

Grammar Builder Activities

Below are some of the many effective ways to use the *Grammar Builder* Dice Kit. While these activities are good ones, the team at V.C. Educational Consulting encourages you to create your own activities to expand, reinforce, and inspire your tutorial and classroom lessons. If you think of a successful new application for the dice, please share it with us at VCEdConsulting@aol.com. Your ideas will help us to expand future editions of this pamphlet!

SENTENCE STRUCTURE DIE: This die is the core of the *Grammar Builder* Dice Kit. While it can be used alone, it is best used with the Conjunction Dice. This die has graphic templates for the common kinds of sentences in English. It is excellent for expanding the variety of sentences students write. Use the *Grammar Builder* Vocabulary Cards (one set included) to review the kinds of sentences represented on this die. Definitions, examples, and matching templates are found on the Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentence cards.

- Developing students' writing involves lots of practice. In a writing skills lesson, the student rolls the die (typically 1-3 times a day). Each time the student rolls, he writes an example of the kind of sentence selected. This adds variety to sentence writing. If you own Conjunction Dice, after the student rolls the Sentence Structure Die, she will roll the appropriate conjunction die or dice, further specifying the kind of sentence that must be written. If you don't own Conjunction Dice, provide the student with a ready reference list of common conjunctions and relative pronouns (included) and ask him to choose from the list (where appropriate) as he begins to write the sentence. Using this activity daily will develop a student's flexibility with written expression. For variety and challenge, you can choose a topic for sentence writing on a given day and also put a minimum word limit on each sentence (e.g., write a sentence of eight or more words about soccer).

In a classroom setting, choose a different student to roll the Sentence Structure Die each day. Allow the roller to announce the kind of sentence each student is to write on the specified day.

- Take turns rolling this die; the roller explains the kind of sentence rolled.
- Take turns rolling this die; the roller explains how the clause(s) in a sentence of this kind are punctuated and connected.
- Take turns rolling this die; the roller explains what kind of conjunction (if any) is used in the kind of sentence rolled. An alternative has the student naming an example of the kind of conjunction used in the sentence rolled. If the kind of sentence rolled does not contain a conjunction, the student says "no conjunction."
- Take turns rolling this die; the roller provides an example of the kind of sentence rolled.
- Take turns rolling this die; the roller identifies a sentence of the kind rolled from a list provided by the teacher.

Note: The compound sentence sides are inked red, matching the coordinating conjunction die. The complex sentence with adjective clause side is inked green, matching the relative pronoun die. The complex sentence sides (D,I and ID) are inked blue though the subordinating conjunction dice are different colors to correspond with the chooser die sides. In other words, the student can readily identify which conjunction dice go with the kind of sentence he rolled.

CONJUNCTION DICE: These dice complement the Sentence Structure Die. Included are seven dice, one with relative pronouns (green with words including who and which), one with coordinating conjunctions (red with words including and and but), four with common subordinating conjunctions (blue with words including unless, red with words including while, purple with words including wherever, and orange with words including when), and a “chooser” die (with colored circle/target sides) to help students select which subordinating conjunction they’ll use. For activities including the Sentence Structure Die, please see the preceding page.

Omit the Sentence Structure Die for these activities:

- Roll the subordinating conjunction and chooser dice (5 total). The chooser die determines which subordinating conjunction die is to be used. The roller then creates a dependent clause that begins with the subordinating conjunction rolled. With a group of students, another alternative is to omit the chooser die and give each student one of the four subordinating conjunction dice. Each student rolls her own die, creating a dependent clause that begins with the subordinating conjunction rolled. After two or three rolls, everybody should switch dice so that they can practice creating dependent clauses with different conjunctions.
- Roll either the relative pronoun die, the coordinating conjunction die, or the subordinating conjunction dice and create sentences using the word rolled. (These creations can be spoken or written or both.) With a group, have one student roll a particular die and everybody write examples of the sentence required and share their results.

PARTS OF SPEECH DIE: This die includes key parts of speech (noun/pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition). Remember that part of speech is determined by the *job* a word is doing in the sentence.

- Take turns rolling the die. The roller provides a definition of the part of speech rolled.
- Take turns rolling the die. The roller provides an example of the part of speech rolled. Another variety of this activity involves a sheet with columns headed by the parts of speech. When the roller names an example of the part of speech rolled, she writes the word under the part of speech on the sheet. (A sample sheet, which can be photocopied, is included.) Yet another variety has the roller providing an example of the part of speech and then using the word in a sentence. Students can be asked to take their turns aloud or in writing.
- Take turns rolling the die. Use a game board of words that includes examples of all parts of speech (one is included). The roller finds an example of the part of speech rolled on the sheet. Then, the student can place a marker (10 each of 5 colors have been provided) on the word used. Depending on the time the teacher has allotted for the activity, participants can attempt to form a row, four in a square, or any other shape that suits (similar to connect 4 or tic tac toe).

Advanced Usage: An advanced spin on any of the activities above involves an opponent identifying *another* part of speech that the word could be, providing an example of its usage. For example, Student A rolls verb and says run or finds it on the game card, identifying it correctly. Player B notes that run can also be a noun and uses it in a sentence correctly and, depending on activity, earns extra points or replaces her opponent's marker with her own: "She had a run in her stocking." or "There was a run on the new video game at the local toy store." Many words can serve as more than one part of speech depending on the *job* they do in a given sentence.

SENTENCE EXPANDERS DIE: Write a simple sentence and expand it in one of six exciting ways (adjective, adverb, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, adjective clause, adverb clause).

- Take turns rolling the die. The roller defines what he rolls.
- Take turns rolling the die. The roller provides an example of what is rolled.
- Put a simple, barebones sentence in front of the student. As the student rolls the die, she "adds" whatever she rolls to the sentence provided. For example:

Present the student with "The man ran."

<i>die roll</i>	<i>student response</i>	<i>student response applied to the sentence</i>
adjective	tall	The tall man ran.
adverb	quickly	The man ran quickly.
adjective phrase	on the corner	The man on the corner ran.
adverb phrase	through the forest	The man ran through the forest.
adjective clause	who looked like my uncle	The man, who looked like my uncle, ran.
adverb clause	because he was being chased	The man ran because he was being chased.

Other examples include the following: The woman swam. The doctor eats. An astronaut launches. Chickens squawk.

KINDS OF SENTENCES DIE: This die includes the kinds of sentences: interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, and declarative. Declarative is included twice because it is by far the most common sentence.

- Take turns rolling the die. The roller provides a definition of the kind of sentence rolled. An alternative has the roller identifying the appropriate punctuation for the kind of sentence rolled.
- Take turns rolling the die. The roller provides an example of the kind of sentence rolled.

- Take turns rolling the die. Using a list that contains a mixture of different kinds of sentences, locate and mark an example of the sentence rolled.

CONJUGATOR DICE: This pair of dice includes a 1” die with the subject/object pronouns (I/me, you, he/him/she/her, it, we/us, they/them) and a 3/4” die with the three basic tenses (past, present, future).

Dice used together:

- Put a verb in the infinitive form (e.g., to run, to be) in front of the student. (A lengthy list of verbs can be viewed at www.wordbroker.biz.) The student rolls both dice together, determining person, number, and tense. He puts the verb into the correct form. For example:

to run is written on a card in front of the students. The first student rolls it and past tense and says or writes (or both) “it ran.” The next student rolls we/us and future tense and says or writes (or both) “we will run.”

to be is written on a card in front of the students. The first student rolls they/them and present tense and says or writes (or both) “they are.” The next student rolls you and past tense and says or writes (or both) “you were.”

Tense die alone:

- Put any verb in front of the students. The roller puts the verb into the tense rolled.
- Put a sentence in front of the students. The roller changes the sentence to the tense rolled or says “already correct” if he rolls the tense in which the sentence is already written. Different students can put the same sentence into different tenses and compare results.

Pronoun die alone:

- Put any verb already in a tense in front of the students (e.g., run, wept). The roller matches the verb to the number/person he has rolled. For example, the teacher puts were on the desk. A student rolls I/me and says “I was.”
- Put a game board of verbs in a variety of forms in front of the students (one has been provided). The roller finds a verb that matches her roll. For example, the student rolls he/him/she/her and selects runs from the list.
- Put a sentence with a blank for the pronoun in front of the students. The roller chooses the correct form of the pronoun rolled to fill in the blank. For example: The book belongs to _____. The student rolls we/us and chooses us for the blank.

NOUN DIE: This die allows students to practice the different kinds of nouns, whether they’re singular or plural, and whether they’re common or proper. Students will grow more flexible with their noun identification and usage!

- Student rolls the die. Using a gameboard of nouns (a sample has been provided), the student locates an example of the kind of noun rolled. When the student rolls singular/plural, he finds

a singular noun and makes it plural or a plural noun and makes it singular. When the student rolls common/proper he must find a proper noun and suggest a common one to replace it (e.g., Paris = city, John = boy, Spot = dog). Then, the student can place a marker (10 each of 5 colors have been provided) on the noun chosen. Depending on the time the teacher has allotted for the activity, participants can attempt to form a row, four in a square, or any other shape that suits (similar to connect 4 or tic tac toe).

- Student rolls the die, providing an example of the kind of noun rolled.

Contents:

Set of *Grammar Builder* Vocabulary Cards
 Parts of Speech Game Board
 Noun Game Board
 Conjugated Verb Game Board
 empty game board
 Game Chips (10 each of 5 different colors)
 conjunction/relative pronoun reference card

Sentence Structure Die  in small bag within larger bag
 7 Conjunction Dice 

Parts of Speech Die
 Sentence Expander Die
 Kinds of Sentences Die
 2 Conjugator Dice
 Noun Die