

PROFICIENCY READING, WRITING, LISTENING, AND SPEAKING

WHAT WILL WE DO?

Proficiency Steppingstone to Ultimate Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking Goals:

Grammar Foundations: In the proficiency curriculum, students will delve into the reduction of adverb clauses to modifying adverbial phrases, a crucial tool for advanced concise writing. They will gain proficiency in transforming time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases, expressing the idea of simultaneous events, and illustrating cause and effect through this structure. Additionally, learners will explore the specific use of "Upon + -ing" to form adverbial phrases (e.g., Upon arriving at the station, she realized she had forgotten her ticket.). Following this, students will master various connectives that express cause, effect, contrast, and condition, enriching their capacity to form complex arguments and discuss hypothetical scenarios.

Initial Module on Grammar: Each learning day will commence with a concise grammar session, taught in an explicit manner. In the first module, learners will delve into the advanced realm of adverb clauses and their transformation into modifying adverbial phrases. Students will commence with an introduction to the concept, followed by understanding the technique of converting time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases. Subsequent sessions will focus on using modifying adverbial phrases to indicate simultaneous actions, express cause and effect relationships, and employ the structure of "upon + -ing" for more nuanced expressions. By the end of this unit, students will be adept at succinctly and elegantly refining their sentence structures. For a deeper insight, you can refer to the sample lessons linked to this module in the "learning activities" section below. In terms of the volume of content addressed weekly, it's critical to recognize that the Proficiency level encompasses chapters 18-20 of the *Understanding and Using English Grammar*, part of the Azar-Hagen Grammar Series. The nature of this expedited schedule necessitates a fast-paced learning approach. To facilitate this, students are provided a dedicated one-hour 'Review and Practice' session every Thursday, focusing on the week's material, in addition to access to designated tutoring hours. Further embedding the learning process, a 20-minute quiz is conducted each Sunday to assess students' grasp of the grammar topics covered the previous week, ensuring continuous tracking of their progress. This systematic approach significantly encourages regular, thorough revision. Before enrollment, students are informed of the rigorous demands of the program, underscoring the substantial commitment and personal responsibility essential for achieving success.

The Four Skills: Following the initial, explicitly taught grammar session, the day's lessons will split into two distinct class sessions: one centered on Reading and Writing, and the other on Listening and Speaking. These sessions will organically build upon the foundational grammar covered, integrating all four skills. While the material in each session will primarily align with the day's grammatical focus and concepts from previous lessons, embedding them within pertinent scenarios, the scope will extend beyond mere grammatical frameworks. In this context, learners will not only deepen their grasp of syntax and enhance their reading skills but also bolster their listening and speaking abilities. The focus will be on comprehending basic texts, refining their ability to identify and construct structured sentences, and practicing interactive communication through active listening and articulate speaking exercises.

Writing: In Proficiency-level writing, learners will embark on an in-depth exploration of advanced essay writing. The curriculum begins by thoroughly reviewing essay fundamentals, from crafting compelling introductions, logically structured bodies, and concise conclusions, to mastering nuanced elements like noun modification. Participants will then navigate through specialized essay types, including cause-effect essays, which emphasize cohesive transitions, connectors, and sophisticated grammar such as articulating past events. The comparison essay segment hones parallel structure, while argumentative essays enhance skills in building persuasive arguments, addressing counterarguments, and maintaining appropriate tone. The intricacies of problem-solution essays and reaction essays are accentuated, highlighting the importance of adverb clauses and clear, concise communication. Throughout the program, a consistent emphasis is placed on ethically sourcing from original materials, employing strategies like direct quotations, paraphrasing, and comprehensive citation methods, while avoiding pitfalls like redundancy. As the course culminates, learners will delve into the realm of research papers, focusing on preparation and the adept use of the passive voice, ensuring they produce articulate and compelling academic writing.

Reading: Building upon their prior achievements at the Advanced level, students will now immerse themselves in mastering the intricacies of advanced analytical reading, enabling them to engage with even more complex and nuanced textual materials. Transitioning from mere comprehension and critical analysis, they will cultivate the acumen to deconstruct, interpret, and critique the most challenging of literary and academic texts, from avant-garde literature to intricate theoretical expositions. Students will not only discern but also predict underlying themes, rhetoric, and biases, even in texts where these are deeply embedded or deliberately obfuscated. They will further augment their vocabulary to grasp and employ specialized terminology with precision, facilitating profound discourse on intricate topics. The skill of intertextual reading will be honed, allowing students to seamlessly weave insights from multiple sources, fostering a holistic understanding of subject matters. Additionally, students will refine their quick reading techniques, ensuring they can distill the essence of extensive materials under time constraints. Ultimately, they will develop a personalized advanced reading strategy, synergizing speed with comprehensive analysis.

Listening: Building on their advanced capabilities from Advanced level, learners at the Proficiency level will reach the pinnacle of auditory comprehension, effortlessly interpreting even the most intricate and layered spoken content. Their profound listening skills will enable them to perceive and interpret every subtlety of intonation, pitch, and rhythm in speech, making them adept at understanding unsignaled changes, hidden implications, and even unspoken sentiments in diverse dialogues. Whether navigating through elaborate academic discourses, dense literary readings, or spontaneous native colloquies, they will not just comprehend but anticipate and mentally engage with the progression of thought. In situations with background noise, overlapping conversations, or regional dialects and accents, they will still maintain an impeccable understanding. Their heightened analytical aptitude will drive them to critically interrogate and reflect on spoken content, even synthesizing insights from multiple spoken sources in real-time. This ultimate mastery of listening ensures that they can seamlessly integrate into any high-level academic, professional, or social setting, while also appreciating the finest nuances of humor, irony, and cultural references in the English language.

Speaking: At the Proficiency level, students' spoken discourse will transcend academic rigor to embody intellectual artistry, effortlessly handling the most abstract, intricate, and controversial topics. Embracing a vast repertoire of advanced vocabulary and rhetorical devices, they will craft speeches and arguments that resonate with both intellectual depth and emotional impact. Their heightened linguistic prowess will be evident in their ability to spontaneously construct and deconstruct arguments, anticipate counterpoints, and weave multidisciplinary insights into a coherent narrative. Engaging with native speakers and experts alike, they will distinguish themselves not just by their fluency, but by their capacity to drive, redirect, or mediate high-level discussions, all while exhibiting cultural sensitivity and global awareness. In high-stakes scenarios – be it international conferences, specialized seminars, or challenging negotiations – their verbal contributions will be marked by clarity, innovation, and persuasive power, solidifying their stature as formidable orators and communicators in any English-speaking arena.

Vocabulary: In the proficiency curriculum, students will delve deeply into a vast lexicon intricately tied to advanced grammatical constructs, honing in especially on adverbial intricacies and connective mechanisms. Their proficiency will encompass discerning and applying a myriad of vocabulary and phrases tailored for crafting, adjusting, and elucidating adverbial clauses. For example, while they'll grasp the "Upon + -ing" construct, they'll also discern its most apt contexts, distinguishing it from analogous structures. Venturing beyond foundational connectives like "although" or "because," they'll adeptly employ sophisticated linkers such as "insofar as" or "by virtue of" to delineate intricate idea relationships. Their lexicon will further be enriched by a nuanced understanding of terms like "dichotomy" and "divergence," allowing them to choose the ideal word for each context.

Grammar Content (Reference):

1. Reduction of Adverb Clauses to Modifying Adverbial Phrases
2. Connectives That Express Cause and Effect, Contrast, and Condition
3. Conditional Sentences and Wishes

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

Learning Strategies:

General Learning Strategies

- **interactive dialogues:** engaging in role-plays or scripted conversations to simulate real-life situations.
- **peer teaching:** pairing students and having one explain or teach a concept to the other.
- **group discussions:** small groups discussing topics or questions to practice speaking and comprehension.
- **project-based learning:** completing small projects (e.g., creating a restaurant menu or a travel brochure) in the target language.
- **think-pair-share:** students first reflect individually, then discuss with a partner, and finally share with the class.
- **jigsaw activities:** dividing a text or audio clip into sections. Each student or group studies a part and then teaches it to the others.
- **task-based learning:** engaging in tasks that require communication and problem-solving in the target language.
- **reflection journals:** writing about personal experiences, challenges, and progress in the target language.
- **portfolio assessment:** collecting students' work over time to track progress and areas for improvement.
- **real-world assignments:** tasks like conducting interviews, creating shopping lists, or writing postcards in the target language.
- **total physical response (TPR):** incorporating physical movement in response to language commands.
- **gallery walk:** posting work or images around the room, allowing students to walk around, view, and comment.
- **scaffolded questions:** posing questions that are progressively more challenging, aiding comprehension and response abilities.
- **feedback circles (peer review):** students provide constructive feedback on each other's spoken or written language output.
- **interactive workshops:** learners participate in hands-on activities, discussions, or problem-solving exercises, fostering an active learning environment.
- **collaborative learning:** learners work together in groups to solve problems, complete tasks, or learn new concepts.
- **interactive storytelling:** a narrative method where learners actively participate, make decisions, or interact with the unfolding story, making learning engaging and experiential.

- **flipped classroom:** learners review content independently (often online) and then apply knowledge through activities facilitated during in-person sessions.
- **error-correction:** educational activities where learners identify and correct errors (e.g., grammatical or factual) in an engaging manner, enhancing learning through correction.

Learning Strategies Classified by Skill

Reading:

- **story mapping:** creating a visual representation of the events or main ideas from a text.
- **matching activities:** linking sentences to corresponding images or headlines to ensure comprehension.
- **scavenger hunt:** searching within a text to find specific items, words, or ideas.
- **fill in the blanks:** completing sentences or paragraphs by inserting the correct words from a provided list.

Writing:

- **sentence starters:** initiating sentences that students complete, aiding in idea generation.
- **interactive journals:** personal writing spaces where students and teachers engage in written dialogue.
- **picture description:** writing based on visual prompts, encouraging descriptive skills.
- **guided paragraphs:** developing content based on given topic sentences or prompts to structure the writing.

Listening:

- **total physical response (TPR):** physically acting out audio instructions to show comprehension.
- **listening bingo:** an activity where students mark off words/phrases on cards as they hear them, promoting attentive listening.
- **gap fill:** filling in missing words on a transcript while listening to the audio.
- **pair summaries:** discussing and summarizing a listened clip with a partner to ensure understanding.

Speaking:

- **role play:** acting out scenarios or dialogues, simulating real-life communication.
- **information gap:** exchanging information in pairs when each student has only part of the required data.
- **show and tell:** presenting and describing a personal object to the class to foster public speaking skills.
- **circle talks:** engaging in group discussions, using a token to signify speaking turns, promoting orderly and inclusive conversation.

Learning Activities

Examples:

Preceding Grammar Lesson – “Changing Time Clauses to Modifying Adverbial Phrases”

Lesson Objective – Students will be able to adeptly change time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases.

In a one-hour grammar lesson designed for Proficiency level learners, students will delve into the intricacies of transforming time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases to enhance the conciseness and formality of their academic writing. Starting with identifying time clauses in given sentences, learners will be introduced to the concept of modifying adverbial phrases, practice the transformation in pairs, and then independently apply the skill to a hypothetical research topic or an academic abstract. The lesson culminates with students sharing their rewritten work, receiving feedback from peers and the instructor, and reflecting on the value of this grammatical technique in academic contexts.

Reading and Writing Lesson – Story Mapping and Guided Paragraphs on "Changing Time Clauses to Modifying Adverbial Phrases"

Lesson Objectives – Students will enhance their understanding of transforming time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases and apply this knowledge in crafting structured academic paragraphs.

In this one-hour reading and writing lesson for Proficiency-level learners, the focus is on the intricate grammatical concept of transforming time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases. Beginning with a short academic passage, students identify and map out the use of time clauses versus adverbial phrases, using a **story mapping** approach. This hands-on reading activity seamlessly transitions into a writing exercise where they craft **academic paragraphs**, guided by specific topic sentences and the challenge of incorporating their freshly grasped knowledge. Concluding with shared insights and feedback, the lesson not only hones their grammatical prowess but also underscores the importance of such structures in enhancing the clarity, conciseness, and sophistication of their academic writing.

Listening and Speaking Lesson – TPR and Show-and-Tell on "Changing Time Clauses to Modifying Adverbial Phrases"

Lesson Objective – Students will improve listening and speaking skills, with an emphasis on the topic of changing time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases, using Total Physical Response (TPR) and Show-and-Tell methodologies.

In this one-hour lesson for Proficiency learners, students enhance their listening and speaking abilities centered on converting time clauses into modifying adverbial phrases. The lesson initiates with a **Total Physical Response (TPR)** activity where students physically respond to an academic audio clip, standing up for time clauses and sitting for adverbial phrases. Following a guided transformation activity, they pair up to transform and verbally present sentences, emphasizing the newly formed adverbial phrases through gestures. The climax of the lesson is a **Show-and-Tell** session where students integrate both clause forms into personal or academic narratives. Peer feedback and reflections solidify learning, emphasizing the value of concise language in academia.

Assessment Methods:

- **interactive dialogues:**
 - Formative: Observing and providing feedback during role-plays. Short quizzes on key phrases or vocabulary used in the scripted conversations.
 - Summative: A graded (rubric) role-play scenario where students are assessed on their fluency, pronunciation, and use of vocabulary.
- **peer teaching:**
 - Formative: Observations and feedback while one student is teaching another.
 - Summative: Assessment (rubric) of a student's ability to teach a new concept to their peers using the target language.
- **group discussions:**
 - Formative: Teacher observes discussions and offers guidance or corrections as needed.
 - Summative: Groups present a summary of their discussions, and they're graded (rubric) on clarity, comprehension, and vocabulary use.
- **project-based learning:**
 - Formative: Ongoing feedback as students develop their projects.
 - Summative: Completed projects are presented and graded (rubric) based on criteria such as creativity, accuracy, and language usage.
- **think-pair-share:**
 - Formative: Observations during the pairing phase.
 - Summative: Evaluation (rubric) of the shared ideas with the class based on clarity and relevance.
- **jigsaw activities:**
 - Formative: Monitoring comprehension as groups study their assigned sections.
 - Summative: Each group presents their section and is graded (rubric) on their teaching ability and understanding of the content.
- **task-based learning:**
 - Formative: Ongoing feedback during task engagement.
 - Summative: Evaluation of task outcomes and the quality of communication during the task.

- **reflection journals:**
 - Formative: Periodic checks of journal entries with comments for improvement.
 - Summative: Grading a selected journal entry based on depth of reflection and language use.
- **portfolio assessment:**
 - Formative: Ongoing feedback on items added to the portfolio.
 - Summative: Comprehensive review of the portfolio at the end of a term or course.
- **real-world assignments:**
 - Formative: Observations and feedback during the assignment process.
 - Summative: Grading of the completed assignments (like the quality of interviews or the content of a shopping list).
- **total physical response (TPR):**
 - Formative: Immediate feedback during physical response activities.
 - Summative: A series of commands are given, and students are assessed on their accuracy and speed of response.
- **gallery walk:**
 - Formative: Observations as students interact with and comment on the posted work.
 - Summative: Evaluation of students' comments for depth, relevance, and language usage.
- **scaffolded questions:**
 - Formative: Immediate feedback on students' responses to initial questions.
 - Summative: Grading of students' responses to the more challenging questions.
- **feedback circles (peer review):**
 - Formative: Monitoring and guiding peer review sessions.
 - Summative: Assessment of the quality, relevance, and language of the feedback given.
- **interactive workshops:**
 - Formative: Observations and feedback during workshop activities.
 - Summative: Post-workshop assessments, such as quizzes or reflections, to gauge comprehension.
- **collaborative learning:**
 - Formative: Ongoing observations and guidance during group activities.
 - Summative: Graded presentations or reports on the results of group projects or tasks.

- **interactive storytelling:**
 - Formative: Immediate feedback as learners make decisions within the story.
 - Summative: Evaluation based on students' decisions, interactions, and understanding of the story.
- **flipped classroom:**
 - Formative: Monitoring online discussions or Q&A sessions related to the independent content review.
 - Summative: Assessing in-class activities and applications of the learned content.
- **error-correction:**
 - Formative: Immediate feedback on identified errors.
 - Summative: Tests or quizzes that include intentional errors to check students' correction abilities.

Summative Assessment Example:

Project-Based Summative Assessment for Proficiency Level (Includes All Four Skills)

"The Professional Networking Portfolio"

Objective: To provide Proficiency-level adult learners an opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension and application of advanced grammatical structures within the context of professional networking, preparing them for undergraduate programs in English-speaking countries.

1. Reading & Research:

Task:

- Read three articles/blogs from reputable sources on the importance and strategies of professional networking in academia.

Focus: Identify instances where the authors use:

- Reduction of adverb clauses to modifying adverbial phrases.
- Connectives that express cause and effect, contrast, and condition.
- Conditional sentences and wishes.

Outcome: An annotated bibliography of the articles, highlighting and commenting on the use of the aforementioned structures.

2. Writing:

Task:

- Compose an article/blog post titled "The Art of Networking in Academia: Navigating Opportunities and Challenges".

Focus: Ensure the integration of:

- At least 5 instances of reducing adverb clauses to modifying adverbial phrases.
- Varied use of connectives that express cause and effect, contrast, and condition.
- At least 3 conditional sentences and 2 wishes.

Outcome: A well-structured, coherent, and grammatically nuanced article of 800-1000 words.

3. Listening:

Task:

- Listen to a recorded panel discussion or podcast on networking challenges faced by international students in English-speaking countries.

Focus: Take comprehensive notes, particularly emphasizing moments where speakers:

- Use the reduction of adverb clauses to modifying adverbial phrases.
- Implement connectives that express cause and effect, contrast, and condition.
- Articulate conditional sentences and wishes.

Outcome: A structured set of notes, with grammar focus points clearly highlighted.

4. Speaking:

Task:

- Organize a mock networking event with classmates. Each student will prepare a 5-minute pitch about their academic interests, potential research projects, and the value they would bring to a university community.

Focus: Within their pitch, students should:

- Seamlessly incorporate the reduction of adverb clauses to modifying adverbial phrases.
- Use varied connectives to structure their speech logically and persuasively.

- Incorporate conditional sentences when discussing potential scenarios and wishes when articulating hopes for their academic journey.

Outcome: A confidently delivered pitch, followed by a Q&A session where students further practice the grammar structures in spontaneous speech.

Assessment Criteria:

- Accurate and effective use of advanced grammar structures in diverse contexts.
- Coherence and cohesion in written and spoken communication.
- Demonstrated understanding of professional networking in academia.
- Peer reviews.