

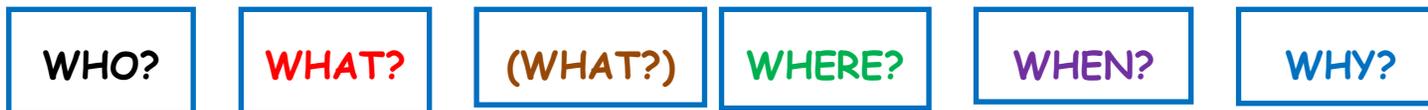


Use the 5Ws to Teach **SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

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**SUMMARY OF THE CONCEPT:**

Instead of using confusing **GRAMMAR WORDS**, we can use **FAMILIAR QUESTION WORDS** to teach learners **the most common word order for English sentences**:



- **WHO** (or possibly, **WHAT**) did the action? (e.g., **I**)
- **WHAT action** did I do? (ate)
- (I did the action **to WHAT** - if applicable; e.g., I ate **what?** - **some cookies**.)
- **WHERE** did I do the action? (there can be up to 3 **WHEREs**, from Most Specific to Most General) (**in my car**)
- **WHEN** did they do the action? (there can be up to 3 **WHENs**, from Most Specific to Most General) (**at seven o'clock last night**)
- **WHY** did I do the action? (**because I didn't have time to eat dinner**).

Please **NOTE**: we **ONLY** tell “Where”, “When” or “Why” if it’s **UNUSUAL**.

We **don't** say (or write), “I ate breakfast in my kitchen this morning because I was hungry. (**redundant/obvious**)

**STEPS TO TEACH THE CONCEPT: PART 1**

1. **Elicit 5 W words** – write on the board in the **order as above** (VERY important!)
2. Have the learners **CHANT** “Who What What Where When Why!” so they’ll remember the order.



3. **Elicit a simple sentence** written in this way. Make sure you use a **SEPARATE** piece of paper for each “W”. For example, “I went to Toronto yesterday to see my son.” Put each section under the correct W. I **use coloured markers** to help **identify the different sections**, but you can do it with one colour.

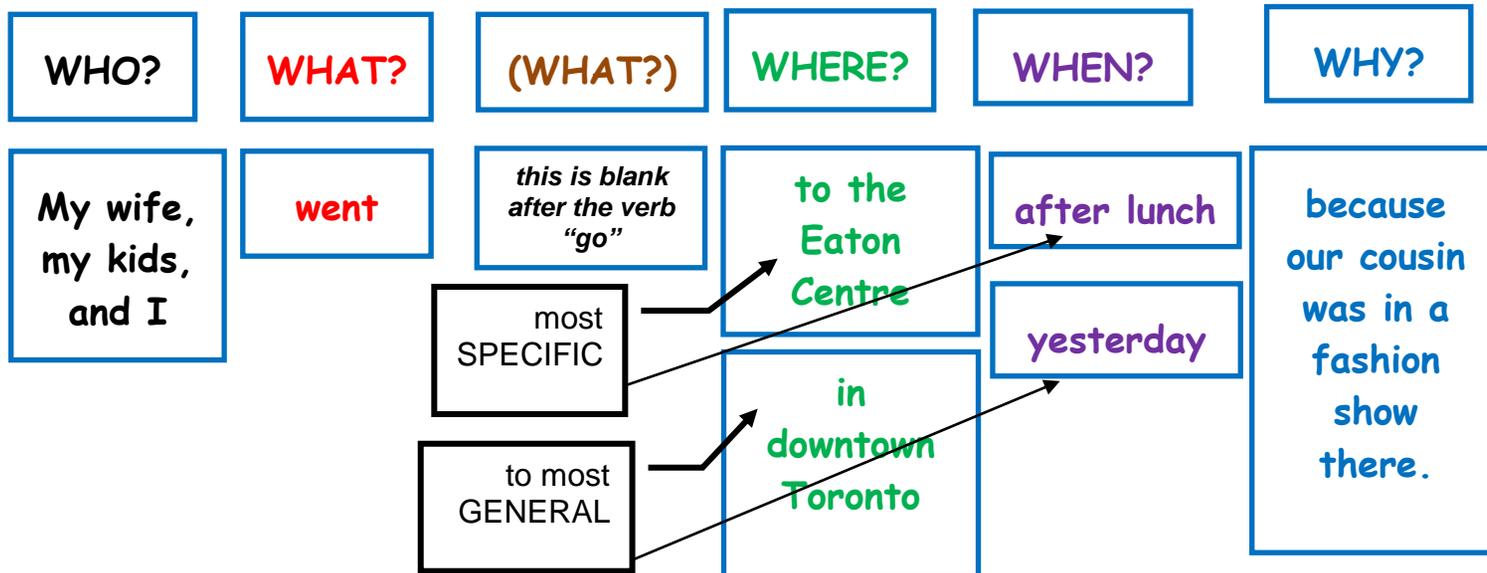
WHO?	did <b>WHAT?</b>	to/for <b>(WHAT?)</b>	went <b>WHERE?</b>	went <b>WHEN?</b>	went <b>WHY?</b>
I	went	[this is blank after the verb “go”]	to Toronto	yesterday	to see my son.

4. Have the learners come up to the board and **REARRANGE** the sentence to **the order it would be in THEIR LANGUAGE**. (If you have multiple learners from the same language background, they can come up in a group to do this activity. They may not all **AGREE**, though!) After they’ve shown the class the correct word order in their language, **ask them to put the sections back in the correct order for ENGLISH. This allows them to visually SEE, kinesthetically FEEL, the DIFFERENCE between word order in their language and English.**
5. Even with a Level 1 class, we then move the **WHEN?** to the **beginning** so learners know time can always go at the beginning. When we do this, I put a comma after the time word/phrase.
6. Put the learners in groups, and have them generate a simple sentence in this format, and then have them stick their sentence on the board under the correct W.
7. If there are grammar errors in the sentence, ask the group to try to fix it; if they can’t, ask the class to fix it. If they can’t, fix it yourself.
8. With a low-level class, this is as far as I take it. I then hand out sheets with **scrambled sentences** (there are dozens of free examples on the web), and have the groups use the 5Ws structure to put the sentences in the correct order. For a very low level class, make sure that each “W” phrase is written on a separate piece of paper so they can be physically rearranged. e.g., **a bagel / my sister / this morning / ate /**



**PART 2: EXPANSION**

9. For higher level classes (Levels 3-4 and up), we talk about the difference between the **comfortable maximum length** of a **SPOKEN sentence** & and **WRITTEN sentence**. (Elicit: About 10-14 words for a spoken sentence & 25 up to about 45 – and actually **unlimited!** - for a written sentence!)
10. We then “**EXPLODE**” each section of one of the previous sentences **if possible** (you can’t always expand – sometimes the verb is the verb!) – to turn a “children’s sentence” into an ADULT sentence. You could suggest using a **Thesaurus** to make the sentences more **DETAILED**, because **good writing in English is detailed writing**.



**NOTE:** you can have up to 3 Wheres or 3 Whens (2 is more common). The order is from most SPECIFIC to most GENERAL.

Use an ADDRESS to demonstrate - 860 Harrington Court, Burlington, Ontario, Canada

most SPECIFIC → 860 Harrington Court  
 → Burlington  
 → Ontario  
 → Canada ← to most GENERAL