

Isn't grammar something for elementary school only? Shouldn't high school students already know about parts of speech and other aspects of grammar?

No, grammar is not simply for elementary schools and no, high school students do not already know all there is to know about grammar. Grammar is a complex learning process that evolves over time. Ask yourself this, "Do I know and remember the various parts of speech and grammar that I learned in elementary school?" The answer is most likely, "No." Grammar is like anything else, it can be easily forgotten if not frequently reviewed. For instance, there are certain aspects of grammar that high school students should know such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns. But qualifiers, dangling participles, and nominal clauses are concepts that are important to writing but too advanced for young minds to know so these ideas can only be taught to older students.

Grammar is not simply rules to be memorized and learned once, but a set of tools that students can take with them to become better writers and speakers. As Noden, the author of *Image Grammar*, puts it, writing is like painting. An artist works at their painting and develops skills and techniques to become a better artist. This idea holds true for writers as well. Grammar gives writers those tools and techniques to produce better works of art. Noden sees "the writer as an artist and [sees] grammatical structures as the artist's tools for creating images"(Noden ix).

Haussamen, author of *Grammar Alive!*, discusses that as teachers, we do not even teach students grammar, "children learn that automatically; rather we are teaching students *about* grammar" (Haussamen xiii). Teachers continue to teach about grammar throughout high school to help students "strengthen skills and deepen [their]

understanding” about grammar in order for them to become better speakers and writers (Haussamen xiii).

Along with having a set of tools to improve their writing, students need to continue to learn grammar so that they are prepared for the “real world.” Knowing standard edited English and using it in professional settings can be the difference between a call back after an interview and hearing nothing at all. As teachers, “we acknowledge our duty to equip students with the keys they will need to open doors that might be closed to them on the basis of their speech, not to mention their writing” (Haussamen xii).

Overall, grammar is not something that should only be taught in elementary school, but a continual process that should be added to throughout a students schooling . Learning about the basics at a young age is helpful but there is more to grammar than just the basics. Grammar beyond the “basics” is best taught to adolescents rather than to young children because of the complex concepts grammar involves. Essentially, grammar is a process that is built upon as we grow.

Works Cited

- Haussamen, Brock. Grammar Alive!: A Guide for Teachers. National Council for Teachers of English. Illinois: 2003.
- Noden, Harry. Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Writing. Boynton/Cook Heinemann. Portsmouth:1999.