

# Grammar Zones

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A cooperative group adventure through  
four basic parts of speech

Grades 3–6



**About the Author:**

Mary Fisk Pack has taught elementary school since 1988, both in California and Sydney, Australia. She believes that children are not vessels to be filled, but treasure chests to be unlocked. Mary's teaching and writing grow from the knowledge that true learning happens when children actively engage in relevant, enjoyable activities. She has extensive training in cooperative learning techniques, which she has incorporated into this unit. Her passions include writing, teaching, and spending time with her family.

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## **Welcome to *Grammar Zones!***

Take your students on an exciting journey through four basic parts of speech—the *Grammar Zones!*

Your third- through sixth-grade students will work in Grammar Groups as they learn about and practice using nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. By completing a variety of creative activities, they earn their way through all four zones on the Grammar Zones map.

Students work together to solve a mystery in Noun Town, revitalize a shop on Adjective Avenue, vacation in Verb Valley, and climb Adverb Bluff. Which group reaches the summit first will depend on their grammar skills, their effort, and a little luck, as fate cards are drawn. A whole-class game of GRAMO incorporates everything they learn along the way.

Activities can be done as individuals or groups, and include building word banks, creating billboards, writing postcards, and completing worksheets. The possibilities are endless for adding or changing activities to meet the needs of your learners.

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## Purpose and Overview

### What is *Grammar Zones*?

*Grammar Zones* is a cooperative group unit that explores four basic parts of speech using a travel game format. As individuals and in Grammar Groups, students complete various activities to earn rewards that move them along the Grammar Zones map.

The adventure begins in Noun Town, a peaceful village filled with friendly and honest folks. But—oh, no!—someone has committed a crime, disrupting the serene setting and creating a frenzy in the air. Initially, students have very little information to help them solve the mystery. They create a class book of nouns and practice using irregular, proper, and possessive nouns, as well as pronouns, to earn clues that will lead them to find the *person* who committed the crime, the *place* where it happened, and the *thing* that was taken.

Groups then travel to Adjective Avenue only to find a once bustling downtown marketplace filled with thriving shops is now struggling to attract customers. Groups use reward money earned for solving The Mystery of Noun Town to purchase a shop to revitalize. As they build an adjective bank and put their words to work on displays and billboards for their shop, they keep track of their shop earnings and expenditures in a checkbook.

After their success on Adjective Avenue, groups earn a vacation to Verb Valley, which boasts a lake for water sports, a tri-level library, a gymnasium, a performing arts studio, and playing fields galore. Grammar Groups choose a recreational spot then brainstorm actions (verbs) they will do there. They conjugate verbs and use irregular verbs to write postcards and a paragraph for the Verb Valley newsletter, all the while earning climbing equipment to help them ascend Adverb Bluff.

To reach the summit, groups build an adverb bank using “how,” “when,” and “where” adverbs; and they diagram sentences. As they practice using adverbs to earn steps up the bluff, groups are faced with fates that affect their movement on the map. Their preparedness may keep them climbing, but sometimes only their grammar skills will get them out of a jam.

When all groups have conquered Adverb Bluff, the whole class shares in a culminating game of GRAMO, celebrating and recognizing the great heights they’ve reached in this unit.



### What do students learn?

The activities within this unit are correlated to national and state education standards. To obtain specific standards information for this title, go to [www.teachinteract.com](http://www.teachinteract.com) or contact us at 1-800-359-0961.

By using *Grammar Zones*, your students will gain and experience the following:

#### **Knowledge**

- Learn the “jobs” of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs
- Recognize patterns of regular plural nouns and pronouns
- Compare with adjectives using *-er*, *-est*, *more*, and *most*
- Learn the present and past tense of verbs
- Build vocabulary by creating part-of-speech word banks

#### **Skills**

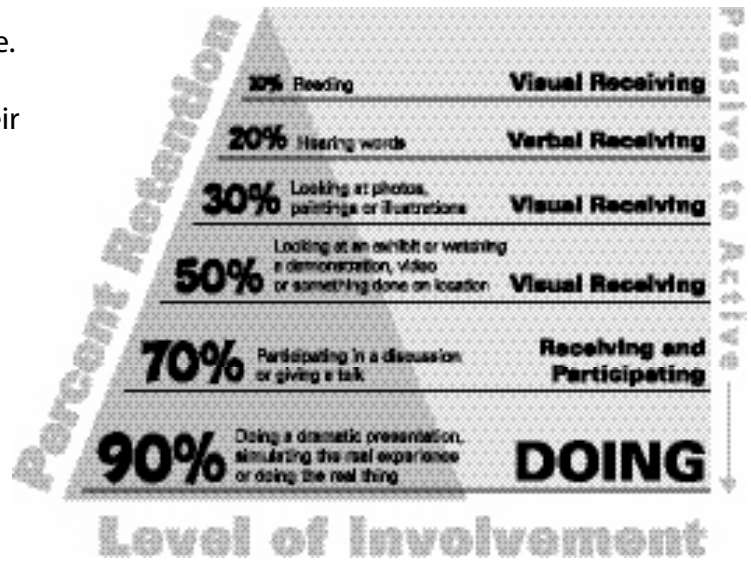
- Diagram simple sentences
- Work collaboratively with peers
- Write letters, book summaries, and paragraphs with a purpose
- Present effectively
- Use deductive reasoning to solve a mystery
- Practice working with possessive nouns
- Build sentences using the four main parts of speech
- Sort adverbs
- Enhance paragraphs by adding adverbs

#### **Attitudes**

- Develop a positive attitude toward the mechanics of English
- Feel challenged as they tackle interactive activities
- Feel satisfaction as their Grammar Groups move through zones
- Gain confidence as their writing skills improve

### Experiential Learning

Students learn best through experience. Research shows that student retention and true understanding increase as their active involvement increases. In short, we want students doing, or simulating, more of the real thing. *Grammar Zones* gives many opportunities for active learning experiences like enhancing a billboard using descriptive adjectives, brainstorming verbs, writing a friendly letter and a real book summary, and sorting adverbs.



Adapted from Edgar Dale's "Cone of Experience"

### How are students organized?

Students are organized into Grammar Groups. Ideally these groups are heterogeneous—balancing gender, skill level, and leadership tendencies—and include five or fewer members. Students remain in their Grammar Groups throughout the unit.

Having students work in groups is an important aspect of this unit. Students working together experience the satisfaction of achieving a common goal. A group can achieve more than a single individual by pooling knowledge, creating group spirit, and providing encouragement to each other—all part of the learning process. Sharing ideas often leads to more solutions than with individual effort. Encouraging children to rely on themselves and one another will help them to develop responsibility and to gain confidence and independence.

Some lessons contain independent activities that can also be done in pairs or as groups.

### How much time is required?

*Grammar Zones* is designed to take six weeks of class time. This time frame requires you to complete one lesson per 50–60 minute class period. Some lessons include extension activities that can be used as replacement activities or added to your unit. See the Unit Time Chart on page 10.



### How is learning assessed?

All activities within *Grammar Zones* can be assessed. Each activity includes a suggested method (e.g., five-point grading scale, percentage score). Each zone also includes a final “practice” writing activity accompanied by a writing rubric, which enables you and your students to determine how well they have achieved the objective. A Cooperative Group Rubric is provided for assessing student contributions and teamwork.

### What Do Rubric Scores Mean?

- 4 Exceeds Expectations**—This rating describes work that exceeds the standard. The descriptor includes words such as “consistently,” “complete,” “with detail,” “actively,” and “willingly.” Students who earn a “4” demonstrate leadership and knowledge during participation in the unit activities. Their performance and/or product are significantly better than what was required or expected.
- 3 Meets Expectations**—This rating describes work that meets the standard with quality. The descriptors lack some of the positive adjectives of a “4,” but this student has mastered the content or skill and can demonstrate his or her understanding in an application setting.
- 2 Nearly There**—This rating describes work that almost meets the standard. Sometimes inconsistent effort or a misconception of the content will result in a “2” rating. This student needs to try a little harder, or needs to revise his or her work in order to meet the standard described.
- 1 Incomplete**—This rating describes work that has not yet met the standard in content and/or skill. This student will require more instruction and another opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or a skill, or will require alternative instruction and assessment.

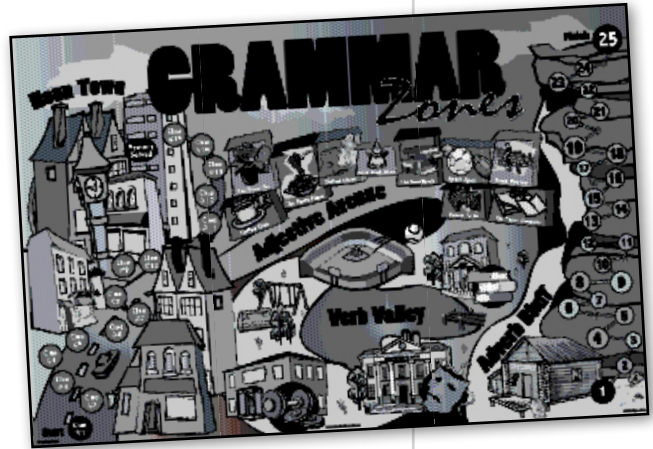
### Why Use *Grammar Zones*?

Grammar curriculum usually includes a lesson and independent written activity, but lacks practical application of the English language. With *Grammar Zones* students learn and experience knowledge, skills, and attitudes through all domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). The lessons are balanced between direct instruction and interactive language activities, and there is a natural range of levels within the activities to reach a broad base of learners.

## Components

### The Grammar Zones Package

The *Grammar Zones* complete package includes this Teacher Guide and a Grammar Zones map. This Teacher Guide includes all the information you need to run a successful unit, including daily lesson plans and reproducible worksheets for the students. The Grammar Zones map functions like a large game board on which Grammar Groups track their progress through each zone. This map can also be used as a focal point on a grammar bulletin board, providing a place to showcase student work and projects created during the unit.



*Grammar Zones* is organized into four zones and a culminating activity. Each zone focuses on a main part of speech. The zones are: Noun Town, Adjective Avenue, Verb Valley, and Adverb Bluff. The culminating activity is a “human bingo” game of GRAMO, which incorporates everything the students learn in the unit.

#### **Each zone includes:**

- Preparation and setup
- Incentives
- Pre-lesson directions
- Lesson plans
- Writing assessment with rubric
- Post-lesson directions

#### **Each lesson includes:**

- A brief overview
- A materials list
- Step-by-step directions
- Reproducible Masters

### Answer Keys

For all objectively-scored activities that have specific answers, you will find the Answer Key in the lesson directions. Some worksheets are followed by a complete Answer Key.