

General Tips for Teaching Grammar to Teenagers

- 1) Challenge the students' power of observation
- 2) Challenge the students' general knowledge
- 3) Teach students something apart from the grammar
- 4) Give students interesting contexts to practice in
- 5) Use teenagers' competitive spirit to your advantage
- 6) Encourage students to be creative and respond on a personal level
- 7) Think about how and when you correct grammatical mistakes
- 8) Turn things round with the Flipped Classroom (see **Gateway 2nd Edition** and <http://www.macmillanenglish.com/events/flipping-the-classroom/>)
- 9) Present grammar in context and encourage students then to work out the rules for themselves. Then get students to start with more controlled, mechanical practice and open out to freer, more communicative and personalised practice.
- 10) Always have 'low tech' or 'no tech' games and activities up your sleeve

A selection of activities

1) **Question practice ice-breaker**

Give the students the answers to some basic personal questions and ask the students to work out the questions. The answers can be sentences or multiple choice, e.g.:

- 1)?
A Very often B Sometimes C Never
- 2)?
A One B Two C More than two
- 3)?
A Mexico B Russia C Another country
- 4)?
A Yes B No C Don't know
- 5)?
A Surfing the net B Doing homework C Sleeping

The students then use their questions to interview other students in the class and feed back to the whole class with interesting things they discovered.

2) Sentence hangman

_ / _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ =
I / H A V E / N E V E R / M E T / T H E / Q U E E N

Play in teams. Teams get one point for guessing a letter that appears in the sentence, five points for guessing a word, and ten points for guessing the complete sentence. Negative points are given for incorrect guesses. Once the sentence has been discovered, use it to revise/analyse a particular structure.

3) Spaghetti lines

To practise 'have got', students secretly link five different names with five different objects.

Jack	bike
Harry	MP3 player
Emma	laptop
Kate and Amy	tablet
Oliver	calculator

They then take it in turns to guess: *Has Jack got an MP3 player?* The winner is the first person to identify who has each object.

The basic idea can be adapted for many different grammatical structures.

4) Dream Holiday

Students secretly choose one of three different holiday destinations, one of three months and one of three types of hotel. They can only go on their dream holiday if they find someone else who has chosen the same three elements. So they must mingle and ask: *Are you going to New York? Are you going to go in July?* etc.

5) Grammar squares

See Gateway A2 1st Edition SBK page 54 exercise 4/Gateway A2 2nd Edition SBK page 42 exercise 4. Students find a minimum of two things for each square – things that they can both do, things that they can do but their partner can't do, things they can't do but their partner can, and things that neither of them can do. Notice that a minimum of two things means that faster students cannot simply say they have finished after a couple of minutes.

6) Grammar charades

Have two teams. Give students a sentence containing a particular structure (e.g. for the present perfect: 'I have sent six emails this morning'). The students take it in turns to mime their sentence to their team who get a point if they identify the sentence correctly within a time limit. See photocopiable activities in Gateway Teacher's Books for similar ideas.

7) Grammar Grid

Draw a grid on the board (5 x 4). How many grammatically correct sentences can the students make, using only the words in the grid, in ten minutes? Use the game to revise grammar that you have just taught, e.g. present perfect, conditionals, passives...

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Example of words to include at an A1+/A2 level, to practise present continuous, *have*, adjectives, word order, etc.:

singing/ green/ girl/ that/ small/ brother/ have/ I/ is/ years/ car/ a/ there/ are/ people/ ten/ my/ here/ no/ old

8) **Strange routines**

Show students photos or simply the names of some very different famous people, e.g. actors, sports stars, cartoon characters, superheroes, politicians etc. Tell the students to imagine they are this person and imagine their daily routine. Now they work with their partner asking and answering present simple questions to discover which famous person their partner is.

9) **Did you really???**

To practice the past simple, ask students to write a variety of sentences about what they did in the holidays/last weekend. Tell them to make some of the sentences true and some false, but to make it difficult to tell which is which. Students compare sentences in pairs or small groups. They can ask each other follow-up questions about each sentence in order to decide whether they think each statement is true or false. Finally, the students make their decisions and see if they were able to separate the truth from the lies.

10) **Who, What, How**

Ask students to think of as many question words as possible and to write them down. Then ask them to write one question with each question word they thought of to find out information about their partner. (You can control the tenses with your instructions, e.g. for the present simple, tell students to ask questions about their partner's daily routine.) The students then interview their partner using their questions. Finally, ask the students to tell you one interesting thing they found out about their partner. The students can then choose some of their questions to find out information about YOU.

Plus:

See examples of 'Grammar Communication' handouts for each level of Gateway 2nd Edition at

<http://www.macmillangateway2.com>

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