

The Magic Lens

A Guide for Parents

The Magic Lens grammar program is designed to break the barriers of traditional instruction in grammar. Rather than repeating the Big Myth, that grammar is a boring, remedial, unteachable subject, *The Magic Lens* confirms what we have known deep down all along: grammar is an exciting form of higher order thinking about language, and a subject that is perfectly teachable. Grammar is a way of thinking about our own ideas.

As a bonus, *The Magic Lens* is now coordinated with *The Word Within the Word* vocabulary program. For anyone who does not use *The Word Within the Word*, there is no harm; *The Magic Lens* stands alone beautifully, but for those who do use *The Word Within the Word*, they will find their vocabulary from that program featured in *The Magic Lens*, where the same words can be seen as phenomena of grammar, thus reinforcing both programs, the words and their usage.

One goal of *The Magic Lens* is to rebuild the grammar calendar. Instead of dragging out grammar instruction until the end of the year—a well intentioned plan but one that prevents students from ever applying grammar, since you can't use what you don't teach until May—*The Magic Lens* provides a compacted approach, presenting all four levels of traditional grammar (parts of speech, parts of sentence, phrases, and clauses) in the first weeks of school. It is not a grammar unit; it is a grammar *launch*. Once the grammar is put in place, *The Magic Lens* provides a wide array of grammar experiences that enhance students' understanding for the rest of the year, and that lets them apply their four levels of grammar to all other language arts experiences.

How is it possible to compact a so-called year's worth of grammar into a month? First, we discover that the supposed immensity and difficulty of grammar are exaggerated. There are really only fifty or sixty terms that students need in order to master the fundamentals of traditional grammar. It is a tiny microsubject of great power. Second, if you put yourself through ten pages of exercises every time you learn a new term, then anything will take years. In *The Magic Lens*, we don't stop learning every time we encounter a new word. Instead, we learn in sets and batches of terms that go together, and instead of dozens of isolated exercises that confine themselves exclusively to a single term, we use four-level analysis. In four-level analysis, we study not one term, such as *preposition*, but an entire sentence. We examine a sentence, and we determine the part of speech of every word, all the parts of the sentence, the phrases, and the clauses. We take a complete look. So every time we find a new sentence to examine, the process is a *thumbnail review of all of grammar!* Look closely at the chart and diagram on the following page:

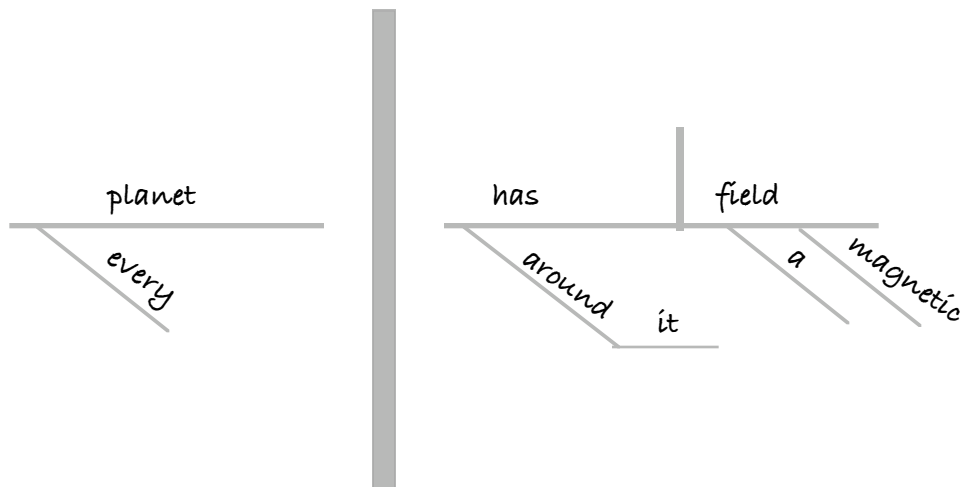
FOUR-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Every planet has a magnetic field around it.

Parts of Speech:	adj.	n.	v.	adj.	adj.	n.	prep.	pron.
Parts of Sentence:	subject		predicate			direct object		
Phrases:								--prepositional--
Clauses:	one independent clause, simple declarative sentence							

Prepositional phrases are always modifiers: adjectives or adverbs. How do we know that this phrase is an adverb and not an adjective? We can hear the logic: it has it around it, sounds more right than a field around it. And the phrase tells where the planet *has* it.

BINARY DIAGRAM



Just imagine what you will accomplish if your student can work through that chart and diagram before the end of September. And then imagine how rapidly the clarity will increase after you have done ten, and twenty, and thirty such sentences! In the traditional program, it takes until May to get to clauses, and students only really have one chance to learn each thing as it is studied and then rapidly abandoned. In *The Magic Lens*, students learn all the concepts up front quickly, and then review them over, and over, and over, every time they do a four-level analysis of a sentence.

The Magic Lens is divided into two real sections, first the introductory lectures, and then the loops. All of the main concepts are provided in the introductory lectures; once you have completed that section, the loops continue to build comprehension by looping repeatedly back through the concepts, providing different ways of thinking about them, as well as incredible sentences that can only be fully appreciated with the *Magic Lens* of grammar.

Some recommendations for using *The Magic Lens*:

- Adopt a consistently positive and enthusiastic approach. Never say bad things about grammar, such as that it “might not be fun but you have to do it.” Grammar IS fun, and exciting, and very, very learnable.

- Emphasize always how easy grammar is. After all, there are only eight parts of speech, and two sides of a sentence, and several kinds of phrases, and really two kinds of clauses. How hard can it possibly be? Grammar has been made to seem much harder than it really is.

- Be Socratic. In other words, as the teacher, you should often confine yourself to questions, and let the student work through the thought processes. Avoid saying *yes* or *no* very much. If a student says that a word in a sentence is an adverb, when you know it is an adjective, don't say *no*, just ask, “Well, what does it modify?” In this way, the student will realize that it can't be an adverb, and will figure it out on his or her own. You want the solution to come up within the student's own mind, rather than in your own. Student realizations must be internal, and not transfer from us in an authoritarian way. By using questions, in a respectful and supportive tone, you can guide the process so that the maximum benefit occurs. We can also be Socratic by selecting sentences that are so challenging that the correct interpretation is in doubt, period. Those make some of the best and most exciting sentences, when several interpretations are competing for our decision.

- Use a grammar catechism. You saw the four-level grammar chart above. Make your own by picking a sentence, writing it on board or paper, and drawing four lines beneath it. Then go through the sentence with questions, letting the student provide answers. Here is an example of the kind of thing that I have always done in the classroom:

The Catechism

The process goes something like this: I write a sentence on the board. Let us say that the sentence I write on the board is:

The Andromedans attacked savagely, and we fell back.

The Andromedans attacked savagely, and we fell back.

Teacher: Here we go. This is one of the sentences on your grammar test, so let's go through it together. We will do a four-level analysis, and you take notes to study for the test. Feel free to ask questions. Today, just call out your answers to my questions. Ready?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: What's grammar?

Students: A way of thinking about language.

Teacher: How many levels are there in traditional grammar?

Students: Four.

Teacher: What is the first level?

Students: Parts of speech.

Teacher: What are the parts of speech?

Students: The eight kinds of words in our language.

Teacher: Thanks. Let's do the parts of speech of all of the words in this sentence. What part of speech is *The*?

Students: An adjective.

Teacher: What kind of adjective?

Students: A definite article.

Teacher: What does *The* modify?

Students: *Andromedans*.

Teacher: What part of speech is *Andromedans*?

Students: A noun.

Teacher: What kind?

Students: A proper, plural noun.

Teacher: What part of speech is *attacked*?

Students: A verb.

Teacher: Action or linking?

Students: Action.

Teacher: Transitive or intransitive or neither?

Students: Intransitive.

Teacher: Why is it intransitive?

Students: It's an action verb without a direct object.

Teacher: What tense is it?

Students: Past tense.

Teacher: Is it active voice or passive voice?

Students: Active voice.

Teacher: How do you know *attacked* is active voice?

Student: Because the verb is voiced so that the subject is acting.

Teacher: Good. What part of speech is *savagely*?

Students: An adverb.
Teacher: What does it modify?
Students: *Attacked*.
Teacher: Prove to me that *savagely* doesn't modify *Andromedans*.
Students: Adverbs don't modify nouns.
Teacher: What modifies nouns?
Students: Adjectives.
Teacher: What part of speech is *and*?
Students: A conjunction.
Teacher: What kind of conjunction?
Students: Coordinating.
Teacher: List the coordinating conjunctions.
Students: And, but, or, nor, for, so, yet.
Teacher: What two things does *and* coordinate in this sentence?
Students: Two independent clauses.
Teacher: Good. We'll look at that more closely in a minute. What part of speech is *we*?
Students: A pronoun
Teacher: An object or subject pronoun?
Students: A subject pronoun.
Teacher: Why is it a subject pronoun?
Students: It's the subject of a predicate.
Teacher: What person and number is *we*?
Students: First person, plural.
Teacher: What is *we*'s antecedent?
Students: *Andromedans*.
Teacher: We are the Andromedans?
Students: No.
Teacher: Then what does *we* replace?
Students: You can't tell from this sentence.
Teacher: Right. The antecedent is unknown. What part of speech is *fell*?
Students: A verb.
Teacher: Is *fell* action or linking?
Students: Action.
Teacher: Transitive or intransitive?
Students: Intransitive.
Teacher: What tense is *fell*?
Students: Past tense.
Teacher: Active voice or passive voice?
Students: Active.
Teacher: Good. What part of speech is *back*?
Students: A preposition.
Teacher: What is the object of that preposition?
Students: Oh. It's not a preposition, it's an adverb.

Teacher: If it's an adverb, what does it modify?

Students: .

Teacher: Prove to me that it's not an adjective.

Students: Adjectives don't modify verbs.

Teacher: What do adjectives modify?

Students: Nouns and pronouns.

Teacher: Good. That finishes the parts of speech. Are there any questions about the parts of speech in this sentence before we look at the second level of grammar? . . . OK, what is the second level of grammar?

Students: Parts of the sentence.

Teacher: What is a sentence?

Students: A thought.

Teacher: No.

Students: Yes.

Teacher: Prove it.

Student: In a sentence, you say something about something, and that is what a thought is.

Teacher: OK, then what are the two important parts of each thought?

Students: The complete subject and the complete predicate.

Teacher: What part of this sentence shall we look for first?

Students: A subject.

Teacher: Do you see a subject?

Students: *Andromedans*.

Teacher: What is that subject's predicate?

Students: *Attacked*.

Teacher: Once again, is it action or linking?

Students: Action.

Teacher: Therefore, what are we not looking for?

Students: A subject complement.

Teacher: Why are we not looking for a subject complement?

Students: Subject complements go with linking verbs.

Teacher: Then what are we looking for?

Students: A direct object.

Teacher: Is there a direct object?

Students: No.

Teacher: Isn't *savagely* a direct object?

Students: No, direct objects are nouns or object pronouns.

Teacher: Is there an indirect object?

Students: No.

Teacher: How do you know?

Students: There's no direct object.

Teacher: So what?

Students: The indirect object comes between an action verb and a direct object.

Teacher: Is there another subject or are we through?

Students: *We* is a another subject.

Teacher: What predicate is *We* the subject of?

Students: *Fell*.

Teacher: Is *fell* action or linking?

Students: Action.

Teacher: So what are we not looking for?

Students: A subject complement.

Teacher: What are we looking for?

Students: A direct object.

Teacher: Is there one?

Students: No.

Teacher: How do you know?

Students: Nothing receives the action.

Teacher: Are we through with parts of the sentence?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: Do you have any questions, before we go on to the third level of grammar? . . . What is the third level of grammar?

Students: Phrases.

Teacher: What is a phrase?

Students: A group of words that doesn't have a subject and its predicate, and that is used as a single part of speech.

Teacher: What kinds of phrases will we look for?

Students: Prepositional, appositive, and verbal.

Teacher: Any prepositional phrases in this sentence?

Students: No.

Teacher: Any appositive phrases?

Students: No.

Teacher: What's an appositive phrase?

Students: An interrupting definition.

Teacher: Isn't *we fell back* an appositive phrase?

Students: No, its an independent clause.

Teacher: Are there any verbal phrases?

Students: No.

Teacher: Isn't *attacked* a participle?

Students: No, it's a verb, not an adjective.

Teacher: No gerunds?

Students: No, there are no *-ing* words.

Teacher: Are there any questions about phrases before we go to the fourth level of grammar? I would be happy to go over anything you'd like.

Student: Can a participle end in *-ing*?

Teacher: Good question. Yes, a participle can end in many things, including *-ing*. If I say, "Falling suddenly, Starbuck yelled," the word *Falling* is a participle modifying the noun *Starbuck*. Does that make sense?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Good. Thanks for your question. Any other questions? . . . What is the fourth level of grammar?

Students: Clauses.

Teacher: What is a clause?

Students: A group of words with a subject and a predicate.

Teacher: What clauses do you see in this sentence?

Students: Two independent clauses.

Teacher: What's the first clause?

Students: *The Andromedans attacked savagely.*

Teacher: What's the second?

Students: *We fell back.*

Teacher: What is the sentence structure?

Students: Compound.

Teacher: How do you know it isn't complex?

Students: There is no dependent clause.

Teacher: What is the punctuation rule for this kind of compound sentence?

Students: I,ccI. (Pronounced, "eye-comma-see-see-eye.")

Teacher: Explain the I,ccI rule.

Student: Put a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.

Teacher: Good, thanks. What is the sentence purpose?

Students: Declarative.

Teacher: Thanks. That was a good analysis. Before we go to the next test sentence, are there any questions?

Students: . . .

Teacher: . . .

Students: . . .

Teacher: Ok, let's look at the next sentence on the test. (Writes the next sentence on the board.) Here we go again! What is grammar?

Students: A way of thinking about language.

Teacher: What are the four levels of traditional grammar?

Students: Parts of speech, parts of the sentence, phrases, and clauses.

Teacher: What are the parts of speech?

Students: The eight kinds of words.

Teacher: What part of speech is this first word

The first sentence took five minutes or so, and now it begins again, sentence by sentence, using each sentence as a model and review of grammar. As a teacher, you ask essentially the same questions every time: all of the parts of speech, all of the parts of the sentence, all of the phrases, and all of the clauses. Challenge the students to prove their points; make them explain their decisions; make them identify their nouns, their pronouns, their conjunctions; ask them what is joined by the conjunction, what is modified by the modifier, what is replaced by the pronoun. Ask them why the sentence is punctuated as it is. When they make a mistake, you accept the answer with

a straight face, and ask them a following question that allows them to figure out for themselves that they made a mistake. *They* have to solve the problems. And when you have completely analyzed the sentence, you begin all over again: “What is grammar?”

If you are using *The Magic Lens* but not *The Word Within the Word*, you will enjoy seeing the advanced vocabulary that is used to make grammar examples. The student will benefit tremendously just from the exposure to these words. If you like, you can create some activities in which the student looks up some of those words and explains what the sentences mean. On the other hand, if you are also using *The Word Within the Word*, then you will see that Lists 1-10 of *The Word Within the Word* coordinate with the introductory lectures in *Magic Lens*, Lists 11-20 go with Loops 1-5, and Lists 21-30 go with Loops 6-10. It’s simple. And since the *Word Within the Word*-based quizzes already appear in the student book of *The Magic Lens*, you don’t even have to run anything off or try to figure out where it goes. It’s all done.

What is not in the student book is the set of review tests that follow Loops 1-5 and 6-10; those are included below for you, together with answer keys.

I hope you and your student thoroughly enjoy using *The Magic Lens*. It has taken decades of classroom experience and years of writing to make this available in this form, and I know that a knowledge of grammar is one of the most exciting and beneficial things that can be studied. Have fun learning.

Nouns from *The Word Within the Word* • List #1

In the sentences below, the words in **bold** contain important Latin or Greek stems. Which of the words in bold are nouns? For each **bold** word that is a noun, write *noun* in the blank to the right.

1. The Civil War **antedates** the Korean War by decades. _____
2. The **anti-aircraft** fire shot down the enemy planes. _____
3. The two nations have a **bilateral** agreement. _____
4. The **circumspect** spy is difficult to catch. _____
5. The two together are an interesting **combination**. *noun*
6. Stubb was **confined** to the ship's hold. _____
7. The lunar lander **descended** through the atmosphere. _____
8. Queequeg's attention was not easily **distracted**. _____
9. She made an **equilateral** triangle with three straws. _____
10. It was an **extraordinary** achievement. _____
11. They were lost in **interstellar** space. _____
12. He received an **intravenous** solution through a tube in his arm. _____
13. The boy was a lonely **introvert** who kept to himself. *noun*
14. He looked fearfully at the glowing, **malevolent** demon. _____
15. Ishmael had the **misfortune** to forget his wallet. *noun*
16. The Pequod's voyage is not a **nonprofit** endeavor. _____
17. Flask added a **postscript** at the bottom of the letter. *noun*
18. Before Romeo left, Juliet had a frightening **premonition**. *noun*
19. The circle was divided into two equal **semicircles**. *noun*
20. The Ahab a sharp order to her **subordinate**. *noun*

Pronouns from *The Word Within the Word* • List #2

In the sentences below, the words in **bold** contain important Latin or Greek stems. Many of the sentences also contain pronouns, though they are not in **bold**. Underline each pronoun you see, and in the blank at the right, write in the type of pronoun it is: subject, object, demonstrative, etc.

1. It is, or once was, ruled by a **monarchy**. subject
2. The **dullard** was always boring everyone to tears. indefinite
3. In killing his father, Oedipus was guilty of **patricide**. possessive
4. She is an electronic **technician**. subject
5. The **dermatitis** on his skin was painful and unpleasant. possessive
6. Balthazar, the scuba diver, collects them—**aquatic** species. object
7. The deaf moose had injured his **auditory** nerve. possessive
8. **Belligerent** nations gain nothing from their many wars. possessive
9. The hostile island tribe **captured** them. object
10. He **incised** the design into the oaken door with a knife. subject
11. **Biomorphic** abstract sculpture resembles these. demonstrative
12. Patton wrote a tedious **autobiography** about his exploits. possessive
13. The **porter** will carry your bags to the train. possessive
14. Please **inscribe** my yearbook. possessive
15. Since Ishmael loved insects, he studied **entomology**. subject
16. The grand jury returned a robbery **indictment** against him. object
17. A **credulous** person will believe that. demonstrative
18. Fortunately, the **centipede** wears its shoes. possessive
19. Ishmael was a **neophyte** in whaling, but he learned quickly. subject
20. He, Ahab, was a lifelong **bibliophile**. subject

Adjectives from *The Word Within the Word* • List #3

In the sentences below, the words in **bold** contain important Latin or Greek stems. The words in *italics*, including those in both bold and italics, are the subject of this exercise. For each word in italics, write either *noun* or *adjective* in the blank at the right.

1. English contains *many* **homophones** like two and too. adjective
2. It was a *specious* argument, but it sounded convincing. adjective
3. The *callow* youth was **inducted** into the army. adjective
4. The **transfer** was made in the darkness of a *moonless* night. adjective
5. The patent is still **pending** on the secret *product*. noun
6. The *two* bacteria were only a **micron** apart. adjective
7. The fire **hydrant** stood in *front* of the school. noun
8. An overexposure to *the* sun's **photons** gave her a sunburn. adjective
9. The swift god Apollo was a member of the *Greek* **pantheon**. adjective
10. He wore a **pentagram** on his sleeve, not an *ordinary* pentagon. adjective
11. The strange boy could move distant objects by *telekinesis*. noun
12. The wild creature had an *omnivorous* appetite. adjective
13. The surgeon was able to **excise** the *malignant* tissue. adjective
14. Johann Sebastian Bach composed *polyphonic* music. adjective
15. The crash victims suffered *hypothermia* on the frozen tundra. noun
16. The amoeba uses its *flowing* **pseudopods** to move. adjective
17. The human brain is said to contain over 100 *billion* **neurons**. adjective
18. Iron ore is called *hematite* because of its red color. noun
19. *Single-celled* animals are known as the **Protozoa**. adjective
20. Laws against *vivisection* prevent cruelty to animals. noun

Verbs from *The Word Within the Word* • List #4

In these sentences, the words in **bold** contain important Latin or Greek stems. Other words are in *italics*. For each word in *italics*, write either *noun*, *adjective*, or *verb* in the blank at the right. If it is a verb, also put *A* for action or *L* for linking.

1. The crystal dissolved into an ***amorphous*** mass. adjective
2. The silk ***vestments*** were hanging on pegs. noun
3. Pip finally ***knew*** the name of his generous **benefactor**. verb, A
4. The **ponderous** burden *was* nearly impossible to lift. verb, L
5. His ***corpulent*** body was a result of his love of sweets. adjective
6. The evil creature *lay* **dormant** for centuries. verb, A
7. There *was* a birthday party for the venerable **patriarch**. verb, L
8. The recently *invented* laser toothbrush is a **novel** idea. adjective
9. Her ***punctilious*** attention to small details was impressive. adjective
10. Silver *felt* **dejected** when the expedition left without him. verb, A
11. The ***devastation*** intensified our need for creation. noun
12. *Self-motivated* people have an internal **locus** of control. adjective
13. The many-cultured United States *is* a **heterodox** nation. verb, L
14. The **amphibians** emerging from the water *had* impermeable skin. verb, A
15. Alexander's ***magnanimous*** victory speech was inspiring. adjective
16. The ***euphony*** of Mozart's concerto carried us away. noun
17. Human beings *have* **endoskeletons**, not exoskeletons. verb, A
18. The tremulous dog on the twenty-third floor has ***acrophobia***. noun
19. The **orthodontist** *straightened* Count Dracula's fangs. verb, A
20. The massive **megalith** *towered* over the ancient ruins. verb, A

Adverbs from *The Word Within the Word* • List #5

For each sentence, identify the part of speech of the word in *italics*.

1. In the spring of 2215, New York was a *revitalized* city. adjective
2. The theory of *democracy* was proven very effective. noun
3. If there is *stereophonic* sound, can there be stereo smell? adjective
4. Is *capitalism* the opposite of Marxism? noun
5. The poet was traveling *incognito* to avoid recognition. adverb
6. The economic disasters could not be *readily surmounted*. adverb
7. The senator's *sonorous* voice was *easily* her best weapon. adverb
8. If the *asteroid* struck *the* earth, it would be a *disaster*. adjective
9. Her *dynamic* personality made her an *obvious* choice. adjective
10. Please *synchronize* your chronometers *immediately*. adverb
11. The *very* hyperactive child suddenly began to *hyperventilate*. adverb
12. The astronomer was an *amiable* individual. adjective
13. The *octarchy* unanimously decided to invade Macedonia. noun
14. The dancers' spinning *gyrations* *continued* long into the night. verb
15. Their *contradictory* remarks *really* offered a sharp contrast. adverb
16. Which do you *prefer*, geography or *geophysics*? verb
17. Galileo thought that the solar system was *heliocentric*. adjective
18. The *thermotropic* plants were *suddenly* killed by the cold front. adverb
19. Is a *square* a tetragon or just a *tetrahedron*? noun
20. The *hydrometer* *accurately* measured the flow of the trout stream. adverb

Prepositions from *The Word Within the Word* • List #6

For each sentence below, identify the part of speech of the word in *italics*.

1. His irrelevant comments were not **germane** *to* the discussion. preposition
2. The friendly alien proved to be *well-mannered* and **gregarious**. adjective
3. The mariner steered *through* beautiful **ultramarine** waters. preposition
4. The anthropologist loved *primates*, most of the time. noun
5. The **pyromaniac** loved starting fires *with* pyrogenic materials. preposition
6. The loudmouth's *clamorous* cries could be heard for blocks. adjective
7. The candidate received a **plurality** but not a majority *of* votes. preposition
8. The job has many *tangible* benefits for a young person. adjective
9. The regulations were *too* **stringent** for the footloose, creative artist. adverb
10. Did the Emancipation Proclamation *liberate* the slaves? verb
11. There was a jungle *near* the **junction** of the Brazilian highways. preposition
12. Would you rather be **excluded** *from* the new group? preposition
13. There was a decision to **secede** *from* the Union. preposition
14. The Amazon has many **tributaries** flowing *into* it. preposition
15. Don't **dignify** his unworthy question *with* an answer. preposition
16. Your **lucid** remarks clarified the confusing issue *for* everyone. preposition
17. The *eruption* of Vesuvius disrupted our celebration. noun
18. The man *beside* him was certainly no **ingrate**. preposition
19. For Cicero, it was a **mediocre** speech, neither *excellent* nor poor. adjective
20. The **translucent** material allowed us to see on the *other* side. adjective