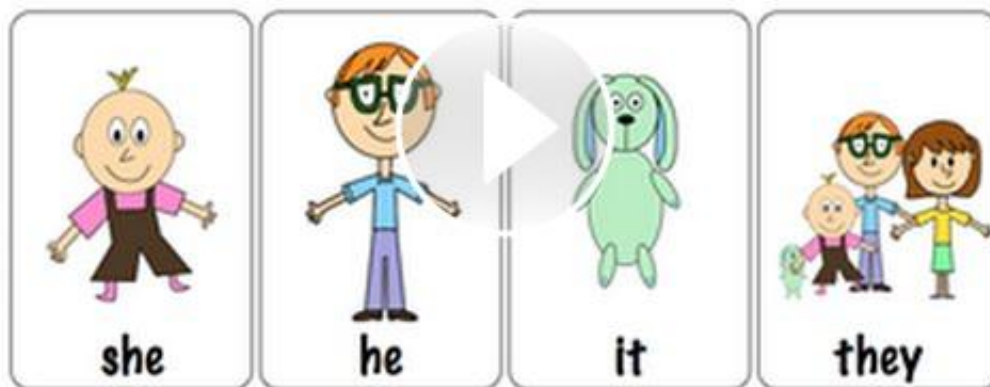


Literacy How-To: Get Comfortable Teaching Syntax

Pronouns



Syntax versus Grammar

One participant's comment at a recent professional development workshop neatly summed up the mood in the room: "Syntax is like sex ed. We know we have to teach it, but we're uncomfortable."

In order to become more at ease with teaching sentence-level skills, begin by understanding that grammar and syntax are not *synonymous*, but related. Grammar has to do with the role/function of words and phrases in a sentence; syntax deals with the arrangement of words and phrases into clauses and sentences. In this way, grammar is to syntax what letters (i.e., sound to letter/s associations) are to words. While letters are used to build words, words and phrases functioning in particular roles (e.g., *who did it?*, *what did it do?*) are the building blocks of sentences.

Words that Link Meaning

An important aspect of syntax is how we link meaning from word to word, phrase to phrase, and sentence to sentence. Several types of words in English link meaning within and across sentences. The role of each of these types of words helps readers and writers make accurate connections, which fosters better comprehension. The video above illustrates a simple activity about pronoun referents.

Want to learn more about Syntax? Explore Literacy How's Reading Wheel for Research, Resources, Teaching Tips, Links, FAQs, Assessment, Fluency, Dual Language Learners (DLLs), Students with Learning Disabilities, Tips for Principals, Observing Syntax Instruction, and Connection to the Common Core State Standards.



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