

## Color-coded grammar cards

**Level:** A1.2, A2.1, A2.2

**Age:** 9-12

**Organization:** whole class

**Aims:** To associate parts of speech with colors; to notice and generate language patterns; to ask for personal information; (to introduce and/or familiarize children with useful metalanguage).

**Language focus:** *In the example:* Wh-questions, present simple, preposition of time, personal information, daily routines

*Alternatives:* any familiar language pattern

**Materials:** *Essential:* color-coded grammar cards (one set, large enough for the class to see). For the example activity, you need 25 color-coded cards (red for Wh-questions, orange for auxiliaries, yellow for subject pronouns, green for verbs, (include 'get up' on one card), blue for prepositions, purple for nouns, black for question marks) to make the following questions:

*Where do you live?*

*When does she get up?*

*What does he have for breakfast?*

*How do they go to school?*

<i>Where</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>live</i>	<i>?</i>
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### Procedure

1. Stick the color-coded grammar cards in jumbled order on the board.
2. Ask a pair of children to come and choose any cards they like and arrange them to make a question, e.g. *When do you have breakfast? / Where do you go to school?*

3. Repeat the procedure with several different pairs. Ask the children what they notice about the order of colors in the questions, i.e. that it's always red, orange, yellow, green at the start, and then sometimes blue and purple as well. If appropriate, introduce or use metalanguage when talking about the colors and parts of speech.
4. Ask the children to help you make four questions using all the cards on the board. Stick the words in columns according to the colors as you do this. Point out that the colors in the questions follow the order of colors in a rainbow. Use this to help the children remember the order, e.g. orange always comes before green in a rainbow.
5. Either elicit other questions that children can make following the same pattern or divide the class into pairs and set a time limit, e.g. five minutes, for them to do this.
6. At the end, ask the children to report back. Examples of questions following a similar pattern are: *Where do you have lunch? When does she have gym? What do they do after school?*

### **Comments and Suggestions**

- You can use an activity like this either as a follow-up to a speaking activity in which children use the same language pattern or as revision and a reminder before leading into a speaking activity. In either case, it is important to remember that although awareness of how to form Wh- questions may help children learn, it does not replace the need for meaningful, contextualized practice for children to be able to use them in their own speech.
- Color-coded grammar cards can be used to help children notice a variety of different language patterns and aspects of grammar, e.g. word order of adjectives and nouns, pronoun replacement, the use of conjunctions to link sentences and add or contrast ideas. It is usually best to only focus on one structure or language pattern at any one time.
- As a follow-up to work on stories or other texts, you can use the same color-code system to get children to notice and underline or circle words in the grammatical category you wish to focus on.
- You may also like to keep a color-coded display of parts of speech, using the same colors as the grammar cards, on the classroom noticeboard. The different parts of speech can be displayed inside stars, circles, fish, flowers, monsters, etc. and referred to during lessons as appropriate.

