

#### **Question 4: Isn't grammar, by necessity, boring? How can it be made to be relevant and important?**

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Yes, the traditional way of teaching grammar can be very boring, for the teachers and the students. But it does not have to be this way. Many teachers teach traditional grammar due to the fact that it is the way that they were taught and simply do not know any other way. There are many ways that grammar can be made relevant and important in the classroom. One way to show students that grammar is important is by helping them discover that it is involved in all forms of communication. Grammar can be found in everyday materials such as: magazines, signs, newspapers, advertisements, television, and the Internet. Seeing that there is grammar in all varieties can help students to apply it appropriately to each situation they encounter.

The traditional way of teaching grammar hasn't worked for students in the past and isn't working today with all of the different dialects students and teachers are faced with. Many students would not hesitate to say that yes, grammar is boring. The way that traditional grammar is taught in the classroom is too unattached to the students and their lives. Adolescents, not to sound stereotypical, are very wrapped up in themselves and their lives. So, a good way to go about teaching them grammar is to show them that it does deal with their everyday lives.

There are many reasons that the traditional teaching of grammar is boring. Many classrooms are put through mindless drills on traditional grammar that has nothing to do with what they are reading or writing. Whole class periods are devoted to mind-numbing grammar lessons, cramming the students' brains with way too many grammar terms to sort out. Another problem with teaching traditional grammar is the worksheets that never end. It is no wonder that students get out of high school and enter college with such shady concepts of what grammar is and what it means in their lives. With traditional grammar, students are learning rules only in a separate context from their reading, writing and speaking. This is problematic because it leads to students not being engaged in the learning of grammar. The emphasis here is only on one "correct" way when it comes to grammar. This alienates students because it makes it seem like grammar is not important in their lives, but only in the classroom.

There are ways to make the teaching of grammar relevant and important in students' lives. As mentioned before, students need to see that grammar comes in all forms, not just Standard English that they find in scholarly textbooks and journals. Teachers need to show students that grammar is part of their everyday speech. A great example of this is code switching. For example, have one student write a sentence on the board using the vocabulary that they speak when they are with their friends. Put the class into groups and have them code switch with Standard English to make the sentence appropriate when speaking to a teacher or any other authority figure. This way they will see that even their "everyday talk" has a grammatical structure to it. This is very important for the students

to know because it will show them that there is not only one form of correct grammar, but some forms are better to use depending on the circumstances. Another way to make grammar relevant and important is to integrate the lessons into everyday activities. Having the students see that grammar plays a role no matter what they are working on shows them that it is worth knowing.

So, as you can see, grammar does not have to be boring for students or teachers. There are many ways that it can be made interesting and fun. As long as teachers are willing to open their minds and change the way that they teach grammar, it will all work out better.