructor: Linda Telfer	Email: l.lubin@dadeschools.net
Level of Lesson: Elementary	Lesson length: 20-30 minutes

Essential Questions:

- How do different parts of speech work together to create a complete and meaningful sentence?
- Why is it important to understand the job of each part of speech when speaking and writing?
- How can changing one part of speech affect the meaning or clarity of a sentence?
- How can we use our voices, movements, and creativity to demonstrate the meaning of words?

Objectives:

- Collaborate with peers to construct grammatically correct sentences and perform a short skit using Parts of Speech Puppets.
- Identify and define key parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctions.
- Demonstrate how each part of speech contributes to the meaning of a sentence.
- Read their assigned lines fluently and use voice, movement, and expression to act out their character.

Materials:

- Parts of Speech Puppets
- The Great Sentence Jam skit/script

Procedures:

- Put students into groups (making sure each group has a mix of different characters).
- Assign students roles from the Great Sentence Jam script.
- Students rehearse their lines with their group using their puppets.
- Groups perform their short skits for the class.

Assessment: Performance Rubric

ESOL Strategies:
Hands-on Activities / Model Task / Visual Cues / Cooperative Learning/Realia/Repetition and Choral Reading

Reflection:

Printable Student Worksheets

Meet My Puppet!

Draw a picture of your completed puppet in the box below and then fill out its profile card.

- Puppet Character Name:

  _____

- My Puppet's Part of Speech: _____
- What is my puppet's job in a sentence? _____

  _____

- Write 3 words that my puppet loves to use (Word Cards):

  1. _____
  2. _____
  3. _____

The Sentence Lab

Work with your puppet troupe to build a complete sentence. Write your group's sentence below!

Our Group's Sentence:

Now, let's identify who did what! Fill in the names of the puppets that helped build your sentence:

1. Which **Nancy Noun** was used? _____
2. Which **Victor Verb** was used? _____
3. Which **Addy Adjective** was used? _____
4. Which **Abner Adverb** was used? *(if any)* _____
5. Which **Kwame Conjunction** was used? *(if any)* _____
6. Which **Prisca Preposition** was used (*if any*) _____
7. Which **India Interjection** was used (*if any*) _____
8. Which **Pedro Pronoun** was used (*if any*) _____

The Great Sentence Jam (Lower Elementary)

Characters

- **Nancy Noun:** Friendly and proud. Loves saying, "I'm a person, place, or thing!"
- **Victor Verb:** Full of energy. Always moving.
- **Addy Adjective:** Loves making things colorful and interesting.
- **Abner Adverb:** Loves telling how and when.
- **Kwame Conjunction:** The friend who joins everyone together.

Script

(Nancy walks to the front.)

NANCY NOUN:

Hello, friends!

My name is Nancy Noun.

I am a person...

a place...

or a thing!

But I'm lonely.

I need friends!

(Victor runs in.)

VICTOR VERB:

Did someone say friends?

Let's run!

Let's jump!

Let's dance!

I love ACTION!

NANCY:

Slow down, Victor!

Who is running?

Who is jumping?

You need a noun!

VICTOR:

You're right!

A noun helps me.

Nancy jumps!

That's better!

(Addy twirls in.)

ADDY ADJECTIVE:

Wait!

Wait!

That sentence is too plain.

Let's make it exciting!

NANCY:

What do you mean?

ADDY:

You are not just Nancy.

You are happy Nancy!

Or tiny Nancy!

Or sparkly Nancy!

I tell what someone or something is like.

NANCY:

I like that!

I'm sparkly!

(Abner walks in with a clock.)

ABNER ADVERB:

Excuse me!

I have a question.

How does Nancy jump?

VICTOR:

Good question!

ABNER:

Nancy jumps quickly!

Nancy jumps carefully!

Nancy jumps today!

I tell how or when.

NANCY:

Now our sentence is even better!

(Kwame enters carrying a big paper chain.)

KWAME CONJUNCTION:

Hi, everyone!

Need some help?

ALL:

Kwame!

KWAME:

I connect words.

I connect ideas.

Watch!

Nancy jumps AND Victor dances.

See?

I joined them together!

NANCY:

We all have a job!

VICTOR:

I show action!

ADDY:

I add describing words!

ABNER:

I tell how or when!

KWAME:

I join words together!

(Everyone faces the audience.)

ALL:

A noun.

A verb.

An adjective.

An adverb.

A conjunction.

We work together...

to make a great sentence!

Thank you!

(Bow.)

💡 Tip

Give each puppet a motion that students repeat every time they hear that part of speech:

- Nancy Noun: Point to yourself, then point around the room.
- Victor Verb: Jump or clap.
- Addy Adjective: Make a big "ta-da!" pose.
- Abner Adverb: Tap an imaginary watch, then move hands quickly or slowly.
- Kwame Conjunction: Link two index fingers together.

By the end of the lesson, students will likely begin anticipating the motions and connecting them with each part of speech, making the grammar concepts much easier to remember.

The Great Sentence Jam (Upper Elementary)

Characters:

- Nancy Noun: A bit dramatic, loves to claim ownership of everything because she is a *person, place, or thing*.
- Victor Verb: Energetic, bouncy, can't stand still, speaks in breathless action sentences.
- Addy Adjective: Highly critical of plain things; obsessed with style, color, and description.
- Abner Adverb: The hyper-specific assistant who is always checking his watch and explaining *how* or *when* things happen.
- Kwame Conjunction: The calm, cool peacemaker who literally glues everyone's ideas together.

[The Script]

(The scene opens. Nancy Noun is standing in the center of the stage, looking proud but lonely.)

NANCY NOUN:

(Sighs dramatically) Ah, look at me. I am Nancy Noun! A person! A place! A... magnificent *thing*! But, oh... I am so incredibly bored just standing here.

(Victor Verb zooms onto the stage, doing jumping jacks or bouncing up and down.)

VICTOR VERB:

Did someone say bored?! Not on my watch! JUMP! RUN! SPIN! EXPLODE! I'm Victor Verb, baby! Action is my middle name! Well, actually, "Verb" is my middle name, but you get it! Let's do something!

NANCY NOUN:

Do *what*, Victor? You can't just bounce around. You need *me* to do the action. "Nancy jumps." See? You are nothing without a noun!

VICTOR VERB:

Oh yeah? Well, a noun just sitting there is just a lump! A "Nancy" on a couch! You need me to get things moving!

(Addy Adjective sashays onto the stage, looking at them both with disapproval.)

ADDY ADJECTIVE:

Excuse me, darlings, but this conversation is so... *plain*. So *dull*. So... *gray*.

NANCY NOUN:

Addy! Who asked you?

ADDY ADJECTIVE:

Nobody, but as Addy Adjective, it is my duty to make you look fabulous. You aren't just "Nancy." You are the **sparkly, brilliant, slightly grumpy** Nancy! And Victor isn't just jumping. He's doing a **ridiculous** jump! I add the flavor, sweethearts.

(Abner Adverb rushes in, wearing glasses or holding a tiny clock, looking very precise.)

ABNER ADVERB:

Wait, wait, wait! *How* is he jumping? *When* is he jumping? We need details, people!

VICTOR VERB:

Abner! My favorite assistant! Tell them how awesome I am!

ABNER ADVERB:

Well, you are jumping **wildly**! And you are doing it **now**! I'm Abner Adverb, and without me, nobody knows *how*, *when*, or *where* Victor's actions are happening. You're welcome!

NANCY NOUN:

Okay, okay, so we have: "Sparkly Nancy" ... "jumps wildly now." That is a sentence, I guess. But it feels so choppy.

VICTOR VERB:

Yeah! It needs more action! Let's add... "slept"! Or "danced"!

ADDY ADJECTIVE:

And more colors! "Green"! "Gigantic"!

ABNER ADVERB:

We can't just throw words together! They'll crash! It will be total grammatical chaos!

(Kwame Conjunction strolls onto the stage, cool and collected, holding a giant glue stick or a puzzle piece.)

KWAME CONJUNCTION:

Did somebody call for a bridge?

ALL:

Kwame!

KWAME CONJUNCTION:

That's right. Kwame Conjunction in the house. You guys have great words, **but** you're disconnected. You're like islands. I'm the glue. Watch this. Nancy, Victor, bring it in.

(Nancy and Victor stand near Kwame).

KWAME CONJUNCTION:

"Nancy jumps **and** Victor dances." See what I did there? I connected you! Or how about: "Nancy is sparkly, **because** Addy dressed her." I hold this whole family together.

NANCY NOUN:

Wow. We really do need each other, don't we?

VICTOR VERB:

We're a team! A grammatical dream team!

ADDY ADJECTIVE:

A **glorious, artistic** team!

ABNER ADVERB:

Which works **perfectly**!

KWAME CONJUNCTION:

And we are ready to take a bow! 1, 2, 3...

ALL PUPPETS:

(Bow to the audience) **Sentence complete!**

(End of Script)

💡 Performance Tip

Before passing out the script, have students highlight their specific character's lines in a designated color (e.g., Victor Verb's lines in yellow, Addy Adjective's in pink). Have them practice making their puppets react physically whenever another character mentions their part of speech!

Meet the Cast of Characters

Character Name	Part of Speech	Personality/Design Ideas
Nancy Noun	Noun (Person, Place, Thing, Idea)	**The Collector:** Give her a little "backpack" or paper pocket. She loves gathering labels of things (e.g., "apple", "dog", "school").
Victor Verb	Verb (Action/State of Being)	**The Athlete:** Give him running shoes, sweatbands, or springy pipe-cleaner hair. He is always moving (e.g., "jump", "sing", "run").
Addy Adjective	Adjective (Describes Nouns)	**The Artist:** Highly colorful, decorated with patterns, sparkles, or textures. She describes Nancy Noun (e.g., "shiny", "blue", "silly").
Abner Adverb	Adverb (Describes Verbs)	**The Speedometer/Assistant:** Often wears glasses or carries a clock. He describes *how, when, or where* Victor does things (e.g., "quickly", "loudly").
Pedro Pronoun	Pronoun (Replaces Nouns)	**The Understudy/Stunt Double:** Give him a reversible cape or a mask! He loves to jump in and stand in for Nancy Noun so she can take a break (e.g., "he", "she", "it", "they").
Kwame Conjunction	Conjunction (Glue/Linker)	**The Builder:** Give him puzzle-piece patterns or a tool belt. He holds hands with others to glue sentences together (e.g., "and", "but", "because").
Prisca Preposition	Preposition (Shows position/time)	**The Mapmaker/Explorer:** Give her a compass, a tiny telescope, or draw a map on her back. She shows where things are or when they happen (e.g., "under", "on", "before", "through").
India Interjection	Interjection (Shows sudden emotion)	**The Drama Queen/ cheerleader:** Give her wild, spiked yarn hair, a megaphone, or a big exclamation point on her chest. She interrupts with big emotions (e.g., "Wow!", "Oops!", "Yay!").

Parts of Speech Puppetry: Grading Rubric

This rubric evaluates both individual grammar knowledge and collaborative teamwork.

Criteria	4 - Excellent	3 - Good	2 - Developing	1 - Needs Support
Puppet Design & Character	Puppet is highly creative, durable, and visually represents its assigned part of speech (e.g., Victor Verb looks sporty/active).	Puppet is complete and neatly made, incorporating elements of the assigned character.	Puppet is complete, but does not clearly reflect the traits of its assigned part of speech.	Puppet is incomplete or rushed; lacks effort or character connection.
Grammar Accuracy	All word cards written for the puppet are 100% accurate to its assigned part of speech.	Most word cards are accurate, with only 1 minor mistake.	Word cards are a mix of correct and incorrect parts of speech (e.g., writing "run" for Nancy Noun).	Word cards are incorrect or missing.
Sentence Building & Teamwork	Active and respectful participant in the group; worked smoothly to physically arrange a correct sentence.	Participated well in group work and contributed to building a correct sentence.	Participated with prompting; had some difficulty arranging the sentence correctly.	Did not cooperate with group members or participate in the sentence-building process.
Performance & Presentation	Confidently operated the puppet during "roll call" and the group show, acting out the character's grammatical job.	Operated the puppet and read words clearly during the performance.	Participated in the performance but was hesitant or forgot to make the puppet act.	Did not participate in the final performance.

Great Sentence Jam Performance Rubric

Skill	4 – Excellent	3 – Good	2 – Developing	1 – Beginning
Part of Speech Knowledge	Clearly understands the job of the part of speech	Mostly understands	Needs some support	Has difficulty identifying it
Reading/Fluency	Reads clearly and confidently	Reads with minor difficulty	Needs prompting	Has significant difficulty
Puppet/Character Use	Uses puppet creatively to demonstrate meaning	Uses puppet appropriately	Uses puppet with prompting	Rarely uses puppet
Teamwork	Works cooperatively and supports others	Usually works well with group	Sometimes needs reminders	Needs frequent support

Resource List

- If You Were a Noun by Michael Dahl
- If You Were a Verb by Michael Dahl
- If You Were an Adjective by Michael Dahl
- If You Were an Adverb by Michael Dahl
- A Mink, a Fink, a Skating Rink: What Is a Noun? by Brian P. Cleary
- To Root, to Toot, to Parachute: What Is a Verb? by Brian P. Cleary
- Many Luscious Lollipops: A Book About Adjectives by Ruth Heller
- Up, Up and Away: A Book About Adverbs by Ruth Heller
- Khan Academy Grammar – https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/grammar?
- Khan Academy ELA Practice – https://www.khanacademy.org
- Khan Academy YouTube – https://www.youtube.com/@khanacademy
- Michaels
- Walmart
- Hobby Lobby

Supplies

- Small paper bags
- Socks
- Construction paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, and markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Googly eyes
- Yarn, pipe cleaners, and craft sticks
- Fabric
- Glitter
- Rhinestones
- Pom-poms
- Index cards
- Sentence strips