

Flip cards for sentences

ACiQ | v9.0

Teaching strategies for writing in Years 3–9

Best for:



Learning about the genre

Supported writing

Figure 1: Teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka and Jones, 2022)

Overview

Description	<p>The flip card for sentences strategy can be used to support students construct a range of differently structured sentences aligned with the purpose and language features of a specific genre. This strategy provides a scaffold for students to experiment with sentence construction by manipulating the different parts of a sentence such as noun groups, articles, adjectives, and other modifiers.</p> <p>For example, students may begin by selecting a main noun, then choose suitable articles and adjectives to build more detailed or genre-appropriate noun groups. As students interact with the flip cards, they are encouraged to vary sentence patterns, develop control over sentence length and complexity, and apply grammatical choices that suit the genre and topic. The strategy supports both the learning of genre-specific language structures and the development of more flexible, purposeful sentence construction.</p> <p>Teachers may consider sentence structures commonly used in a particular genre of text as well as the content descriptions in the Australian Curriculum v9.0: English sub-strand — Language for expressing and developing ideas in the Language strand. For example:</p> <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">understand that a clause is a unit of grammar usually containing a subject and a verb that need to agree (AC9E3LA06) <p>Year 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">understand that complex sentences contain one independent clause and at least one dependent clause typically joined by a subordinating conjunction to create relationships, such as time and causality (AC9E4LA06) <p>Year 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">understand that the structure of a complex sentence includes a main clause and at least one dependent clause, and understand how writers can use this structure for effect (AC9E5LA05)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how noun groups can be expanded in a variety of ways to provide a fuller description of a person, place, thing or idea (AC9E5LA06) <p>Year 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how embedded clauses can expand the variety of complex sentences to elaborate, extend and explain ideas (AC9E6LA05) understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses and a range of adverb groups (AC9E6LA06) <p>Year 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how complex and compound-complex sentences can be used to elaborate, extend and explain ideas (AC9E7LA05) understand how consistency of tense through verbs and verb groups achieves clarity in sentences (AC9E7LA06) <p>Year 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examine a variety of clause structures including embedded clauses that add information and expand ideas in sentences (AC9E8LA05) understand the effect of nominalisation in texts (AC9E8LA06) <p>Year 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify how authors vary sentence structures creatively for effects, such as intentionally using a dependent clause on its own or a sentence fragment (AC9E9LA05) understand how abstract nouns and nominalisation can be used to summarise ideas in text (AC9E9LA06)
<p>Literacy learning focus — progression levels P6–P11 for Years 3–9 (based on the Literacy learning progression — creating texts)</p>	<p>Text forms and features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses noun groups/phrases to add detail (P6) <p>Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects more specific adjectives (e.g. “giant” for “tall”, “golden” for “yellow”) (P6) uses a range of learning area topic words (e.g. “environment”, “equipment”) (P7) <p>General indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses articles accurately (e.g. “a”, “an”, “the”) (see <i>Grammar</i>) (P8) <p>Informative text indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses adjectives to create more accurate descriptions (e.g. “the warm-blooded mammal”) (see <i>Grammar</i>) (P8) uses a range of technical and subject-specific words to add detail and authority to information (e.g. “hibernate” instead of “sleep”) (P8) uses more elaborate noun groups/phrases that include classifying adjectives and specific nouns (e.g. “mineral component of sedimentary rocks”) (P9) uses discipline-specific terminology to provide accurate and explicit information (e.g. “discipline metalanguage”) (P10) uses extended noun groups/phrases including adjectival phrases (e.g. “a sturdy construction with modern design features”) (see <i>Grammar</i>) (P11) uses complex abstractions (e.g. “economic”, “sociocultural”) (P11)

	<p>Imaginative text indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a range of learnt topic words and words from other authors (P8) • uses complementary noun and verb groups (e.g. “Through narrowed eyes she scrutinised the haggard face.”) (see <i>Grammar</i>) (P11) • uses vocabulary for precision (e.g. “shrouded” for “covered”) (P11) <p>Persuasive text indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses adjectives to persuade (e.g. “dangerous behaviour”) (P8) • uses a range of learnt topic words to add credibility to arguments (P8) • uses topic-specific vocabulary to add credibility and weight to arguments (e.g. “cadence”, “interplanetary”, “silt”) (P10) • uses words that create connotations (e.g. “miserly”, “frugal”) (P10) • uses vocabulary for precision (e.g. “the underwhelming performance of the opening batters”) (P11)
Teacher preparation	<p>Make sets of flip cards, considering the layout for your learning focus. The following example (Table 1) is a suggested layout for constructing noun groups suitable for Year 5 students (AC9E5LA06: understand how noun groups can be expanded in a variety of ways to provide a fuller description of a person, place, thing or idea). On the front of the cards, the parts of the noun group can be printed. On the back of the cards, provide blank space to write. This strategy is best used after teachers have modelled the strategy. Teachers may review the building blocks of sentences and show students how sentences are structured differently according to the genre of a text.</p>

Suggested implementation

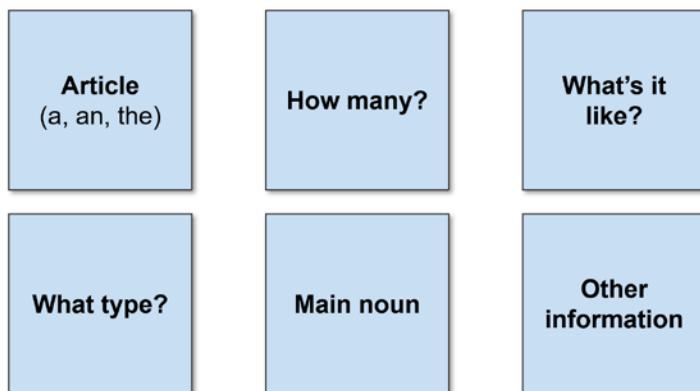
The following example focuses on building noun groups and may be adapted for your learning focus:

1. Through modelling and guided practice, introduce the whole class to the parts of differently structured sentences. Consider using a text related to the genre students are learning about to illustrate the structure of these sentences, e.g. *Binna Burra 25* and simple sentences with elaborated noun groups.
2. Make sets of flip cards (see Tables 1 and 2). Familiarise students with how to use the flip cards. **Note:** Cards can be edited to reflect the sentence structure to be explored.
3. Clarify the purpose of the activity to be undertaken, e.g. to add detail to noun groups, to build richer description by extending noun groups, to enhance understanding of possible phases in a text.
4. Select a sentence to be constructed.
5. Discuss the range and order of the sentence parts that could be arranged for a particular purpose.
6. Discuss what other information may be included. This may involve a discussion of other punctuation or grammatical considerations, such as conjunctions. Add other information to complete the sentence.
7. Review the sentence to evaluate learning.
8. Share the sentences, facilitate self or peer feedback, and create a bank of model sentences.

Flip cards for noun groups



Table 1: Example of using flip cards to create noun groups



- A **Article** — a word that indicates which, how many or how much of the noun it is associated with. The three English articles are: the, a, an.
- B **How many?** — (adjective) a word class that describes, identifies or quantifies a noun or pronoun, e.g. two (quantity).
- C **What's it like?** — (adjective) a word class that describes, identifies or quantifies a noun or pronoun, e.g. ancient (descriptive).
- D **What type?** — (adjective) a word class that describes, identifies or quantifies a noun or pronoun, e.g. wooden (classifying).
- E **Main noun** — (noun) a word class that includes all words denoting person, place, object or thing, idea or emotion. Nouns may be common, proper, collective, abstract and compound and (subject) a word or group of words (usually a noun group/ phrase) in a sentence or clause representing the person, thing or ideas doing the action that follows, e.g. The dog (subject) was barking.
- F **Other information** — an optional addition that may follow the main noun (subject).

Variations

Other templates such as Table 2 can be used to explore sentence construction.



Table 2: Building blocks of a noun group

Adjectives					
Article	How many?	What's it like?	What type?	Main noun	Other information
a		luxurious		bathroom	



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1. 'Teaching learning cycle' diagram supplied by Bev Derewianka co-author of Derewianka B and Jones P (2022) *Teaching Language in Context* Oxford University Press.
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