Guide to MBA’s Junior School Writing and Grammar Curriculum

7th Grade

Expectations for students starting the 7th grade:
- Understand the concept of a complete sentence
- Know basic parts of speech
- Understand the basic structures of a simple sentence
- See the importance of legible handwriting
- Understand the importance of correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Goals for the year:
- Teach basic grammar principles (parts of speech, parts of the sentence, adjective clauses with relative pronouns, and adverb clauses with subordinating conjunctions)
- Teach rules for capitalization, punctuation, possession
- Teach the value of correcting errors
- Write in complete sentences
- Teach paragraph structure, emphasizing importance of topic sentences
- Introduce how to use supporting evidence that develops an idea
- Teach students the difference between summary and analysis; go beyond elementary school “book reports.”
- Teach the difference among various types of writing: narration, descriptive, expository, and argumentative
- Strive for consistency between 7th & 8th grade error-marking on paper (teachers to use 3 scores: format (correct margins, title form, heading, font, spacing, pagination); mechanics (identifies grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors); content (rewards insight and creativity along with identifying errors in word choice, diction, sentence clarity, paragraph unity, and organization of ideas)
- Introduce Writing as a Process
  a. Brainstorming: bullet and numbered lists
  b. Organization: outlines, diagrams
  c. Drafting: rough and final
  d. Revision: recognize, correct, avoid common errors
- Introduce these types of composition:
  a. Thorough identification of person, place, symbol
  b. Thorough answer to study question
  c. Thorough answer to discussion question
  d. Thorough answer discussing a quotation
  e. Descriptive paragraph and essay
  f. Narrative paragraph and essay
  g. Expository paragraph and essay
  h. Argumentative paragraph and essay
- Vocabulary
a. Recognize 180 vocabulary words
b. Use 3 context clues to understand word meaning
c. Use 180 words in meaningful context with correct grammar, and sentence structure and purpose

8th Grade

Expectations for rising 8th graders:

- Recognize complete sentences versus fragments
- Write coherent, relatively simple paragraphs with topic sentences and some incorporated evidence that develops an idea
- Know basic punctuation rules and understand sentence structure (subject, verb, direct object, etcetera)
- Know basic rules for capitalization and possession
- Have solid understanding of 8 parts of speech
- Diagram simple, compound, and complex structures.
- Have some exposure to the composition types (see above)
- Vocabulary study skills

Goals for the year:

- Review and teach basic grammar principles (parts of speech, parts of the sentence, clauses, verbals)
- Review and teach rules for capitalization, punctuation (including semicolon and colon use), possession
- Review and teach diagramming of sentence structures, especially verbals and clauses
- Make connection between the teaching of grammar and the teaching of good writing
- Teach the value of correction exercises
- Write in complete sentences and give thorough answers to study questions, using all homework assignment to practice correct writing
- Write many paragraph-oriented assignments, emphasizing importance of topic sentences and incorporating evidence
- Emphasize properly using quotations as evidence
- Continue to teach the writing process and the concepts of the multi-paragraph theme (pre-writing techniques; the MBA outline form; the theory of the introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion)
- Continue to introduce boys to descriptive, argumentative, expository, and narrative writing