

More Grammar Review Using "Jabberwocky"

An Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan

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Grade Level(s): 9, 10, 11, 12

Subject(s):

Language Arts/Grammar

Duration: 50 minutes

Description: This lesson provides students with a grammar review exercise using "Jabberwocky," by Lewis Carroll.

Goals:

To provide an opportunity for students to review essential grammar conventions while gaining experience, confidence, and stimulating cognitive growth.

To provide the teacher with an opportunity to identify where the students are with their grammar at the beginning of the school year. From there, the teacher can choose to emphasize the various areas of grammar that need to be strengthened.

To reinforce learning through the use of technology.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

locate the nonsense words from the poem.

summarize the action of the poem "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll.

identify and label the various parts of speech including nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and articles found in the lines of the poem.

effectively search for the definitions of the parts of speech.

Materials:

computers with Internet access

pencils

Procedure:

Reading of the Poem

The teacher will distribute copies of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" to each student. The teacher will read the poem out loud from the web site <http://www.jabberwocky.com/carroll/jabber/jabberwocky.html> while the students follow along on their computers. After the poem is read, the teacher will tell the students that "Jabberwocky," by Lewis Carroll, is generally considered to be the greatest of all nonsense poems in English. In the paragraph following the poem, Alice of Wonderland puts her finger on the secret of the poem's charm:

"It seems to fill my head with ideas -- only I don't know exactly what they are."

Although the strange words have no precise meaning, they seem to carry subtle overtones. In other words, Lewis Carroll used a lot of nonsense words, but you can still understand the story.

Interpretation of the Poem

The students will be asked to orally interpret the meaning of the poem by raising their hands. The interpretation should be something such as, "It is about a brave boy who slays the fierce Jabberwock." The teacher will ask, "How do you know that is what's happening?" The answer is that, although the words are nonsense, from taking the real words in the poem and associating the nonsense words with them, one can get the gist of the poem. The main actions are there, but the supplementary nouns, adjectives, and verbs are nonsense. The teacher and students will discuss several of the nonsense words, in context, as examples.

Example: *He took his vorpal sword in hand*

We know that a sword is a weapon, and weapons are dangerous. So, vorpal must be an adjective because it modifies or describes the word sword. It tells what kind of sword it is; a vorpal sword.

The Parts of Speech

The teacher will tell the students that for homework, they are going to choose one stanza of the poem and label each word with its appropriate part of speech. The teacher will review the parts of speech with the students using a handout. See [Review of Parts of Speech](#).

Labeling the Parts of Speech

The teacher will use a copy of the first stanza of the poem to give an example of what is to be done for homework (The teacher might want to show this on an overhead projector). The teacher will explain that, by using the words that they already know the meanings of and substituting new words for the nonsense

ones, they should be able to figure out what part of speech each word is. They should refer back to the handout on the parts of speech for help.

Example: *'Twas brillig and the slithy toves*

We know that "'twas" means "it was", "and" is a conjunction, and "the" is an article. We can tell that "brillig", which refers back to "it" is a reflexive pronoun. We also know "toves" is a noun because it is plural and because if a noun is put behind "the" it makes sense. Also, "slithy" must be an adjective because it is describing the word "toves".

Summary

The teacher will summarize what has been done in class today, touching on the review of the parts of speech and the group work. The students may get into their previous groups and begin the homework assignment together. The teacher will continue to circulate the room, offering assistance, answering questions, and keeping the students on task.

Assignment:

Each student must choose one stanza of the poem and label each word with its correct part of speech.

Students with Disabilities:

The lesson plan may be adapted for a disabled student using the input of guidance counselors or the student's special education teacher according to his/her specific abilities and achievements. A student with a disability should do well in the group activities when paired with a non-disabled student. A copy of the handout on the parts of speech may be given to the student's parents or special education teacher previous to this lesson so that he/she will have already reviewed and will be familiar with the parts of speech. A copy of the lesson plan may also be included to better aid the student's parents or teacher.

Assessment:

A. Progress Toward Objectives:

The teacher will review the homework assignments checking the labeling of the parts of speech to evaluate student understanding and implementation. If students have effectively identified and labeled the parts of speech, the current objectives have been met. If they have not, the parts of speech must be explained and re-evaluated as soon as possible.

B. Self Evaluation:

The teacher will review the class period, asking: Did I give clear directions?

How was my classroom management?

Useful Internet Resources: * [The Jabberwocky](http://www.bliner.com/scott/jaber_frames.html)

http://www.bliner.com/scott/jaber_frames.html

* [The Ultimate Jabberwocky Page](http://www.waxdog.com/jabberwocky/) <http://www.waxdog.com/jabberwocky/>