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Georgia Performance Standards Framework for ELA Unit 5 – 4th Grade

Grade: 4th
Topic: Interactive Conventions
Instructional unit: Any Unit (This task may be used throughout the year as the teacher builds on students’ knowledge of parts of speech, punctuation, and sentence structure.)
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The task: (The idea for this task was modified from a lesson plan found at http://www.learnnc.org/lessons/writing3142003727) The teacher will have the students take on the roles of different words and punctuation and work collaboratively to create a complete sentence using correct parts of speech, word order, and punctuation. To begin this task, the teacher needs to have different color index cards or paper strips to list various categories of words based on parts of speech (For example, nouns – blue, verbs – red, adjectives – green, pronouns – orange, adverbs – purple). (The teacher may adapt the list of words and parts of speech based on what he/she has covered previously in the school year.) On one side of the card, the student will write the word beginning with a capital letter, and on the other side, write it beginning with a lower case. Punctuation cards should also be made in their own unique color, perhaps black. Punctuation may include the end marks (period, question mark, and exclamation point) as well as commas based on what the teacher has taught. Next students should decide on a sound for each punctuation mark (Example: period = “Pop.”, question mark = “Huh?”, exclamation point = “Wooh!”).

To begin the activity, one student selects a noun card and another student chooses a verb card. The students make a sentence with their two words. They arrange themselves in any order they like. They read their words aloud. For example, “Friends play” or “Play friends.” The teacher asks, “Is this a complete sentence? What is missing?” Students should recognize that the sentence needs punctuation. A third student chooses a punctuation mark to end the sentence. (This student makes the sound of the punctuation mark as he/she stands at the end of the sentence.) Once again, each student says his/her word and the punctuation person makes the sound of the punctuation mark. The class members indicate agreement or disagreement with the sentence by turning their thumbs up or down.

The teacher may then ask the students if the words order can be changed and still make a complete sentence. In this way, types of sentences (declarative, exclamatory, imperative, and interrogative) may be incorporated and/or assessed. The activity continues as other students choose adjectives and then adverbs to build on and elaborate the sentence. Students may change the word order and/or the punctuation to change sentence meaning and impact as words are added to the sentence. These changes involve decisions that the sentence team makes collaboratively prior to presenting to the class. This process requires students to use language arts, problem solving, and teamwork skills at the same time.

As this activity continues and students become familiar with the basics of the process, other punctuation may be added, such as colons, quotation marks, articles, conjunctions, prepositional phrases, and new vocabulary to the process as appropriate. This activity may also be used to help students understand sentence structure, complete sentences, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, subject-verb agreement, correct pronoun use, etc. For more information go to http://www.learnnc.org/lessons/writing3142003727
Differentiation:
This task is naturally differentiated because each student chooses his or her own word or part of speech card before joining “the sentence.”

Focus Standard:
ELA4C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student
b. Uses and identifies four basic parts of speech (adjective, noun, verb, adverb).
c. Uses and identifies correct mechanics (end marks, commas for series, capitalization), correct usage (subject and verb agreement in a simple sentence), and correct sentence structure (elimination of sentence fragments).
h. Varies the sentence structure by kind (declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences and functional fragments), order, and complexity (simple, compound).

Circumstances of the assignment/Notes to the Teachers:
In this task sentences can be as long as the teacher determines useful in modeling good sentence structure. This would be a great activity to start at the beginning of the year and expand as the year progresses and more elements of the convention standard are taught.