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To the Instructor

The intention of Creative Grammar is to empower students in their grammar learning process and encourage them to use the points practiced in this book actively and confidently in their everyday lives. The approach supports the use of the four skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—in developing both fluent and accurate mastery of complex grammar topics.

With Creative Grammar, students read and look for specific constructions. They listen for grammar points. They write phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, focusing on what they have learned. Through guided conversations and communicative activities, students will practice speaking with many people: their instructor and fellow students, as well as their friends, relatives, and co-workers. When they speak, they will often do so with specific instructions concerning a particular tense, voice, or clausal construction. Instead of parroting grammar rules out of context, students will discuss how skillful speakers and writers use adjectives to add detail to their writing, present progressive to discuss future plans, and certain modals when they want to be more polite.

Creative Grammar is divided into 12 units of 16 pages each. Between the Grammar Introduction and the Unit Review, instructors are encouraged to take advantage of the flexibility built into Creative Grammar and complete the activities in any appropriate order. An Answer Key allows students to use the book either in class or for independent study. Please note that the Answer Key pages are perforated so that they can be removed.

Each unit begins with a presentation of the main grammar point followed by a key capitalization, punctuation, or pronunciation point. Next, between 11 and 13 of the following activity types appear: Sentence Writing, Cloze, Writing Page, Error Correction, Theme-based Discussion (oral), Sentence Stems and Sentence Conclusions (completions), Grammar Discussion (oral), Communicative Activities (oral), Sentence Structure, Description of the Illustration or Description of the Photograph (written and oral), Grammar in Action, and Grammar Practice. The following is an overview of each activity type, as well as suggestions for classroom use.

Grammar Introduction  Each unit opens with a presentation of the grammar point that introduces rules and provides many examples. Advise students to pay close attention to the sample sentences in order to understand the models. You may want to assign the Grammar Introduction as homework to be read in advance. That will allow you sufficient time to discuss how the grammar points are used in speaking and writing. These discussions usually spark greater interest in the concept.

Spelling, Punctuation, or Pronunciation  The smaller, but key, points presented after the Grammar Introduction are often overlooked by students. They are, however, very important in developing oral and written fluency. Spelling is a particular problem for many English language students. Encourage them to learn the rules so that they can apply them outside of English class in their everyday lives.

Cloze  Cloze exercises require students to practice several different skills. They must understand vocabulary, tense, voice, and number. They are also a good test of whether students understand singular and plural nouns and subject–verb agreement. Finally, cloze exercises provide practice in word order, the correct placement of words in the context of the sentence. Cloze exercises work well as paired activities.

Sentence Writing  Students write sentences on their own within specific scenarios. The production of sentences (rather than simple fill-ins) demonstrates an understanding and an active grasp of the grammar point. On occasion, have your students copy their sentences on the board for the class to check against the models. The atmosphere of the class becomes collaborative as students edit each other’s work.

The Writing Page  This activity extends the Sentence writing activity. In many cases, students are asked to write several sentences or a paragraph based on a specific theme. In writing and correcting this assignment, it is important to focus on the specific grammar point highlighted in the chapter.
Other grammar mistakes might be pointed out, but the goal is to provide practice on specific structures.

**Error Correction**  The mistakes presented in this section are common ones (such as the use of the conditional contrary-to-fact or object pronouns after *than*). It is sometimes easier to examine other people's mistakes, so this exercise can serve as the focus of discussion.

**Theme-based Discussion**  The topics of the Theme-based Discussion are current and varied. The activity should begin in small groups and then expand to the entire class. It is essential for the instructor to monitor students' grammar but not censor their ideas and opinions. There are two purposes to this exercise: to encourage students to speak and listen as they use the targeted grammar constructions accurately and appropriately, and to assure students that what they are learning is not theoretical but practical.

**Sentence Stems and Sentence Conclusions**  In these activities, students complete the beginnings or endings of sentences. This is a creative exercise because there are so many correct answers. In addition, students have to understand whether the missing part of the sentence should be affirmative or negative. Stems and conclusions are best done as an individual in-class activity or homework assignment.

**Grammar Discussion**  The Grammar Discussion point is introduced first in a text box in the Grammar Introduction section. Often it is an activity based on the grammar used in real life. The approach here is to have students question how common the grammar point is, whether it is used correctly or incorrectly most of the time, and what the specific uses of the point are. For example, it is interesting to discuss why the present progressive tense is used in police investigations. The study of grammar is a constant in most ESL students' lives. Making it come alive for them is essential.

**Communicative Activities**  These activities vary greatly and include surveys, interviews, games, map-making, and paired activities. They focus on the grammar point and encourage awareness of its use. Students are often inspired to become actively involved in language learning in these tasks.

**Sentence Structures**  Sentence structure practice concentrates on aspects of punctuation, word order, subject-verb agreement, and the sequence of tenses. All of these elements are combined in the activity, just as they would be in real-life English use.

**Description of the Illustration or Photograph**  Each unit presents illustrations or photographs, that serve as the basis for writing and discussion. Students analyze the illustration or photograph and compose sentences or paragraphs practicing the specific grammar point. There is generally a lot going on in the pictures, so encourage a class discussion for a few minutes before the students write. For further practice, you might have them cut out their own photographs, cartoons, or drawings, write about them for homework, and bring them to class for discussion and further work.

**Grammar in Action**  Grammar does not take place only in grammar class. Everything written is based on grammar (even if the grammar is incorrectly used, as in e-mail messages and some advertisements). This interactive section presents reading passages illustrating grammar points. The passages include newspaper and magazine articles, that are of interest to students but whose primary purpose is to show that the grammar point is not used only in the textbook.

**Grammar Practice**  This section concentrates on traditional exercises such as sentence combining and changing the tense according to time indicators. Students are quite familiar with this type of drill, which is best done for homework and then selectively corrected in class (going over only the odd-numbered sentences, for example).

**Unit Review**  Each unit ends with a Directed Writing activity that serves as a unit grammar review. Each writing assignment takes students step by step through a paragraph-writing activity that encourages them to use the grammar of the unit in a specific, personal, familiar life situation. Students are carefully guided through the writing process. In prewriting, students are asked a number of questions and given suggestions to help them make notes about the topic. For the first draft, students are given explicit instruction about how to use the grammar of the unit in their paragraphs as well as a list of specific terms they might want to use.
A first-draft model is also provided. For the revision, students exchange paragraphs with a partner who reads a series of questions to make sure all of the information has been included and the grammar is correct. Students are then assigned the final draft. Students have a list of criteria that you will use in the evaluation process.

We hope these materials assist you in making your grammar class one in which the following can be found:

- a high standard of grammatical accuracy in meaningful, relevant, significant sentences;
- a genuine curiosity on both your students’ and your part about how various structures are used in different social settings;
- a playful environment where learners are encouraged to explore English and make their own discoveries and mistakes are not to be feared but instead can serve as material to be examined;
- a welcoming, collaborative environment where students enhance their knowledge of English structure;
- a classroom environment where the issues of the day and the events of your students’ real lives are respectfully brought into the learning experience;
- a set of strategies that students can develop in class and continue to use after finishing formal English study to deepen their understanding of how English grammar is used by real people for real purposes.

The goal of this text is to make the study of grammar more creative and enjoyable, allowing students free rein to their imaginations in writing and the chance to fully participate in a range of communicative activities. Enjoy!

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