Syntax-The Sentence Patterns of Language

Overview:

Syntax is the arrangement of words to form sentences. It is important to understand syntax when you are learning a new language so that you know how to correctly form sentences.

Syntax Terms:

A. Grammar is a process which governs the formation of phrases, clauses, and their placement with words in a sentence.
   
   1. Dependency Grammar: is a syntax system in which lexicon elements are linked by dependence, e.g., an adjective is linked to a noun, an adverb is linked to a verb, etc.
   2. Functionalist Grammar: Is the innate organization of natural language by it's function.

B. Syntax is the arrangement of words to create a well-formed sentence.

C. A sentence is a group of words containing a subject and a verb which forms a complete thought. It is also called an independent clause because it can stand alone for its complete meaning. A sentence can contain other clauses, phrases and additional words to complete the thought.
1. **Subject**: A noun, pronoun, phrase or clause about which the sentence is purposed.
2. **Verb**: Word(s) which state the action or existence of the subject.
3. **Complement**: A noun, phrase or clause which complements the verb.

1. **Object**: A complement which is the direct or indirect recipient of the action.
2. **Predicate Nominative or Predicate Adjective**: A complement which renames or describes the subject and follows a verb of existence (linking verb).

1. **Adjective**: A word, phrase or clause which describes a noun or noun phrase.
2. **Adverb**: A word, phrase or clause which describes a verb, adjective or other adverb.
D. A **phrase** is a small group of words standing together to create a conceptual unit.

E. A **clause** is a unit of grammatical organization consisting of a subject and a verb.

1. An **independent clause** is a complete sentence.
2. A dependent clause is not a complete sentence and must be joined to an independent clause with a conjunction to be complete.

*Because we were late, we ran to class.*

F. A sentence diagram is a pictorial representation of the grammatical structure of a sentence. It is used as a model to show structure.

G. A Verb tense is the form of a verb which indicates time. A verb tense may indicate past, present or future time, and whether an action is ongoing or has been completed.
H. **Plurals** are forms of nouns and verbs which indicate more than one in existence or completing the action. examples: baby, babies......am, was, were

I. A **modal** is a verb which combines with another verb to indicate mood or tense. The ten most common modals in English are can, could, may, might, must, ought, shall, should, will, and would.

**Resources**

For Students:

Brain Pop includes lots of free resources but access to all the videos can be purchased. There is a special section for ELLs. This site ranges from pre-k to grade twelve videos, games, and interactive quizzes. ![http://www.brainpop.com/](http://www.brainpop.com/)


Fun Brain includes games such as “Grammar Gorilla” and “The Plural Girls.” This site is composed of both math and language arts activities; it is divided by topic or grade levels kindergarten through eighth. ![http://www.funbrain.com/cgi-bin/getskill.cgi?A4=1](http://www.funbrain.com/cgi-bin/getskill.cgi?A4=1)
Purdue University’s OWL site is an academic learning tool for both educators and students. Not only does this site include the intricacies of APA format, it also serves as both of visual for how to format and lesson ideas for educators. This site is geared more towards middle school to high school students. [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/5/]

For teachers:

- Daily English grammar lessons [http://www.englishgrammar.org]
- Worksheets to practice syntax [http://www.usingenglish.com/handouts/]

YouTube Videos

- School House Rock on nouns…”A Noun is a Person, Place or Thing” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfnXUWJz0sE]
- School House Rock on verbs…”Verbs” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cftcj9IYa1U]
- School House Rock on adjectives…”Unpack Your Adjectives” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkuuZEey bs]
- School House Rock on adverbs…”Lolly, Lolly, Lolly, Get Your Adverbs Here” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14fXm4FOMPM]

Ways to Teach Syntax to ELLs

- Use concrete methods in teaching ELLs sentence structure. The following link is an example of a concrete way to teach syntax to ELLs.
  [http://www.thekindergartensmorgasboard.com/2014/02/a-kindergarten-smorgasboard-morning.html?m=1]

  - This site helps explain functional grammar to teachers and gives specific methods of teaching it. [http://stories4learning.com/moodle/course/view.php?id=15]
• This is a useful PDF for teachers, which explains how to teach Functional Grammar to ELLs.


Sources for definitions:

http://www.wikipedia.org

http://dictionary.reference.com

Images: