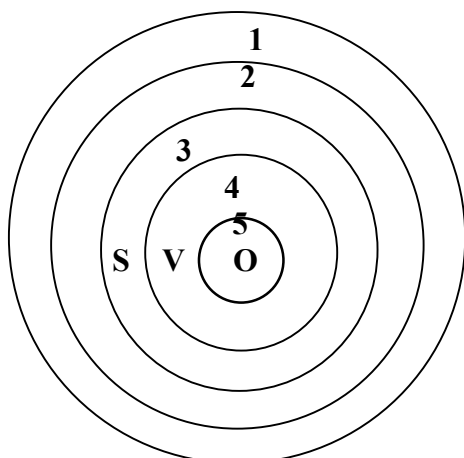


GRAMMAR WHEEL

There is an enormous amount of information packed into **The Grammar Wheel**. In the video, I showed the basic concept and operation of the wheel. Let me now explain in more detail how the wheel is constructed – conceptually that is. After that I will address your questions with respect to lesson plans and curriculum.

Conceptual structure of The Grammar Wheel:



In order to facilitate discussion, let us designate the rings of the grammar wheel as follows:

Ring 1	=	'WH' question words
Ring 2	=	auxiliary words
Ring 3	=	Subject words
Ring 4	=	Verb words
Ring 5	=	Object word

The wheel incorporates the following grammatical aspects:

- (1) The 'WH' question words. If you look at the prototype that I sent you, you will see that there are 2 groups, one group in blue (e.g. **when, where**, etc) and the other in red (e.g. **whose, how many**). This, to my knowledge, is an entirely original contribution to the teaching of English grammar, and one that my students found extremely useful. Let me use the example of the girl and the cookie from the video demonstration.

(a) *When did the girl take a cookie?*
'WH' *aux* *S* *V* *O*

Note the structure:

- 'WH' = question word
- aux = auxiliary (to denote time, i.e. past, present, future)
- S = Subject
- V = Verb
- O = Object

Now, let's use the same example but start the question with 'how many'.

(b) *How many cookies did the girl take?*
'WH' *O* *aux* *S* *V*



Note how the position of the object word 'cookie' has moved from the end of the sentence in example (a) to a position between the 'WH' word and the auxiliary.

- (2) In Ring 2, we have the 'auxiliary' words. Again, I have incorporated an innovation in how to 'see' and how to manipulate grammatical structure that greatly simplifies conceptual learning for the student.

There are two kinds of auxiliaries in this ring:

- (a) verb tense auxiliaries in black, e.g. **do, did**, etc.
- (b) 'modal' auxiliaries (or 'helper verbs') in yellow, e.g. **can, should**, etc

As I explained in the video, there are 2 main kinds of questions: 'Yes/No' questions and 'WH' questions. In 'Yes/No' questions, we proceed inwards from ring 2 to ring 5, and in 'WH' questions, we proceed from ring 1 to ring 5.

Example of Yes/No question with verb tense auxiliary:

Did the girl take a cookie?
aux S V O

Example of 'WH' question with modal auxiliary:

Can the girl take a cookie?
aux S V O

- (3) In Ring 3, we have the subject. The subject is either a noun or a pronoun. If we proceed inwards as before, we now have, Subject → Verb → Object (or **S – V – O** as I wrote on the flip chart during the video I sent you). In grammatical terms, this is a statement, or more precisely, a **positive statement**.

Example of positive statement:

she] *takes a cookie* (with pronoun)
the girl] *takes a cookie* (with noun)
S V O

- (4) In Ring 4, we have 14 very high-frequency verbs (N.B. given the present design structure of **The Grammar Wheel**, it has to be 14 verbs. However, this number could be increased, by for example having one of the 14 segments on Disk #4 reserved as a 'slot' window, through which one could see a much larger selection of verbs printed (in small font) in a circle on Disk #3, and available by rotating this disk.

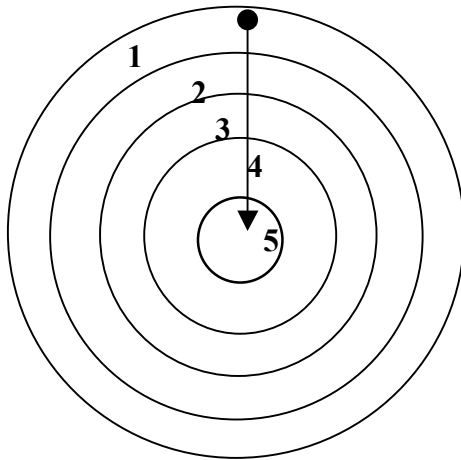
If we proceed inward from ring (or disk) 4 to the central ring 5, we have only 2 words in the structure, the verb and the object. Functionally, this is the structure that we use when we are giving precise instructions or directions. **The Grammar Wheel** addresses not only language structure but also language functions. Let me explain briefly;

Anyone who has brought up young children knows that there is a significant difference in meaning between your sweet innocent 4 year old daughter saying, “*can I take a cookie?*”, as opposed to, “*should I take a cookie?*” (said to herself, of course!), and the words she **really** wants to hear, namely, her Mum or Dad saying ‘*take a cookie*’.

(4) And at the center of it all is Ring 5 (= wheel = disk), which contains the object, in this case, ‘the cookie’.

* * *

Summary:

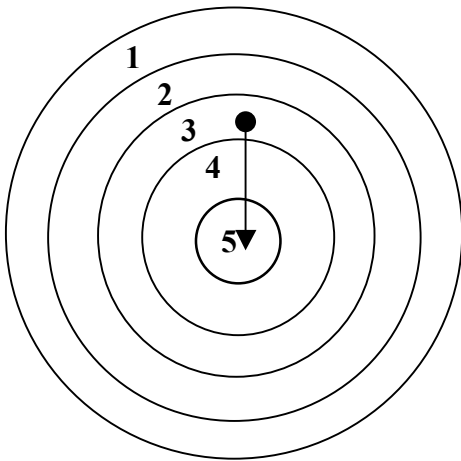
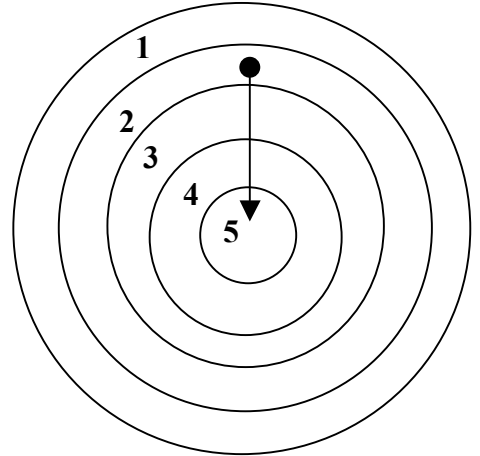


'WH' question

When did the girl take a cookie?

Yes / No question

Did the girl take a cookie?

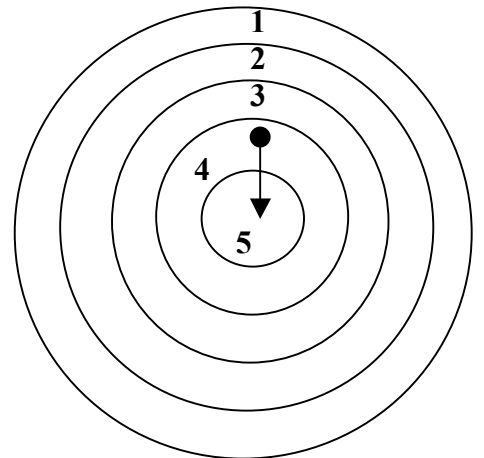


Positive Statement

The girl took a cookie

Imperative (Instruction / Direction)

Take a cookie



O.K. now to your questions:

1. *Would you be able to create a "lesson plan" showing how you would integrate this item into a school's curriculum? What grade level (or range of grade levels) do you feel this is most appropriate for?*

I recently had a long discussion with a friend of mine who has just retired from a lifetime career of teaching in Elementary School. She became very excited when I showed her The Grammar Wheel. She many ways in which it could be used. She said she saw it being used as early as Grade 2 (with a simplified version, e.g. reduce to 'WH' question words to the 7 essential ones, who, what, when, where, whose, which and how.) She felt its widest range of use would be at the Grade 4-6 level. The curriculum goal at Grades 4 and 5 would be to use the Grammar Wheel as a tool to help students attain better and more correct **sentence structure**. At Grade 6, the goal would be to expand this to **paragraph writing**. These activities would be part of the writing skills program.

Brief sample Lesson Plan:

Curriculum Theme: Social Studies: Martin Luther King; The March to Washington

- (1) Teacher asks students to write 4 questions on the above subject using their Grammar Wheels, e.g. *why did he go to Washington? where did he start from? when did he arrive in Washington?* or at slightly higher level, *how long did it take to get to Washington? how far did they walk? how many people went with him? how long did it take them?* etc.
- (2) Teacher asks students to research answers to these questions, e.g. speak to class-mates, go to library, go onto Internet, etc.
- (3) Teacher asks students to write 4 sentences that respond to their questions.
- (4) (At higher level) Teacher asks students to combine these sentences into a paragraph.

Together we brainstormed many other ideas, including how to use the Wheel in spelling activities, error identification exercises, interaction activities such as charades, etc. My friend said that she could envision an Elementary classroom in which every student had his / her own Grammar Wheel, in addition to which the teacher would have a large-scale wall model of the Wheel. There are also interesting ideas that come out the distinction between turning the disks as opposed to spinning one or more of them (as in roulette). Turning involves conscious and deliberate intention / choice, whereas spinning introduces a random element.

I have already talked about how the verb 'bank' could be expanded by having a slot window. My friend mentioned another possibility in which Disk 4 (the verb disk) would have blank segments in which could write in their own verbs.

We discussed how there has been great concern in Canada, the U.S.A., and in Britain about 'the basics', and specifically how the educational programs in these countries have been severely criticized for turning out students who lack basic reading and writing skills. These problems have been addressed in your country, as you know, as a priority for the Bush administration. In B.C., there is ongoing debate and reform to ensure that basic skills are

taught, and taught well. My friend used the expression, “there are holes in the ‘whole language’ method” – that educators can no longer assume that students are learning the basic skills from this approach. She predicted that in the near future there will be increasing resources devoted to finding answers to these problems, and that in her opinion, The Grammar Wheel would go a long way to addressing many of them.

Another cause of concern in Canada (but I know it applies to the U.S., Britain and Australia as well) is the increasing multi-cultural nature of the classroom due to increasing immigration. The Grammar Wheel could be used for second-language learners either within the regular classroom or in an adjunctive ‘special education’ program.

To put it succinctly, the goal of using The Grammar Wheel would be to help students develop the ability to speak and write grammatically correct sentences.

At the adult E.S.L. level, the Wheel is most appropriate at the lower beginner, upper beginner and lower intermediate, although like any general resource (e.g. a dictionary) it would continue to be used at higher levels as well.

2. *Is this appropriate for adult education i.e. E.S.L. (English as a Second Language) classes?*

Yes. I taught adult E.S.L. for 20 years and **The Grammar Wheel** was developed at the end of this period as a means of simplifying the key elements of language acquisition (adult or child level) such as question formation, understanding of structure and function, verb tenses, helper verbs, word order, etc.

The most widely used E.S.L. textbooks in North America are the series of 3 books written by Betty Azar (Prentice-Hall). Here are the contents of the Beginner level book, Basic English Grammar.

- Chapter 1: Using *Be* and *Have*
- 2: Using *Be*
- 3: *Be + ing*
- 4. The Simple Present Tense
- 5. Nouns
- 6. Some special verbs and expressions
- 7. The Simple Past Tense
- 8. Expressing Future Time
- 9. Expressing Ability (i.e. using *Can*)
- 10. Nouns and Pronouns
- 11. Making Comparisons 1
- 12. Making Comparisons 2

And from her intermediate book, Fundamentals Of English Grammar, the opening Chapters:

- Chapter 1: Present Time
- 2: Past Time
- 3: Future Time
- 4. Nouns and Pronouns
- 5. Modal Auxiliaries (i.e. *can, could, would, should, must, have to, etc.*)
- 6. Questions (i.e. ‘*WH*’ and *Yes / No* questions)

7. The Present Perfect

Here's the point. Ninety per cent (90%) of the above is covered by The Grammar Wheel in hands-on educational tool form.

There are many language game activities that could utilize The Grammar Wheel, as an introduction to the activity, or actually during the activity. For example, 'human bingo', '20 questions', board games that present answers to which students have to make up questions, reading comprehension activities (i.e. read article, write 5-8 "WH" question based on it; partners check questions for accuracy). I could on and on. If you want more ideas, consult a book like Fun with Grammar: Communication Activities for the Azar Grammar Series, (Suzanne Woodward, Prentice-Hall, '97, ISBN: 0-13-567926-5)

3. *Any other thoughts as to how it would be used in the market.*

As I have pointed out in other publications, there is a vast world wide market (at child and adult level), for aids to learning English. In a country such as China, for example, which is still relatively 'low-tech.' and where the average person does not have a lot of money, one could imagine the appeal of a hands-on tool that simplified the process of English language acquisition (especially with the Olympics coming up, and the heightened awareness of the importance of speaking other languages in its aftermath).

On a more whimsical note, I have imagined the Grammar Wheel as everything from a Frisbee, to a roulette wheel (you are based in Las Vegas aren't you?!), to a visual aid to mystical or spiritual contemplation (what IS the object of our deepest questions? what is the source and destination of our intentions, etc. Down the road, I see a software application that would find its way into foreign business-men's electronic pocket books or lap tops.