

Grammar Spy™

10 Days of Grammar Bell Ringers

Five-minute warm-ups for middle & high school · No prep required

A good grammar bell ringer helps students settle into class, activates prior knowledge, and provides consistent practice without taking up half the lesson. The best warm-ups share three traits: they are **short**, they **focus on one skill**, and they require students to **think** rather than copy answers. Use one bell ringer per day for two weeks.

1. Fix the Sentence

Directions: Display a sentence with several mistakes and ask students to rewrite it correctly.

Example:

yesterday i go to the store with my friend

Answer: Yesterday, I went to the store with my friend.

Skills Practiced: Capitalization, Punctuation, Verb tense, Editing

Why It Works: Students learn to recognize common errors while reviewing multiple grammar concepts at once.

2. Which One Sounds Right?

Directions: Present two similar sentences. Ask students to choose the correct one and explain why.

Example:

A. She don't like pizza.

B. She doesn't like pizza.

Answer: B. She doesn't like pizza. (Subject-verb agreement)

Skills Practiced: Subject-verb agreement, Grammar explanations, Academic discussion

Why It Works: Students must justify their thinking instead of simply guessing.

3. Daily Editing Challenge

Directions: Provide a short paragraph containing several mistakes. Students identify and correct all errors.

Example:

my brother play soccer every weekend. he practice after school and he want to play professionally someday.

Answer: My brother plays soccer every weekend. He practices after school and he wants to play professionally someday.

Skills Practiced: Editing, Verb forms, Capitalization, Punctuation

Why It Works: Students see grammar in context rather than isolated sentences.

4. Sentence Unscramble

Directions: Give students words or phrases out of order. Have them build a correct sentence.

Example:

every day / walks / to school / Maria

Answer: Maria walks to school every day.

Skills Practiced: Sentence structure, Word order, Subject-verb agreement

Why It Works: Students physically and mentally build sentences rather than memorize rules.

5. Grammar Detective

Directions: Present a sentence with an error. Students identify the mistake, the evidence, and the correction.

Example:

The students was excited about the field trip.

Answer: The students were excited about the field trip. (Subject 'students' is plural.)

Skills Practiced: Error analysis, Subject-verb agreement, Reasoning

Why It Works: Students enjoy solving problems and explaining their reasoning.

6. Choose the Best Verb

Directions: Display a sentence with multiple verb choices. Students pick the correct one.

Example:

Yesterday, Maria (go, goes, went) to the library.

Answer: went

Skills Practiced: Verb tense, Context clues, Reading comprehension

Why It Works: Students connect grammar choices to meaning.

7. Expand the Sentence

Directions: Start with a simple sentence and challenge students to improve it.

Example:

The dog ran.

Answer: The frightened dog ran quickly across the wet field.

Skills Practiced: Sentence variety, Adjectives, Adverbs, Descriptive writing

Why It Works: Students learn that grammar supports stronger writing.

8. Tense Switch

Directions: Provide a sentence and ask students to rewrite it in a different tense.

Example:

I play soccer after school.

Answer: Yesterday, I played soccer after school. / Tomorrow, I will play soccer after school.

Skills Practiced: Verb tense, Sentence transformation

Why It Works: Students see how verb forms change depending on time.

9. Question Builder

Directions: Give students a statement. Ask them to turn it into a question.

Example:

Maria likes science.

Answer: Does Maria like science?

Skills Practiced: Question formation, Auxiliary verbs, Speaking practice

Why It Works: Grammar immediately becomes communication.

10. Student Error of the Week

Directions: Collect anonymous mistakes from student writing. Discuss one common error together.

Example:

He go to school every day.

Answer: He goes to school every day.

Skills Practiced: Subject-verb agreement, Error pattern recognition

Why It Works: Students learn from authentic writing and notice patterns in their own work.

Tips for Successful Bell Ringers

- Keep grammar warm-ups short. Five minutes is usually enough.
- Focus on one target skill at a time. Students make more progress with repeated, focused practice.
- Use mistakes as learning opportunities. Grammar practice should build confidence, not embarrassment.
- Build a consistent routine. Students should know exactly what to do when they enter the classroom.
- Small daily practice adds up. Five minutes a day = over four hours of focused grammar each school year.

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