



How to Make Grammar Charts Engaging

Grammar charts have a lot of important information and are quick, easy-to-find resources. But simply going through the charts in class can be boring. Here are some ideas I've used to make them engaging. I hope your students enjoy them as much as mine have!

BECOMING THE EXPERT (All levels)

STEP 1: Make a copy of the grammar chart you are teaching or reviewing. If you are reviewing several grammar points, use several charts.

STEP 2: Cut the charts into sections, making sure you have at least one rule or example per student. (In most charts, grammar rules are on the left and examples are on the right.) See below for reference:

3.1 Present Perfect and Simple Past Contrasted	
A Use the present perfect to refer to events or repeated actions that continue into the present moment.	Gandhi has inspired people all over the world. (Gandhi inspired people for many years, and his ideas still inspire people now.)
Use the simple past to refer to completed actions.	Gandhi promoted nonviolence against British rule. (Gandhi did this while he was alive.)
B Use the present perfect to refer to an action completed at an unspecified time in the past that has an effect in the present.	The Gates Foundation has supported health care in poor countries. (Poor countries are benefiting from this care now.)
Use the simple past to refer to a completed action in the past that doesn't have an effect in the present.	Bill Gates founded the Microsoft Corporation in 1975. (This is a fact about Bill Gates's past.)

STEP 3: As students come into class, hand them a rule or example.

STEP 4: When class begins, have students find their chart partner. If they have a rule, they must find the example. If they have an example, they must find the rule.

STEP 5: Tell your students they are now the experts on their part of the chart. Each team shares their grammar point with the class.

EXTENSION

A - Have student teams add more examples to their rule.

B - Have student teams check activities to see if "their" rules have been followed correctly.

VARIATION: SEEING CONNECTIONS (High Intermediate – Advanced level)

Follow STEPS 1-3 above, but only cut up and give students the rule side of the chart. In this variation, give 2-3 students the same rule and have them find those partners. Have students look for examples of

their rule in readings, textbooks, or their own writing, but NOT in the grammar book. Students then present their findings to other small groups or to the class.

BENEFITS BEYOND ENGAGEMENT

- 1** - To reinforce the idea that grammar is not an isolated skill but is central to language use
- 2** - To engage students in talking about language and how grammar isn't a set of arbitrary rules