

## K LANGUAGE STANDARDS: A DEEPER DIVE

In the next three sections, we'll dive more deeply into each grade's Language Standards and look at ways to teach and assess them more systematically, in conjunction with writing instruction. These are by no means the *only* ways to teach these standards, just a few to illustrate how to connect grammar with writing and reading. We begin with kindergarten.

### L K.1.A: Print many upper- and lowercase letters.

#### TEACHING THIS:

This book does not explain phonics instruction, but I recommend K-2 teachers use it to teach students how to read, which means that as they learn sounds attached to letters and phonemes, they also learn how to write them. That said, here are some additional tips:

- For a lesson on patterns, show “letter lines” (A-Z) of upper- and lowercase letters. Ask students to comment on what similarities and differences they notice (e.g., “B” is bigger than “b.”).
- Discuss WHY we use capital letters when writing: 1) to show we are starting a new sentence, 2) to show respect for a name of a person, place, or thing (AKA proper nouns), and 3) to show we are shouting (“IS ANYBODY HOME???”).
- Model writing the letters, reminding students about how they sound and words that begin with them.
- Point to examples of the letters in texts you read aloud.

#### ASSESSING THIS:

Dictated quizzes, especially with erasable white boards, can quickly capture which students are “getting it” and which need more support.

### L K.1.B: Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.

#### TEACHING THIS:

- This standard reminds me of when I first learned to speak French. We were taught to say and write things like, “The book is on the table. The pencil is on the desk. I need some paper. I write. I draw.” In other words: basic, functional things that people could point to and comment on. In *Bringing Words to Life*, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan refer to these as “Tier 1” words.<sup>1</sup> These words are certainly important. But we should not forget that students’ listening comprehension is higher than their reading comprehension, so let’s also use Tier 2 words—more robust vocabulary—when speaking to the little ones. One day a kindergarten teacher came up to me about a week after I’d made this point in a workshop, and she said, “You’ll never believe what happened. One of my students used the word ‘continuum’! I asked him how he knew that word, and he looked at me and said, ‘You used it last week.’”

#### ASSESSING THIS:

- Students can demonstrate this familiarity with basic vocabulary by using index cards with the words on them to build sentences—AKA “literacy

<sup>1</sup> Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* (New York: Guilford Press, 2002), 8.

manipulatives”—or orally by creating sentences with a partner (you could circulate to check on progress).

- Once their penmanship is recognizable, students should *write* their sentences. If students do this in stations during your guided reading block, make sure they receive individual feedback, and be sure that co-teachers or assistants know exactly how to provide that feedback. (PS: This speaks to one of my pet peeves: when students are not given feedback on their work in stations, they often waste time practicing things incorrectly.)

**L K.1.C: Form regular plural nouns orally by adding /s/ or /es/ (e.g., dog, dogs; wish, wishes).<sup>2</sup>**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard. That said, this standard provides an opportunity to discuss “formal vs. informal” language and code-switching. See Chapter 2—specifically “Principle #6: Provide Oral Support”—for suggestions on how to do this.

**L K.1.D: Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).**

**TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard should be paired with *L K.2.B: Recognize and name end punctuation*.
- The most obvious way to introduce this standard is to ask questions orally and point to the written question words for visual support. You will definitely want an anchor chart for the 5Ws and H questions. See “The Most Important Writing Standard” in Chapter 4 for the “5Ws and H Organizer.”
- In morning meetings, ask students questions about whatever topic you are discussing.
- You can kick things up a notch by teaching students how to play “Jeopardy”—responding to an “answer” with a question. For example:
  - “Answer: The Coolest Teacher on the Planet.”
  - “Question: *Who is [Your Name Here]?*”

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- As noted above, to demonstrate understanding of how to use question words, students could play “Jeopardy”: given an answer (e.g., “in Newark”), students generate a logical question (e.g., “Where is this school located?” or “Where do we live?”). This is a good vehicle for reviewing content.
- Dictated quizzes, especially with erasable white boards, can quickly capture which students are “getting it” and which need more support.

**L K.1.E: Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).**

**TEACHING THIS:**

<sup>2</sup> The general rule, of course, is to add *-s* to form the plural of most nouns; add *-es* to singular nouns ending in *-s*, *-sh*, *-ch*, and *-x*. For more information on forming plural nouns, see Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 346-347.

- You will need a soft object such as a squoosh ball or a small pillow—something that won't hurt anyone. Place the object in various locations and emphasize the phrases that capture its location: "The ball is *ON the desk*. The ball is *IN the closet*. I brought this ball *TO school* today *FOR you*." Invite students to generate their own sentences emphasizing the prepositional phrases.
- As always, reinforce oral language with visual support such as an anchor chart listing the prepositions you want them to use or a PowerPoint presentation that quizzes them.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- First, read aloud sentences and invite students to identify the prepositional phrases (e.g., "to him"). You can engage the entire class in practice by doing this with a rapid-fire turn-and-talk approach. Don't forget to model this: "I'll say the sentence once, then Partner A will turn to Partner B and restate *only* the prepositional phrase to Partner B. For example, if I said, 'I gave the book to Joe,' Partner A would turn to Partner B and say, 'TO JOE.' Let's see a model pair try this...." Select a pair to demonstrate, then launch a whole-class attempt. Then cold-call and clarify if anyone was confused. Run a few rounds, then switch the partner roles.
- Students should move from identifying the phrases to imitating your sentences using prepositions, then writing their own.
- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the prepositions belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

#### **L K.1.F: Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.**

##### **TEACHING THIS:**

- From Day One, students should be required to speak with complete sentences in every classroom. As I noted in *The Literacy Cookbook*, the oral practice of expressing complete thoughts translates into more penetrating reading and more coherent writing, plus it teaches other students (who hear these complete explanations) more in the process.<sup>3</sup>
- Whenever you're working explicitly on this standard—which you will probably do frequently—it's important to make students aware of what they are doing. Here's a sample pitch: *Class, whenever we speak or write, we always strive to use complete sentences. We do this because we want people to understand us. If I suddenly blurted out, "Dog!" you might imagine I saw a dog, but you couldn't be sure. Maybe I meant, "I want a dog!" Whereas, if I said, "I see a dog," you would know what I meant. "I see a dog" is a complete sentence, and that's helpful. But it might not be enough. It would be more helpful to be more specific. Like, I could say, "I see a big dog." Or, "I see a big dog on a leash." That way you would know it's OK; it's on a leash. Today we're going to work on building our complete sentences and expanding them to add more specific information....*
- After that pitch, you could tie your instruction to particular building blocks, such as nouns and verbs (L K.1.B), plural nouns (L K.1.C), question words (L K.1.D),

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Tantillo, *The Literacy Cookbook: A Practical Guide to Effective Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Instruction* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 116.

or prepositions (L K.1.E).

- At the K level, students will need lots of practice in both speaking and writing complete sentences. Modeling is key. Also, don't forget to ask, "What do you *like* about that sentence?" Revisit "Principle #3: Ask, 'What Do You *Like* About That Sentence?'" in Chapter 2 for more ideas about this approach.
- PS: This is a great vehicle for reviewing content.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- As students develop their writing skills, you can move from oral assessments to written ones. The key is to assess sentence creation and to make the demonstration of that skill as authentic as possible. As noted above, you might want to target specific building blocks such as nouns and verbs (L K.1.B), plural nouns (L K.1.C), question words (L K.1.D), or prepositions (L K.1.E).

**L K.2.A: Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.**

**TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard pairs well with *L K.1.A: Print many upper- and lowercase letters.*
- Remind students WHY we use capital letters when writing: 1) to show we are starting a new sentence, 2) to show respect for a name of a person, place, or thing (AKA proper nouns), and 3) to show we are shouting ("IS ANYBODY HOME???"). In this case, "I" is the person being respected.
- Write model sentences that include "I" and have students imitate these.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- Dictated quizzes, especially with erasable white boards, can quickly capture which students are "getting it" and which need more support.
- With paper and pencil, you can also give students several words and ask them to use them in a sentence with proper capitalization and end punctuation.

**L K.2.B: Recognize and name end punctuation.**

**TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard should be paired with *L K.1.D: Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).*
- You might begin by inviting students to read two "sentences," noting, "I think something is wrong with one of them. Let's see if we can figure out what it is." For example: 1) "Olivia gets dressed." 2) "Olivia likes to go to the beach" (Hopefully they will notice that #2 is missing end punctuation and suggest adding a period, and you can move into your pitch.)
- Sample pitch: *As we work on writing complete sentences, one thing we need to pay close attention to is END PUNCTUATION. If you write a "sentence" without end punctuation, it's not actually over yet; it's not a complete sentence. If we don't end our sentences, readers will get confused [Give an example of a run-on here, to illustrate such confusion]. The kind of end punctuation we use depends on what we are trying to say. We have choices!*
- Show students sample sentences with periods and exclamation points and read them with dramatic flair to demonstrate the difference. Then move into question marks.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- At the K level, you will begin with oral practice (students telling you which punctuation makes the most sense), then move into reading practice (“Read each sentence and add the appropriate end punctuation”), then move into more authentic writing practice (“Write three questions”).

**L K.2.C: Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes).**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard.

**L K.2.D: Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard.

**L K.3: N/A: Begins in grade 2.****GRADE 1 LANGUAGE STANDARDS: A DEEPER DIVE**

Next, we’ll dive more deeply into the Grade 1 Language Standards and look at how to teach and assess them more systematically, in conjunction with writing instruction. Again: these are by no means the *only* ways to teach these standards, just a few to illustrate how to connect grammar with writing and reading.

**L 1.1.A: Print all upper- and lowercase letters.****TEACHING THIS:** *[This repeats L K.1.A.]*

This book does not explain phonics instruction, but I recommend K-2 teachers use it to teach students how to read, which means that as they learn sounds attached to letters and phonemes, they also learn how to write them. That said, here are some additional tips:

- For a lesson on patterns, show “letter lines” (A-Z) of upper- and lowercase letters. Ask students to comment on what similarities and differences they notice (e.g., “B” is bigger than “b.”).
- Discuss WHY we use capital letters when writing: 1) to show we are starting a new sentence, 2) to show respect for a name of a person, place, or thing (AKA proper nouns), and 3) to show we are shouting (“IS ANYBODY HOME???”).
- Model writing the letters, reminding students about how they sound and words that begin with them.
- Point to examples of the letters in texts you read aloud.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

Dictated quizzes, especially with erasable white boards, can quickly capture which students are “getting it” and which need more support.

**L 1.1.B: Use common, proper, and possessive nouns.****TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard should be paired with *L 1.2.A: Capitalize [dates and] names of*

people.

- When it comes to introducing the differences among common, proper, and possessive nouns, you might begin by showing these three examples: dog, Snoopy, and Snoopy's. Then ask students to explain the differences among these three. Of course, you could also start smaller and simply compare "dog" to "Snoopy," then later move to "Snoopy" versus "Snoopy's."
- In your pitch, it makes sense to focus on the value of clarity. For example: *Why are we paying attention to the little differences between these two words [or among these three words]? Because good writers strive for clarity; they want to ensure that readers know what they are talking about, so they provide clues for the reader. We capitalize names like "Snoopy"—and in fact, we capitalize not just the names of people or animals but also the names of places (like "New Jersey") and things (like "the Democratic Party")—as a sign of respect. We're not just talking about any old dog; we're talking about Snoopy. And we add the "apostrophe -s" to show possession: something belongs to Snoopy.*
- If you want to start with only common nouns, you might tell students that you need to make labels for every object in the classroom and need their assistance. Then take particular care to note why you are NOT capitalizing the labels for common nouns. Then you could label yourself, capitalizing your name, and delve into the pitch about proper nouns.
- After a preliminary introduction to SINGULAR possessive nouns, you should point out that PLURAL nouns can also be possessive. For example, "the children's favorite book" or "my two cats' food bowls." *Since the plural ends with -s (when it's regular), we only add the apostrophe.*
- Students should practice writing sentences that use these different types of nouns.
- Show students how to edit incorrect sentences: by double-underlining the first letter for nouns that *should* be capitalized.

#### ASSESSING THIS:

- Give students sentences without nouns capitalized; they should double-underline the first letter of any word that should be capitalized. Also, either during the quiz or while going over it, they should also explain *why* that word should be capitalized, e.g., "Fido is the name of a particular dog, a proper noun, so it should be capitalized."
- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several words they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) Proper and possessive nouns should be written and punctuated correctly.

#### **L 1.1.C: Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences (e.g., He hops; We hop).**

#### TEACHING THIS:

- This standard should be paired with *L 1.1.D: Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns (e.g., I, me, my; they, them, their; anyone, everything).*
- Show students this information (or other regular verbs you prefer), and ask them

what pattern(s) they notice:

- I talk.-----I laugh.
  - You talk.-----You laugh.
  - We talk.-----We laugh.
  - They talk.-----They laugh.
  - He/She/It talks.---He/She/It laughs.
- They should notice that only the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (He/She/It) verb ends with –s.
  - Ask them to apply this rule with other verbs.
  - Replace the pronouns with singular and plural nouns, and ask them to apply the rule again.
  - This standard provides an opportunity to discuss “formal vs. informal” language and code-switching. See Chapter 2—specifically “Principle #6: Provide Oral Support”—for suggestions on how to do this.

#### ASSESSING THIS:

- Dictated quizzes, especially with erasable white boards, can quickly capture which students are “getting it” and which need more support.
- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several verbs they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) All verbs must agree with their subjects.
- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the verbs belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

#### **L 1.1.D: Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns (e.g., I, me, my; they, them, their; anyone, everything).**

#### TEACHING THIS:

- This standard should be paired with *L 1.1.C: Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences (e.g., He hops; We hop).*
- See Chapter 2, “Principle #1: Treat Students Like Detectives,” for a description of how to introduce **personal pronouns**. See also Chapter 3 for “Cloze Reading Passage: Personal Pronouns.”
- Following from that introduction, which includes the sentence “I met Christine and Rochelle for dinner,” here’s the pitch: *Good writers use pronouns to avoid repeating themselves. Imagine how silly it would sound if I wrote an entire paragraph about dinner with Christine and Rochelle and never used “they” or “them”! “Christine and Rochelle ordered lasagna. Christine and Rochelle liked the garlic bread. Christine and Rochelle talked about their jobs....”* Note: Based on this pitch, students should infer that pronouns should agree with their antecedents (i.e., “they” agrees with “Christine and Rochelle”), but you may need to emphasize this point if students seem confused.
- Use your current read-aloud text as the base from which to translate nouns into pronouns (e.g., replace “Olivia” with “she”). Invite students to help with this.
- Modeling and having students imitate sentences is the key. PS: Students don’t need to know about your golf game. Use sentences from their current text(s) to reinforce content while simultaneously illustrating the grammar points you want

to teach.

- A few technical points:
  - When you're ready to turn to **possessive pronouns** (*my, mine, your, yours, her, hers, his, its, our, ours, your, yours, their, theirs*), remember that some function as *adjectives* (e.g., *my laptop*).
  - Regarding **indefinite pronouns** (*anything, anyone, some*, etc.), most are always singular (*everyone, each*); some are always plural (*both, many*); and a few may be either. Most indefinite pronouns substitute for nouns, but some also function as adjectives (*All campers must check in...*).<sup>4</sup>

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several pronouns they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) All pronouns must be used properly.
- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the pronouns belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

#### **L 1.1.E: Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home).**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard follows from *L 1.1.C: Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences* (e.g., *He hops; We hop*). Once students grasp basic sentence structure (subject + verb=sentence) and present tense, you can move into different tenses.
- **GENRE ALERT: Students will need to apply this standard when working on narrative writing (W 1.3).**
- Show students examples of different tenses. You can even use the exact words from this standard: *Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home*. Invite them to explain how these sentences are different. Discuss the clues such as time-indicating words and different verb forms.
- Note that English is a challenging language with many exceptions to rules, so not all verbs are “regular.” For example, even though we say, “I walked” and “I laughed,” we don’t say, “I runned” or “I haved.” English contains numerous irregular verbs, and you simply have to learn them.
- Model writing a narrative paragraph in either past or future tense, inviting student input as you go. Be sure to point out transitions/signal words such as “then,” “before,” and “after.” Remind students that transitions help readers steer through the text and follow what is going on; you can illustrate this by leaving out some transitions to show how confusing such writing can be.
- Let students imitate and practice sentences focused on different tenses, then move into paragraph writing.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

<sup>4</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 364. See this page for a list of indefinite pronouns.

- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. For **past tense**, they could write a narrative paragraph about “what happened from when I entered school this morning till I arrived in this class” or some variation on that idea. For **future tense**, the topic could be “what I will do between leaving school and going to bed tonight.” Tell them you will score the paragraph based on three things: 1) All sentences must be complete, 2) They should include transitions/signal words such as “then” and “after,” and 3) All verbs must be written in the appropriate tense.
- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the verbs or the transitions belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

### L 1.1.F: Use frequently occurring adjectives.

#### TEACHING THIS:

- **GENRE ALERT: Students should apply this standard when working on narrative writing (W 1.3).**
- Show students a few sentences (ideally about a text they’re currently reading or a topic they’re studying) in two columns: 1) Column 1 should be bare-bones statements with no adjectives; 2) Column 2 should be statements that include adjectives. Ask students to compare the sentences in Column 1 to those in Column 2: *What do you notice? What do you like about the sentences in Column 2?*
- The pitch: *Good writers—just like good artists—use a variety of tools to convey their messages to readers. One key tool is adjectives, which help us SEE what they are saying more clearly. It’s easier to picture a cat if someone describes it beyond saying, “I have a cat.” For example, I could say, “My cat Lulu has mostly gray and black fur, so her white paws look like fancy gloves or socks.” And you would see that. If I added, “And she’s fat—gigantic, really. She weighs 20 pounds!” that would give you an even clearer picture. And keep in mind that adjectives are not just about SEEING; they can address all five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. Starting today, we’re going to pay more attention to how we use adjectives and sensory details in our writing....*
- Show students examples of sentences using adjectives to capture sensory details, and have them imitate these.
- Boost their vocabulary with lists of sensory-related adjectives.
- Then move into students generating their own adjective-laden sentences about a given text or topic. Note: Tying writing to the text or topic at hand is an effective way to review content. It also ensures that everyone has enough background knowledge to generate ideas. The direction “Write about whatever you want” can stymie students because some believe there is always a right answer and they don’t know what it is, while others become so focused on impressing their peers that they cannot decide what to write about. With a common text or topic as the focus, students don’t have to worry about any of that and can put their own creative spin on the material.

#### ASSESSING THIS:

- An early quiz might give students bare-bones sentences and ask them to insert

adjectives to make them more compelling.

- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Ask them to write a descriptive paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) The paragraph must include at least THREE DIFFERENT KINDS of sensory details.

### **L 1.1.G: Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or, so, because).**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- Show students a pair of sentences that could be logically combined with a conjunction—e.g., “I like peanut butter. I don’t like jelly.” Ask them, “If you had to combine these sentences and turn them into one sentence, how could you do it? There is not one right answer here, but I will ask you to explain your thinking. Talk to your neighbor.” Students might come up with “Insert a semi-colon!” (There’s always one in the crowd), but at some point they will realize that inserting “, but” makes the most sense. Note that “but” is called a “conjunction” [specifically, **a coordinating conjunction**], and move into the pitch: *Today we’re going to start paying more attention to conjunctions because they help us build bigger, stronger sentences. And they help us vary our sentence structures so that we’re not always writing short, choppy sentences. With a conjunction, we can combine two simple sentences to form a “compound sentence.” Let’s look at some more short sentences that we can combine with conjunctions—and let’s see if we can figure out what the other conjunctions are, besides “but.”*
- Provide pairs of sentences and ask students to combine them logically. Note that a comma must precede the conjunction when two independent clauses are being combined. [Stunningly, this point is not addressed in the Common Core Standards until grade 4. See *L 4.2.C: Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.*]
- Note the useful mnemonic FANBOYS for coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.*
- Model other uses of conjunctions—phrases such as “this or that” and “bread and butter”—to remind students that conjunctions provide the glue to combine not only sentences but also words and phrases.
- After working through the coordinating conjunctions, introduce “because,” **a subordinating conjunction**, and have students practice Hochman and Wexler’s “Because, But, So” approach (described earlier in this chapter, in the “K-2 Writing Standards with Instructional Guidance” section).<sup>5</sup>

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- Ultimately, of course, you want students to practice using FANBOYS in their own writing.
- Also: per Hochman and Wexler, students should expand sentences with *because, but, and so.*

<sup>5</sup> Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler, *The Writing Revolution: A Guide to Advancing Thinking Through Writing in All Subjects and Grades* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2017), 40-43.

- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the conjunctions belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

### **L 1.1.H: Use determiners (e.g., articles, demonstratives).**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard is a powerful reminder of how difficult it is to learn English. You might read the description and think, *OK, students need to know “A, an, the, this, that, these, those”*: *What’s the big deal?* But if you consult a reference manual such as Hacker and Sommers’s *Rules for Writers*, you will find NINE PAGES devoted to articles.<sup>6</sup> There are nuances to the use of articles that we never think about. For instance, the rule “Use *the* with most specific common nouns” is followed by SIX particular sub-rule situations:<sup>7</sup>
  1. The noun has been previously mentioned: e.g., “A truck cut in front of our van. When **THE** truck skidded....”
  2. A phrase or clause following the noun restricts its identity: e.g., “Bryce warned me that **THE** GPS in his car was not working.”
  3. A superlative adjective such as best or most intelligent makes the noun’s identity specific: e.g., “Our petite daughter dated **THE** tallest boy in her class.”
  4. The noun describes a unique person, place, or thing: e.g., “During an eclipse, one should not look directly at **THE** sun.”
  5. The context or situation makes the noun’s identity clear: e.g., “Please don’t slam **THE** door when you leave.”
  6. The noun is singular and refers to a scientific class or category of items (most often animals, musical instruments, and inventions): e.g., “**THE** tin whistle is common in traditional Irish music.”
- All of this is to say: Do your homework. Buy *Rules for Writers* or some equally comprehensive manual (though I think that one’s the best) to review the minutiae of seemingly easy standards.<sup>8</sup> Then apply the seven principles I explained in Chapter 2. Start by showing examples of how articles and other determiners are used, let students derive the rules, and let them practice using these tools.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- Students should practice using articles and demonstratives such as *a, an, the, this, that, these, and those* in their own writing.
- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the articles and other determiners belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

### **L 1.1.I: Use frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., during, beyond, toward).**

#### **TEACHING THIS:** [*This repeats L K.1.E.*]

- You will need a soft object such as a squoosh ball or a small pillow—something that won’t hurt anyone. Place the object in various locations and emphasize the phrases that capture its location: “The ball is *ON the desk*. The ball is *IN the*

<sup>6</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 270-279.

<sup>7</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 272-274.

<sup>8</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition).

<p><i>closet. I brought this ball TO school today FOR you.” Invite students to generate their own sentences emphasizing the prepositional phrases.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, reinforce oral language with visual support such as an anchor chart listing the prepositions you want them to use or a PowerPoint presentation that quizzes them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First, read aloud sentences and invite students to identify the prepositional phrases (e.g., “to him”). You can engage the entire class in practice by doing this with a rapid-fire turn-and-talk approach. Don’t forget to model this: “I’ll say the sentence once, then Partner A will turn to Partner B and restate <i>only</i> the prepositional phrase to Partner B. For example, if I said, ‘I gave the book to Joe,’ Partner A would turn to Partner B and say, ‘TO JOE.’ Let’s see a model pair try this....” Select a pair to demonstrate, then launch a whole-class attempt. Then cold-call and clarify if anyone was confused. Run a few rounds, then switch the partner roles.</li> <li>• Students should move from identifying the phrases to imitating your sentences using prepositions, then writing their own.</li> <li>• Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the prepositions belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.</li> </ul>

**L 1.1.J: Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts.**

<p><b>TEACHING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This standard should follow from <i>L 1.2.B: Use end punctuation for sentences.</i></li> <li>• After that mini-lesson on “why we NEED end punctuation,” delve into different types of sentences. By this point, students should be familiar with simple and compound declarative sentences (assuming you have dealt with conjunctions: See <i>L 1.1.G: Use frequently occurring conjunctions.</i>), and they should have seen interrogative sentences in kindergarten (See <i>L K.1.D: Understand and use question words [interrogatives] [e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how]</i>). The two new types of sentences are <b>imperative</b> (“Turn off that TV.”) and <b>exclamatory</b> (“Wow, that’s loud!”); you can begin with either one.</li> <li>• In either case, show students examples of the type of sentence you are introducing, and ask them to tell their neighbor what they notice, then share their ideas with the class. With imperatives, they should recognize that the sentences are requests or commands. With exclamatory sentences, they should notice the exclamation point: the purpose is to exclaim.</li> <li>• Students should practice imitating the given sentences, then write their own. You could make this playful by providing scenarios for them to respond to. For example: <i>Imagine someone accidentally spilled milk on your desk. What POLITE imperative sentence might you say? What POLITE exclamatory sentence might you say?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing. Provide prompts/scenarios for them to respond to with a sentence or two.</li> </ul>

### **L 1.2.A: Capitalize dates and names of people.**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- The first half of this standard should be taught with *L 1.2.C: Use commas in dates [and to separate single words in a series]*.
- You can address the first part of this standard every morning by modeling the correct format of the date—e.g., “Monday, January 8, 2018”—and reminding students that 1) we capitalize the NAMES OF DATES (so: days, months, and holidays) and 2) we need the commas to keep the information organized. For example, Monday and January are two different things. The comma between “8” and “2018” makes it easier to distinguish between the date and year.
- To teach the second part of this standard, see *L 1.1.B: Use common, proper, and possessive nouns*.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- Students should write the date properly as part of the heading for any papers they hand in.
- To assess the second part of this standard, see *L 1.1.B: Use common, proper, and possessive nouns*.

### **L 1.2.B: Use end punctuation for sentences.**

#### **TEACHING THIS:** *[This repeats L K.2.B.]*

- This standard should precede *L 1.1.J: Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts*.
- Invite students to read two “sentences,” noting, “I think something is wrong with one of them. Let’s see if we can figure out what it is.” For example: 1) “Olivia gets dressed.” 2) “Olivia likes to go to the beach” (Hopefully they will notice that #2 is missing end punctuation and suggest adding a period, and you can move into your pitch.)
- Sample pitch: *As we work on writing complete sentences, one thing we need to pay close attention to is END PUNCTUATION. If you write a “sentence” without end punctuation, it’s not actually over yet; it’s not a complete sentence. And the kind of end punctuation we use depends on what we are trying to say. We have choices!*
- Show students sample sentences with periods and exclamation points and read them with dramatic flair to demonstrate the difference. Then move into question marks.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- Initially, you will begin with oral practice (students telling you which punctuation makes the most sense), then move into reading practice (“Read each sentence and add the appropriate end punctuation”), then move into more authentic writing practice (“Write three questions about Frog or Toad”). Remember, working on skills is also a good time to review content and assess comprehension.

### **L 1.2.C: Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series.**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- To teach the first part of this standard, see *L 1.2.A: Capitalize dates [and names of people]*.
- To teach the second part of this standard, show students a sentence with a list— e.g., “When I went on a picnic, I brought sandwiches, chips, and water.” Ask them, “Why do you think I needed the comma between ‘sandwiches’ and ‘chips’? Tell your neighbor what you think.” Listen to what they say and steer them toward the notion that the comma separates items so that we can understand what the writer meant; otherwise we might think “sandwiches” was trying to describe “chips.” As we know from studying and using adjectives, adjectives go directly before the nouns they describe (“*fast car*, not *fast, car*”) [See *L 1.1.F: Use frequently occurring adjectives.*]
- To practice, you could play “I’m Going on a Picnic, and I’m Bringing...” but require students to say, “Comma,” after each item in the list: “I’m going on a picnic, and I’m bringing bread, comma, soda, comma, and cheese.”

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- To assess the first part of this standard, see *L 1.2.A: Capitalize dates [and names of people]*.
- Ask students to write a sentence about a current text or topic; the only requirement is that it must include a properly-punctuated list.

**L 1.2.D: Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words.**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard.

**L 1.2.E: Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard.

**L 1.3: N/A: Begins in grade 2.**

**GRADE 2 LANGUAGE STANDARDS: A DEEPER DIVE**

Next, we’ll dive more deeply into the Grade 2 Language Standards and look at how to teach and assess them more systematically, in conjunction with writing instruction. Again: these are by no means the *only* ways to teach these standards, just a few to illustrate how to connect grammar with writing and reading.

**L 2.1.A: Use collective nouns (e.g., group).**

**TEACHING THIS:**

- Remember that students were introduced to different types of nouns in 1<sup>st</sup> grade (*L 1.1.B: Use common, proper, and possessive nouns.*).
- Show students a list of collective nouns such as *committee, group, audience, class, family, and team* and ask them to discuss with a neighbor what they think these words have in common. Cold-calling should elicit that they are all words

- that describe a collection of people.
- The pitch: *Right, and for this reason they are called “collective nouns.” But there is something a little unusual about them. I’m going to give you a few sentences using these words and see if you can figure out what is unusual.*
  - Show them sentences such as:
    - *The group is large, but I think it can fit in that classroom.*
    - *When the rock star appeared on stage, the audience was thrilled.*
    - *The committee gave its approval for the request.*
  - If they are stumped, give them a hint: *Pay close attention to the verbs.*
  - If they are still stumped, underline the nouns and circle the verbs. Then say, *If a collective noun represents a COLLECTION of people, that means it’s more than one person. So wait: why isn’t the verb plural? Why don’t we say, “The group are large”? This is the weird thing: collective nouns are singular. Let’s look at these examples....*
  - Show students collective nouns for places, such as *range (of mountains), forest, suite, library*; and things (including living things), such as *basket, batch, deck (of cards), wad, swarm*.<sup>9</sup>
  - Brainstorm a more complete list of collective nouns for people, places, and things, and make this an anchor chart. Students should practice writing sentences using collective nouns.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several collective nouns they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) Collective nouns should agree with their verbs.
- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the proper verbs connected to collective nouns belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

**L 2.1.B: Form and use frequently occurring irregular plural nouns (e.g., feet, children, teeth, mice, fish).**

**TEACHING THIS:**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard. That said, this standard provides an opportunity to remind students of how we form REGULAR plural nouns (See *L K.1.C: Form regular plural nouns orally by adding /s/ or /es/ [e.g., dog, dogs; wish, wishes]*) and to point out that English is a highly irregular language.
- PS: A quick Google search will produce a list of common irregular plural nouns.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- As always, students need to practice writing with these forms.
- Be sure to review regular plural noun forms, as well. You can design quick quizzes in which students choose the correct form when the correct and incorrect

<sup>9</sup> Jeff Anderson with Whitney La Rocca, *Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language, Grades 1-5* (Portland, ME, Stenhouse Publishers, 2017), 117-118.

forms are provided in context like this:

- The dog/dogs sat on the floor and ate their biscuits.
- For my birthday, I made three wishes/wishes.
- All of the child/children in first grade like cupcakes.

PS: Make sure students underline any context clues.

### **L 2.1.C: Use reflexive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- Show students several sentences using reflexive pronouns (such as those that follow) and ask them to discuss with a neighbor first *Who is the subject?* Then *Who is the object?*
  - I dressed myself.
  - The chef accidentally cut herself.
- Cold-calling should elicit that the subject and object are the same person. This is one way to tell you need a reflexive pronoun as opposed to a personal pronoun: you wouldn't write, "I dressed me."
- Pitch: *Knowing how to use reflexive pronouns makes it easier for you to write more complex sentences. If you didn't know about reflexive pronouns, how could you buy yourself an ice cream cone? How would you say that—"I bought [Your Name Here] an ice cream cone"???* Which brings us to another important point:
- Reflexive pronouns can also be indirect objects, as in "I made a cup of tea for myself." In this case, the cup of tea is the object.
- Reflexive pronouns can also be used as **intensive pronouns**, as in "Bruce Springsteen *himself* sang at her brother's wedding."<sup>10</sup>
- Caveat: Be careful not to replace personal pronouns with reflexive pronouns. "Sandy and myself went swimming" is incorrect. It should be "Sandy and I went swimming."
- Students should practice writing sentences about a current text or topic using reflexive and intensive pronouns.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the proper reflexive or intensive pronouns belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.

### **L 2.1.D: Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., sat, hid, told).**

#### **TEACHING THIS:**

- This standard follows from *L 1.1.E: Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home).*
- Again, we have another opportunity to remark upon how irregular the English language is! Start with the regular forms of past tense verbs—e.g., *talk* → *talked* and *ask* → *asked*—and show students examples of present tense verbs they know, such as *sit*, *hide*, and *tell*. Then simply ask them: *How would you talk about*

<sup>10</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 363-364.

<p><i>having done these things yesterday? Would you say, “I sitted”?</i> Elicit the proper past tense forms for these examples, then show them a vocabulary list of others they will need to learn (easily found online).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch: <i>Why do we need to learn these? Because good writers know these forms and use them fluently. And once you know them, no one can take them away from you.</i></li> <li>• Students should practice incorporating these forms into sentences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several present-tense verbs they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) These verbs must be used properly in the past tense.</li> <li>• Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the proper past tense forms of the irregular verbs belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.</li> </ul>

**L 2.1.E: Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.**

<p><b>TEACHING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This standard follows from <i>L 1.1.F: Use frequently occurring adjectives</i>. (It’s a good idea to review the guidance there.)</li> <li>• <b>GENRE ALERT: This standard is useful when working on narrative writing (W 2.3).</b></li> <li>• In order to teach this standard, it’s important to know the rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns. They usually answer these questions: <i>Which one? What kind of? How many?</i><sup>11</sup></li> <li>○ Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They usually answer: <i>When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?</i><sup>12</sup></li> <li>○ Although many adverbs are formed by adding <i>-ly</i> to adjectives, not all are. Also, some adjectives end in <i>-ly</i> (<i>lovely, friendly</i>), and some adverbs don’t (<i>always, here, there</i>).<sup>13</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• More than likely, adverbs will come up when you are reviewing basic sentence structure. To be complete, a sentence must have a subject and a verb. As Jeff Anderson points out, you can teach this very simply by modeling how to write a two-word sentence: e.g., <i>She laughed</i>.<sup>14</sup> Students then write their own two-word sentences on their white boards and show you, then you extend this approach to</li> </ul>
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<sup>11</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 230 and 367-368.

<sup>12</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 230 and 368.

<sup>13</sup> Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *Rules for Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> edition), 230.

<sup>14</sup> Jeff Anderson, *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s Workshop* (Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005), 65-67.

<p>“three-word sentences” by adding an adverb—e.g., <i>She laughed loudly</i>. Some people like to say that “adverbs add information to the verb.”<sup>15</sup> When students imitate the model, most will likely add an <i>-ly</i> word at the end, and you can seize the opportunity to discuss adverbs—how they often end with <i>-ly</i> but not always (for example, you could have written, <i>She laughed yesterday</i>, which answers the question <i>When?</i> And so on.</p>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several adjectives and adverbs they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) These adjectives and adverbs must be used correctly.</li> <li>• Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the proper adjectives and adverbs belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.</li> </ul>

**L 2.1.F: Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences (e.g., The boy watched the movie; The little boy watched the movie; The action movie was watched by the little boy).**

<p><b>TEACHING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This standard is obviously not a one-shot standard but one you will revisit repeatedly as students draft and revise writing. If you have been following my advice to assess most of these Language Standards by requiring students to write targeted sentences and paragraphs, then every time you collect their work, you have an opportunity to determine which aspects of their writing need revision. When you hand back the original drafts, you can praise and provide constructive feedback on student exemplars. Revision is the phase when we do the most work on expanding and rearranging, and your mini-lessons can convey this message most aptly.</li> <li>• See Chapter 2, “Principle #4: Give Faster Feedback,” for recommendations on how to provide effective feedback to the class, how to run efficient writing conferences, and how to maximize peer feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give students opportunities to revise their sentences and paragraphs. Establish targets for revision such as “Expand your paragraph with the ‘Because-But-So’ approach” or “Clarify and elaborate where your partner raised questions about your writing.”</li> </ul>

**L 2.2.A: Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names.**

<p><b>TEACHING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalization is introduced in K (via <i>L K.1.A</i>, which is actually about printing capital letters, and <i>L K.2.A: Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I</i>) and reinforced in grade 1 (via <i>L 1.1.B: Use common, proper, and</i></li> </ul>
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<sup>15</sup> Jeff Anderson with Whitney La Rocca, *Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language, Grades 1-5* (Portland, ME, Stenhouse Publishers, 2017), 285.

*possessive nouns* and *L 1.2.A: Capitalize dates and names of people*). So teaching this standard should entail a simple review.

- Show students examples in two columns:

Column 1	Column 2
1. Christmas/Thanksgiving	1. morning/evening
2. Nike/Pizza Hut	2. shoe/pizza
3. Florida/Texas	3. house/cottage

- Ask them to figure out what the relationship is between Column 1 and Column 2 and discuss this with a neighbor. Cold-calling should elicit that Column 1 lists proper nouns and Column 2 lists common nouns. If they don't also notice that the proper nouns are capitalized, ask them what else they notice, then steer them towards that realization.
- You should ask students to summarize the reasons why we use capital letters when writing: 1) to show we are starting a new sentence, 2) to show respect for a name of a person, place, or thing (AKA proper nouns), and 3) to show we are shouting ("IS ANYBODY HOME???").
- Students should practice writing sentences that use common and proper nouns.
- Remind students how to edit incorrect sentences: by double-underlining nouns that *should* be capitalized.

#### **ASSESSING THIS:**

- Give students sentences without nouns capitalized; they should double-underline the first letter of any word that should be capitalized. Also, either during the quiz or while going over it, they should also explain *why* that word should be capitalized, e.g., "Fido is the name of a particular dog, a proper noun, so it should be capitalized."
- As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several words they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) Proper and common nouns should be written correctly.

#### **L 2.2.B: Use commas in greetings and closings of letters.**

##### **TEACHING THIS:**

- Find an authentic reason for students to write a letter to someone.
- Pitch: *There are many different ways in which people communicate with one another. We talk face-to-face, obviously; we talk on the phone. What else do we do to communicate? Brainstorm a list of ways in which we communicate: in person, by phone, by text, by Email, by letter—oh, by letter! That's what we're going to do today! We're going to write an old-fashioned letter! Now, before we do this, let's talk about WHY people write letters. What purposes are there for letter writing? Brainstorm a list of reasons why we write letters. Point to today's purpose.*
- Show students a model letter and explain the key features of the form (capitalize

<p>the salutation; use a comma if you know the person or a colon if you don't; and so on).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask them to write the beginning of their letter, and circulate to ensure that they are following the model. Then allow them to proceed. PS: They will probably need to be reminded to indent for new paragraphs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several words they must include in a letter about a text or topic they are studying (e.g., they could write to a character in a story they've read, to a family member they feel grateful toward, or to a public figure to share their concerns about a topic of interest), and tell them you will score the letter based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) They must format their letter correctly, with proper punctuation and capitalization. (Note: You can always modify the suggested criteria; these are suggestions, not rules.)</li> </ul>

**L 2.2.C: Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives.**

<p><b>TEACHING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This standard follows from <i>L 1.1.B: Use common, proper, and possessive nouns</i>. You should refer to the guidance for that standard: you will probably want to implement the described lesson, which helps students discover that possessive nouns are formed with apostrophe –s.</li> <li>• Regarding contractions, I am not sure there is an optimal moment when you should introduce them. We use them all the time when speaking. I would try to find a teachable moment to toss in a quick demonstration of how contractions are formed—i.e., what letter(s) the apostrophe replaces.</li> <li>• Students should practice writing sentences that include possessive nouns and contractions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSING THIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, we want students to demonstrate their grasp of these grammatical concepts in their own writing, first in sentences then in paragraphs. Give them several nouns and contractions they must include in a paragraph about a text or topic they are studying, and tell them you will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) The given nouns must be written as possessive nouns, and the contractions must be used correctly.</li> <li>• Cloze reading (text with blanks where, in this case, the proper possessive nouns and contractions belong) is another useful way to check for understanding.</li> </ul>

**L 2.2.D: Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words (e.g., cage → badge; boy → boil).**

- This book does not explain phonics instruction but recommends its use for this standard.

**L 2.2.E: Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.**

**TEACHING THIS:**

- I do not advocate telling students to “look it up” when you’re reading a text with the whole class and someone asks, “What does that word mean?” Looking it up creates a distraction, and often when students look up word, they don’t understand the definition anyway. Instead, you should ask them to look for context clues or word parts that they recognize, and if that doesn’t work, give them a prepared sentence that provides ample instructive/directive context so they can figure it out. By wrestling with the context to infer the meaning of the word, students will then *own* the word. I’m not saying you should never just quickly tell them the meaning to keep things moving, but they are more likely to retain the word if they’ve had to figure it out.
- That said, sometimes students need to use reference materials such as dictionaries and thesauruses, and they need to learn how to use them.
- The pitch: *Sometimes when we’re reading independently, we come upon or encounter a word that is unfamiliar. We can’t figure it out from context clues, and we don’t recognize any parts of the word. One thing we can do is use the dictionary to look it up. Let’s try that...*
- Have students find a word, then discuss the features of the entry. If it includes an etymology, even better: this is a clue to the roots of the word.
- Since this is probably a new skill for students, ask them what they find challenging about this process so you can address any concerns or confusion.
- Remind students that the dictionary can also help them find the spelling of a word, as long as they can begin to sound it out.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- For a quick quiz, you can game-ify the process of looking up words and using dictionary skills while also reviewing content by simply giving them a few words to look up, with requirements about what information to capture.

**L 2.3.A: Compare formal and informal uses of English.****TEACHING THIS:**

- See Chapter 2—specifically “Principle #6: Provide Oral Support”—for suggestions on how to do this.

**ASSESSING THIS:**

- Ditto.