

Exploring Different Grammars

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Grammar has many faces. There is the grammar of rules and textbooks that is most widely known (and cringed at), but there is also the grammar students, and everyone else for that matter, experience daily and throughout their life. There is not one “correct” way to speak and we should not teach students as such. We should, instead, teach them to recognize the appropriate grammar to match the environment, situation, people, places and things. This means that students already know rules for these different grammars. They know the rules of speech between themselves and their teachers, their parents, and their friends. This project aims to help students realize they already know grammar rules and how they can analyze it to find the rules that are inherent in learning how to speak.

It starts off with a group activity meant to help students start thinking differently about grammar. In groups of four, the students list different grammars after I give them my list of examples to help them better understand what I’m expecting from them: Pirate Gramm-Arrr!, Beatnik Lingo, Mommy Talk, Shakespearian Gibberish. Each group then splits into pairs. These pairs pick a grammar from the group’s list to role-play.

From this beginning activity, a class list of grammars is created. From this list, each student is going to pick three grammars to focus on. Their task is to take their three chosen grammars and make a guide for it. They must use at least two of the following: a dictionary, a translation guide (for either the “stickler” or those who are learning the ins and outs of the English language), a do’s and don’ts guide or usage guide.