

# Unit 5: Strengthening Grammar Skills & Expanding Vocabulary (Weeks 30-36)

Content Area: **Template**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Full Year**  
Length: **9 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit 5: Strengthening Grammar Skills & Expanding Vocabulary

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The purpose of this ongoing unit is to strengthen students' command of language through their speech and writing. Particularly, as per the Language Standards, students will expand on their vocabulary knowledge and review and practice grammar conventions. These ongoing exercises will strengthen students' reading comprehension, as they will be able to understand a wider variety of previously unknown vocabulary, as well as strengthen their writing skills, as they will be able to write with clarity and sophistication.

## Essential Questions

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1. How does having a command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage help us become better readers, writers, and speakers?
2. How does an expansive knowledge of vocabulary strengthen our reading and writing skills?

## Pre-Assessments

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As this unit continues throughout the duration of the course, pre-assessments for vocabulary knowledge will occur prior to each whole-class text. Teachers will be informed by assessment data about which words to teach explicitly throughout each particular text. Grammar instruction will be informed by a start-of-year pre-assessment to gauge students' current knowledge of language conventions (parts of speech, sentence structure, etc.). Assessment results will inform instruction of which conventions need to be taught, practiced, and reinforced.

## Instructional Plan

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-Daily Review Sessions

-Quizlet Live

-Emphasis on using context clues to determine unknown words students come across that we don't formally cover in class; if that doesn't work, emphasis on making it a regular practice to look up and define words for yourself.

-Emphasis on constant rereading of own work for editing and revising purposes, i.e., you aren't "finished" until you've edited your work to the best of your ability and/or reviewed it with a trusted classmate/ teacher/ parent, etc.

-Emphasis on using sentence variation, figurative language, and a wider variety of vocabulary to make writing come alive.

## **Parts of Speech**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT understanding and adhering to the conventions of the English language is imperative to effectively communicate.

WALT the English language is continually evolving, therefore usage rules periodically change.

### **Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"**

I can identify parts of speech in multiple sentence types

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

Whole class instruction/review of parts of speech and their functions in sentences: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns

\*Students who perform exceptionally well on pre-assessment will be implemented as "instructors" throughout units to help those who struggle in this area

### **Formative Assessments**

-Weekly Review Sessions: Students will work alone or with a partner on daily reviews so that I can assess their understanding of that week's content; this will inform my instruction.

-Quizlet Live Games: Prior to each quiz, students will play Quizlet Live to review their knowledge of the weeks' prior lessons/ content

-Bi-Cycle Quizzes: Every two cycles, students will take a quiz on the vocab and language content they learned previously; this will inform my instruction, e.g., do I need to review certain concepts more deeply?

-Quarterly Tests: At the end of each marking period, students will be assessed on all vocab and language content they've learned previously; tests are cumulative.

## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Sentence construction, capitalization, and punctuation**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT despite casual messaging norms, we must adhere to all punctuation, capitalization, and spelling conventions when it comes to academic and professional writing.

WALT editing and proofreading our work is the best way to ensure we've spelled everything correctly.

WALT vary our sentence structure to increase the sophistication of our writing.

### **Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"**

I can vary my sentence structure

## **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

Whole class instruction/review of sentence construction, capitalization, and punctuation: types of clauses, phrases, parallel structure, structure variation, run-ons, fragments, semicolons, colons, quotation marks, etc.

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## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

Commonlit

## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

### **Language**

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#### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT use the context - the words around an unknown word - to help us define the unknown word.

WALT understanding basic parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) is essential to understanding vocabulary and sentence structure.

WALT good readers are constantly looking up unfamiliar words; it's completely natural to Google a word!

#### **Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"**

I can use resources to define words I don't know

I can use context to figure out the meaning of words

#### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

Whole class instruction/review of use of language: active vs. passive, verb tenses, figures of speech, etc.

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## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

Commonlit

## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Vocabulary**

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### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT the strongest writers are like artists; they use vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures to paint a particular picture.

WALT there are hundreds of thousands of words in the English language, many of which mean the same thing; however, even synonyms have slightly nuanced meanings, which is why so many words exist.

WALT to expand on our vocabulary knowledge, we must study brand new words assigned to us, continually use context clues and dictionaries to define unfamiliar words on our own, and employ these words in our writing and speech until they become permanent fixtures in our vocabulary set.

### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can identify vocabulary words

## **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

Whole class instruction/review of vocabulary words - all words are either pulled from our whole-class texts or relevant to the content we are reviewing in each unit

## **Formative Assessments**

-Weekly Review Sessions: Students will work alone or with a partner on daily reviews so that I can assess their understanding of that week’s content; this will inform my instruction.

-Quizlet Live Games: Prior to each quiz, students will play Quizlet Live to review their knowledge of the weeks’ prior lessons/ content

-Bi-Cycle Quizzes: Every two cycles, students will take a quiz on the vocab and language content they learned previously; this will inform my instruction, e.g., do I need to review certain concepts more deeply?

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## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

Commonlit

## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

### **Modifications and/or Accommodations**

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#### **Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)**

#### **English Language Learners**

**Native language support:** The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

**Adjusted Speech:** The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

**Visuals:** The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

**Front-Loading Vocabulary:** The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

#### **Special Education Students**

**Chunking:** The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

**Checking for Understanding:** It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

**Extra time:** The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

**Oral Reading:** The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

**Timers:** The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

## **Students with 504 Plans**

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**Extra time:** The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

## **Gifted & Talented Strategies**

**Extensions/Enrichments:** Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

**Modify/Change Activities:** Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

## **Students at Risk of School Failure**

**Directions or Instructions:** Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

**Peer Support:** Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for

clarification before going to you.

**Alternate or Modified Assignments:** Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

**Increase One to One Time:** When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

**Contracts:** It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

**Hands On:** As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

**Tests/Assessments:** Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

**Seating:** Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

## **New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area**

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ELA.L.SS.11–12.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
ELA.L.SS.11–12.1.A	Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and place, and is sometimes contested.
ELA.L.SS.11–12.1.B	Observe hyphenation conventions.
ELA.L.SS.11–12.1.C	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.L.KL.11–12.2	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
ELA.L.KL.11–12.2.A	Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.
ELA.L.KL.11–12.2.B	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
ELA.L.KL.11–12.2.C	Demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases

	based on grades 11–12 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3.B	Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable).
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3.C	Analyze how an author or speaker uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text or discussion.
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3.D	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3.E	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
ELA.L.VI.11–12.4	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings, including connotative meanings.
ELA.L.VI.11–12.4.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
ELA.L.VI.11–12.4.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
ELA.L.VI.11–12.4.C	Analyze how the meaning of a key term or terms develops or is refined over the course of a text.
ELA.L.VI.11–12.4.D	Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
ELA.W.RW.11–12.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

## **Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills**

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CAEP.9.2.12.C.3	Identify transferable career skills and design alternate career plans.
CAEP.9.2.12.C.4	Analyze how economic conditions and societal changes influence employment trends and future education.
CAEP.9.2.12.C.5	Research career opportunities in the United States and abroad that require knowledge of world languages and diverse cultures.
CAEP.9.2.12.C.6	Investigate entrepreneurship opportunities as options for career planning and identify the knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources required for owning and managing a business.
TECH.9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).

## **Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking**

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CS.K-12.2.a	Cultivate working relationships with individuals possessing diverse perspectives, skills, and personalities.
CS.K-12.2.c	Solicit and incorporate feedback from, and provide constructive feedback to, team members and other stakeholders.

## **Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSL for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math**

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SOC.K-12.5

Presenting Arguments and Explanations

Using a variety of formats designed for a purpose and an authentic audience forms the basis for clear communication. Strong arguments contain claims with organized evidence and valid reasoning that respects the diversity of the world and the dignity of each person. Writing findings and engaging in civil discussion with an audience provides a key step in the process of thinking critically about conclusions and continued inquiry.

## **21st Century Life and Career**

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CRP.K-12.CRP1

Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.

CRP.K-12.CRP2

Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP.K-12.CRP3

Attend to personal health and financial well-being.

CRP.K-12.CRP4

Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP.K-12.CRP5

Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.

CRP.K-12.CRP6

Demonstrate creativity and innovation.

CRP.K-12.CRP7

Employ valid and reliable research strategies.

CRP.K-12.CRP8

Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

CRP.K-12.CRP9

Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.

CRP.K-12.CRP10

Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.

CRP.K-12.CRP11

Use technology to enhance productivity.

CRP.K-12.CRP12

Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

## **Integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Climate Change, Informational and Media Literacy**

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See Crosswalks

## **SEL Competencies**

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SEL.PK-12.3.3

Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ

SEL.PK-12.4.1

Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills

SEL.PK-12.5.2

Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others