There is a place called Grammar Island, made of words and dreams. There are fish and birds, and waves and wind, and beaches where kids can play. On Grammar Island you find wonderful things, such as birds and language.
On Grammar Island
you learn that
thinking about language
is fun!

Language is talking and writing.
It is how we make
our ideas out of words!

Remind students that
sentences do not occur
in nature. Language
comes from us; it is
ourselves, in words.
It is important to be good at language because we use language for almost everything—even to say, “Let’s go for a swim!” So the better you are at language, the better you are at MANY THINGS!
When we talk or write, that is language. When we think in words, like the word splash, that is language.

Q: How is a word different from a random group of letters such as dixerp?
When we think about language, that is called **GRAMMAR**.

On Grammar Island, we think about language in **FOUR** great ways.
The four ways of thinking about language are called:

1. parts of speech
2. parts of the sentence
3. phrases
4. clauses

These four levels are the foundation for four-level analysis. Each level is crucial to good writing.
We will learn more about these soon, but here is a sneak preview:

1. **parts of speech:**
   - the eight kinds of words
2. **parts of the sentence:**
   - the parts of ideas
3. **phrases:**
   - little groups of words
4. **clauses:**
   - subject/predicate ideas

Q: Think about a team sport. How are the players different from the game?
Part One

The Parts of Speech
(the eight kinds of words!)
Grammar lets us think about our words.

There are many words.

bug, blue, wave, smell, flower, yellow, beach, ocean, cloud,

fish, ran, splash, duck, island, wow, boat, tide

Discuss: Why do we need to know anything about words?

A demonstration: See how many words you can list in a minute.
But how many different kinds of words do you think there are for all the things on Grammar Island?

A zillion?
Guess what?
There are only eight kinds of words!

Only eight!
The eight kinds of words are called the Parts of Speech.

Our language is made of only eight kinds of parts!

Q: What do we mean when we talk about the PARTS of a fish?
Here are the names of the eight kinds of words:

- noun
- pronoun
- adjective
- verb
- adverb
- preposition
- conjunction
- interjection

We see the primary roles of the noun and verb and the support roles of the six others.

Stress the surprise of this fact. We might expect millions of kinds of words, but English is based on two main kinds of words.
It is surprising that in a huge language, there are only eight kinds of words!

There are two main kinds of words, the noun and the verb, and six others.

The emphasis is on EASY. Anyone can learn eight things. The difficulty of grammar is over-rated. Students learn better when they see in advance that something is learnable.
And since there are only eight kinds of words, it is EASY to learn what they are!
Part Two
The Parts of the Sentence

So there are eight kinds of words that we can use to make our ideas. The noun, pronoun, and adjective make what we are talking about, and the verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection help say something about it.
In grammar, this whole idea is called a SENTENCE.

Every sentence has TWO PARTS:

what it is about,
called the SUBJECT,
and
what we say about the subject,
called the PREDICATE.

Q: Sentence comes from the Latin verb sentire, to feel, to be of the opinion. Does that make sense?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SUBJECT</strong></th>
<th><strong>PREDICATE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td>is a nice guy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelena</td>
<td>is very smart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The coqui</td>
<td>is a frog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gray kitten</td>
<td>mewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>painted the shed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Atlantic</td>
<td>is blue and deep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>is an architect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Nouns can be on both sides of the sentence. Does that make sense?
Notice that the verb is always in the predicate. We call the verb the **SIMPLE PREDICATE**.

The duck **ate** a nice fish.

The **COMPLETE PREDICATE** is the verb and all the adverbs and other words that go with it to say something about the subject.

When we say **PREDICATE**, we usually will mean just the verb, the simple predicate.
We now have TWO different ways to name things! As parts of speech, and as parts of sentence. If we say,

**Bugs buzzed.**

the word *bugs* is a noun, if we are talking about parts of speech, but this noun is also called a SUBJECT because it has a verb, *buzzed*, about it.
Part Three
Phrases
Remember when we studied prepositions, and we learned that a preposition is always the first word of a little word group called a **prepositional phrase**?
Now we can learn one more thing about prepositional phrases. They **modify**! Every prepositional phrase acts like a **big adjective** or a **big adverb**!

Q: A prepositional phrase is a group of words, but it acts like ONE word, like an adjective or adverb. How can it do that?
Remember that adjectives modify nouns or pronouns, and adverbs modify verbs? Well, a prepositional phrase can act like a big adjective to modify a noun, like the noun `rhinoceros`:

- `the rhinoceros on the beach`
- `the rhinoceros in the mist`

**Prepositional phrases that act as adjectives follow their nouns:**
- `the dog on the sand`
Or a prepositional phrase can act like a big adverb to modify a verb, like the verb *peeked*:

She peeked **under the canoe**.

She peeked **over the canoe**.

Mention that there are other kinds of phrases (appositive, verbal) that we will study in the future.
A key concept: the phrases are INSIDE the clauses. The clause includes the phrase. The phrase is a part of its clause.
Do you remember that every sentence has TWO parts:
the subject and the predicate?

Each group of words with a subject and predicate in it is called a CLAUSE.
The rain came quickly.

is a clause because it has a subject, the noun rain, and a predicate, the verb came.

The adjective the and the adverb quickly are also part of this clause. They go with their subject and predicate.
Sometimes we connect one subject and predicate to ANOTHER subject and predicate to make a big double sentence!

The rain came quickly, and the island grew green.

And each group of words with a subject and predicate in it is a CLAUSE.
Teacher Resource Section
To the instructor:

Grammar Island provides mid-elementary students with a unique combination of challenge and access. Even though the concepts are advanced for elementary children, they are presented easily and with fun, inviting students to the wonderful island where we discover how we make our ideas. The pages often focus on a single concept, and the best approach is to read together with the kids, to turn to each page, which may be only a single sentence, and talk with the children, asking questions, referring back, and responding to student questions before looking at the next page. Having a conversation with excitement and fun is paramount.

Grammar Island is based on a profound conviction that the bad things sometimes said about grammar are not true—that grammar is fun, incredibly useful, and extraordinarily high-level, perfectly appropriate for challenging even the brightest elementary children. Grammar Island is founded on high expectations of children’s ability to learn and on a high opinion of the value and fun of grammar.

Grammar Island is not meant to take a whole year; on the contrary, it is intended to be studied quickly early in the school year, making it possible to use and apply the valuable knowledge for the remainder of the year. Many pages of Grammar Island contain only a single sentence, so a month or less should be plenty of time to move through the whole island! Grammar Island provides a compact approach to introducing grammar; rather than being a grammar unit, it is a grammar launch.

For every teacher who has wanted a strong grammar program for mid-elementary children, here it is. I hope you and your students love going to Grammar Island.

Michael Clay Thompson
Can you tell the part of speech of every word in these sentences?
Put n. below each noun, pron. below each pronoun,
adj. below each adjective, v. below each verb, and adv. below each adverb.

She is nice.

Polly wants a cracker badly.

The eagle chick was fuzzy.

A high cloud suddenly dropped blue rain.
Answers:

She is nice.
pron. v. adj.

Polly wants a cracker badly.
n. v. adj. n. adv.

The eagle chick was fuzzy.
adj. adj. n. v. adj.

A high cloud suddenly dropped blue rain.
adj. adj. n. adv. v. adj. n.
A game to play...

Let’s Play Grambo Says

Grambo says, touch your nose when I say an adjective:
mouse...pudding...she.....blue!
Grambo says, touch your ear when I say a noun:
fluffy...chicken!
Grambo says, put your hand down when I say a pronoun:
brown.....measles.....banana.....tall.....you!
Grambo says, touch the top of your head when I say a noun:
curly.....sweet....me.....them.....silly.....hungry.....frog!
Grambo says, rub the top of your head when I say an adjective:
green!
Grambo says, clap your hands when I say a pronoun:
duck.....pigeon.....hippopotamus.....giraffe.....he!

Keep playing until only one student is left!