

## Grade 1: Sample Mini-Lessons

Week 3/4: Skill: Sentences end with an end mark.  
Focus on statements.

**\*\*Teacher note:** information about the “Meet the Dix Family” color sheet:

A color sheet introducing the members of the Dix family is included with the Week 3/4 practice pages. Students will find Meg, Tim, their parents, and their pets in practice items for the next several weeks. By the time students encounter the skill of capitalizing first names, they will have seen the names and pictures of Tim and Meg and will have built a bit of schema. This allows us to limit the number of names we use in DLI items and build our practice items around a family that the students get to know.

Please guide students to color the page using the colors indicated on the key. As we progress to color words, students will be given daily practice items which ask them to color Mom’s hair yellow; the Dix house will be blue with a red roof, and Puff, the cat, will be orange with brown stripes. These daily items will be consistent with the way that the color sheet was completed.

**Prior knowledge:**

Students will have been exposed to this skill in Kindergarten.

**Lesson focus:** A sentence ends with a period.

Only statements will be used for DLI materials for weeks 1-15.

Ask students several of these questions:

What do you see at the end of a train? (a caboose)

What do you see at the end of a dog? (a tail)

What do you see at the end of a movie? (the credits)

What do you hear at the end of the school day? (the bell)

What does your Dad hear at the end of his night’s sleep? (the alarm clock)

What do you see at the end of a sentence?

Tell students a period is a signal to us that a sentence has ended, just like a caboose or a school bell are signals to us that something has ended.

A sentence does not go on and on and on. It stops after it has done its JOB.  
Share with students the following jobs of a sentence:

Three JOBS for a sentence:

- 1) a sentence tells what a person does, or
- 2) a sentence tells what a thing does, or
- 3) a sentence tells what happened.

Compose some sentences together using the idea that a sentence stops when it has done its JOB. The following is a possible dialogue you might have with your students about job #1:

Teacher: Since a sentence tells what a person does, could someone name a person?

Student: Mom

Teacher: Let's record that name on our chart. What did we learn the last two weeks about what kind of letter we should use at the beginning of the sentence?  
Yes, that's right; let's start with a capital letter for our first word, "Mom."

Teacher: Do you think that this is a sentence? (Point to the word "Mom.") No, you are right; this is just our first word. The sentence hasn't finished its job, yet. It has to tell what the person does. Could someone tell one thing that Mom does?

Student: Mom goes to store.

Teacher: Let's write that next to the word "Mom." Write the words "goes to the store" but do not add a period.

Teacher: Has the sentence finished its job? Does it tell who? Yes, the sentence is talking about Mom. Does it tell what Mom does? Yes, it tells that Mom goes to the store. What do you think? Has the sentence finished its job? Yes, so how do we show that this sentence has finished its job?

Student: We need a period to show that it is the end of the sentence.

Teacher: That is correct! A big, fat period tells us that this sentence is ending.

Repeat the steps above asking students to name another person and then ask what that person does. Review the concepts as you close the lesson: a period is the signal that a sentence has ended, just like a caboose is a signal that the train has ended. Sentences do not go on and on. A sentence ends when it has finished its job. Today we learned that one job of a sentence is to tell what a person does. When the sentence finishes doing that job, it needs a period to show that it has ended.

On other instructional days, review the concepts from today's lesson and then develop Job Two for a sentence... telling what a thing does, or Job Three, telling what happened.

### Lesson extension:

The following song reinforces the lesson content. It can be used as you do interactive editing with your class and also when your students look at their own writing. The editing tune below teaches students a strategy of using their thumb and pinkie to signal the capital letter and end mark. When students look for capitals and end punctuation, this tactile approach can help students stay focused.

**" My Sentence Needs a Check"**  
Sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell"

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. My sentence needs a check,<br>My sentence needs a check,<br>Hi-ho, the Derry-o,<br>My sentence needs a check. | 2. Thumb taps the capital,<br>Thumb taps the capital,<br>Hi-ho, the Derry-o,<br>Thumb taps the capital.    |
| 3. Pinkie pats the period,<br>Pinkie pats the period,<br>Hi-ho, the Derry-o,<br>Pinkie pats the period.          | 4. My sentence now is fine,<br>My sentence now is fine,<br>Hi-ho, the Derry-o,<br>My sentence now is fine. |

## Week 7: Capital letter for I

**Prior knowledge:** Students know that the names of people, including their own names, start with a capital letter.

**Lesson Focus:** Use a capital letter "I" when writing the pronoun "I".

### Lesson Strategy:

**Materials:** 4" x 9" piece of bright construction paper for each student  
Crayons or markers

Remind students that we learned how special we are. That fact makes us use a capital letter when we start to write our names.

Write your name on this piece of construction paper. Make sure you start your name with a capital letter.

When we talk about ourselves, we don't say, "Mary wants a drink of water." We say, "I want a drink of water." We use the word "I" instead of our name when we talk about ourselves. "I" takes the place of our whole name. Since our name starts with a capital, "I" must be a capital letter because it does the job or takes the place of our name. Turn your paper over and write a big, bold capital "I" to take the place of your name.

Now both sides of your card are YOU, and both have capital letters.

**Lesson Extension:** "Capital I" song

### "CAPITAL I" SONG

(Sung to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad")

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I've been working on my capitals,  
All the live-long day.  
I've been working on my capitals,  
Just to pass the time away.  
When you see the letter "I"  
Standing all alone,  
Make it big and bold and capital  
To show that it's your own.

## Week 20: Verbs are Action words

**Prior knowledge:** This is an introductory skill- the focus will be on action verbs.

**Lesson Focus:** Students will learn that verbs are action words.

**Lesson Strategy:** Tell students that each sentence has an action part. If the sentence is about a cat, the verb is the word that tells what the cat does. Ask students this question: "What can a cat do?" Sample responses include the following: eat, sleep, play, purr, climb, scratch, and meow. On another day you may wish to ask instead: "What did the cat do?" or "What is the cat doing?" These questions will generate verbs in past tense or past participles and you can talk about other endings common to verbs.

After talking to students about verbs as action words, play the game "What Can I Do?" To play, you begin by doing an action and have students guess the verb. Emphasize that the verb will tell what you can do. When students guess the verb, record it on chart paper and build a list which you can post in your classroom. After a few examples that you perform, ask for students to volunteer to do an action and have other students guess the verb. Suggestions include the following verbs: jump, clap, hop, sing, snap (fingers), skip, sleep, yawn, whistle, write, comb, pat, pull, push, kneel, climb, and read.

**Mini-lesson song:** teach the following song to your students and use recess as an opportunity to add more verbs to your class list.

### "Verbs"

To the tune of "Take me out to the Ball Game"

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1

Take me out to the playground,  
It's a place to find verbs.  
Verbs are those words that are ac-tion-packed,  
You swing on the swings...., then you glide back.

For it's kick the soccer ball, shoot it,

The goalie lunges to save.  
For it's one, two, three verbs you'll find,  
On the school play-ground!

2

Take me out to the playground,  
Can YOU think of some verbs?  
Think of the batter and pitcher, too.  
Verbs are words that can tell what  
they do.

For it's swing, slide, catch on the  
play-ground,  
If there's an ac-tion, verbs tell!  
For it's verbs that show what you do,  
On the school play-ground!