Using Slot Sheets in Level 1

Students know slot sheets as "grammar worksheets." They are a set of five progressively more inclusive columnar sheets that allow students to "slot" English construction types into their correct positions in an English sentence. They follow the basic Sector Analysis principle that any sentence can be looked at as an arrangement of particular **forms,** also called construction types (words, phrases, clauses, etc.), in particular locations corresponding to their **functions**: SUBJECT, VERB, OBJECT, ADVERBIALS, etc.

Sheets 1a and 1b block off several positions to focus attention on the VERB-OBJECT core of a written English sentence. Both ESL and EFL students should first become comfortable with the **base form** of the English verb—the form that has no inflections, no time, no person. Conveniently in English, the base form is also our command form: *Stop! Look! Listen!* So the sheets begin with real communication instead of fake sentences like "This is a book."

On sheet 1a, students write a series of commands which the teacher acts out(see the sample *Linda! Get Up!*). ESL students call out the commands as they see the teacher doing them; EFL students would need help with the vocabulary. Both groups can use the colored reference "Basic Verb Idioms" to find all the collocations in *Linda! Get Up!*

Sheet 1b does two things. It opens up two more columns: the SUBJECT column and the second adverbial column, which is the location for "What time?" Students add a subject—*I*—and write their own daily routines. These sentences are choppy and repetitive, so Sheet 1b also prompts compound sentences by introducing the word *and* in the verb column. Here's how to do it: On the board, bracket the first three sentences of someone's daily routine (as long as all three events are part of the morning routine and ask students to come up and make one sentence from the three. The pattern they will come to is **T=**, which has one subject and multiple verbs as in "I get up at 6:30, take a shower and get dressed."

Sheet 2 also does two things: It opens the final column, which is initially for sequence signals like *Then, Later* and *After school*. Students can go to *Bob's Routine* and other routines or to *My Day Yesterday*. They hand the slot sheet in, get it back with correction symbols, correct and recopy as a titled composition in paragraph form on loose-leaf paper. The slot sheet is later stapled to the back of this final copy.

Sheet 2 also stabilizes the variants that Level 1 students need in the two ADVERBIAL positions: particular prepositions followed by a little box that represents their object, other questions besides Where? and What time? which we <u>generally</u> line out in the order suggested. Check these out for yourself: do you say, "I went with my husband to the mall" or "I went to the mall with my husband"? And if you ask Why? or What for?, you may get an infinitive structure (to V) like *to get a new matress.*

Sheet 3 expands the possibilities of three slots. The slot outside the trunk (indicated by a double vertical line) is a catch-all for sequence signals, front shifters (like *Last Thanksgiving* or *Yesterday*) and the fanboys *and/but/so*. Unlike the *and* in the verb slot, these fanboys join whole trunks, generally with two different subjects, as in "A man cooked a delicious turkey, and his wife helped him." The VERB slot expands to include x-words and negatives, as in "A boy kissed a girl in the park, but she didn't like it." The slot following the verb now has a place for two objects, the first of which is traditionally called the indirect object, as in "She sent me a letter," and a complement—the descriptive structure that usually follows a form of the verb *BE*, as in "My mother was sad."

Sheet 3 has an alternative form that differs only in its division into two sections, each for a **Little Story**. The Little Stories are a series of short act-out and picture stories that prompt a particular sequence of new grammar items. You might know the first of these, *The Turkey.*

Sheet 4 is the first sheet that has two sides. When students have written a dozen or more short compositions in slot sheets, most are quite capable of slotting a 200-word story given to them (like *My Last Day in My Country*) and, more importantly, their own longer narratives: *My First Kiss, When I Came to New York, My Best Birthday, A Wonderful Trip I Took*, etc. ESL students use clauses even before they have been formally introduced, so this sheet adds *because* and *when* in the catch-all slot in front of the trunk. Students seem to have no trouble using these two connectors as if they were fanboys and even slot more deeply embedded clauses like "I knew I would miss her" without missing a beat.

One more thing is more or less sneaked in on sheet 4. The B sector, which is actually two separate slots on either side of the OBJECT position for the particles that accompany separable two-word verbs (*e.g. turn on, turn off, put back*) just casually shows up inside the verb slot for things like "I picked up my daughter at school."

Finally, in the last sheet—sheet 5—the other B sector is introduced. Even low level students need it because they will write things like, "My cousin picked me up at the airport." For now, this is the most advanced thing these slot sheets accommodate

From the beginning of slot sheet use, word order is greatly emphasized, and the very few verb inflections—-*s* or *-ed* endings, for example, stand out because they are all in a single column.

New functions are added with each new sheet. Students don't have lessons on adverbials, say, but they will start to notice the prepositional phrases at the top of the two adverbial columns.

With these sheets, students are working on all the following almost entirely <u>without presentations</u> <u>or</u> <u>exercises</u>:

- past irregular verbs and *-ed* endings on regular verbs;
- *a* for first mention of a nominal; pronoun or *the* for second mention;
- subject pronouns vs. object pronouns;
- "boxes" (nominal constructions) in subject an object positions vs. phrases in adverbial positions;
- two-word separable verbs;
- connectors: linkers and FANBOYS;
- four sentence patterns: TRUNK, TRUNK + TRUNK, TRUNK WITH TWO PARTS and LINKER AND TRUNK (including their punctuation).

Name:_____ Date:___/___

Title: _____

VERB	OBJECT	Where?

Grammar Worksheet 1b

Name:_____ Date:___/___/_

SUBJECT	VERB + *and* VERB	OBJECT	Where?	What time?
	Title: _____			

Grammar Worksheet 2

Name:_____ Date:___/___/__

Title: _____

SEQUENCE SIGNAL	SUBJECT	VERB + *and* VERB	OBJECT	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?

Grammar Worksheet 3

Name:_____ Date:___/___/____

Title: _____

SEQ./When? OR + *(and/but/so)*	SUBJECT	VERB + *and* VERB (X) (Neg) VERB	OBJECT$_1$ OBJECT$_2$ OR COMPLEMENT	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?

Grammar Worksheet 3

Name:_____ Date:___/___/____

SEQ./When? OR + *(and/but/so)*	SUBJECT	VERB *and* VERB (X) (Neg) VERB	OBJECT$_1$ OBJECT$_2$ OR COMPLEMENT	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?
	Little Stories title:				
	Little Stories title:				

Grammar Worksheet 4 (continued)

SEQ/When? OR + (and, but, so) OR + (because, when)	SUBJECT	VERB + and VERB (X) (N) VERB (B)	OBJECT$_1$ OBJECT$_2$ OR COMPLEMENT	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?

Grammar Worksheet 4

Name:_____ Date:___/___/___

SEQ/When? OR + *(and, but, so)* OR + *(because, when)*	SUBJECT	VERB + *and* VERB (X) (N) VERB (B̃)	OBJECT$_1$ OBJECT$_2$ OR COMPLEMENT	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?
	Title: _____				

Grammar Worksheet 5

Name:_____ Date:___/___/___

Title: _____

SEQ/When? OR + *(and, but, so)* OR + *(because, when)*	SUBJECT	VERB *and* VERB (X) (N) VERB (B̃)	OBJECT$_1$ OBJECT$_2$ OR COMPLEMENT	B *(on, off, etc)*	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?

Grammar Worksheet 5 (continued)

SEQ/When? OR + (and, but, so) OR + (because, when)	SUBJECT	VERB and VERB (X) (N) VERB (B)	OBJECT$_1$ OBJECT$_2$ OR COMPLEMENT	B (on, off, etc)	ADVERBIALS to/at/for/about ☐ How? How much? Where?	ADVERBIALS with ☐ Why? (to V) When? What time? How long? How often?