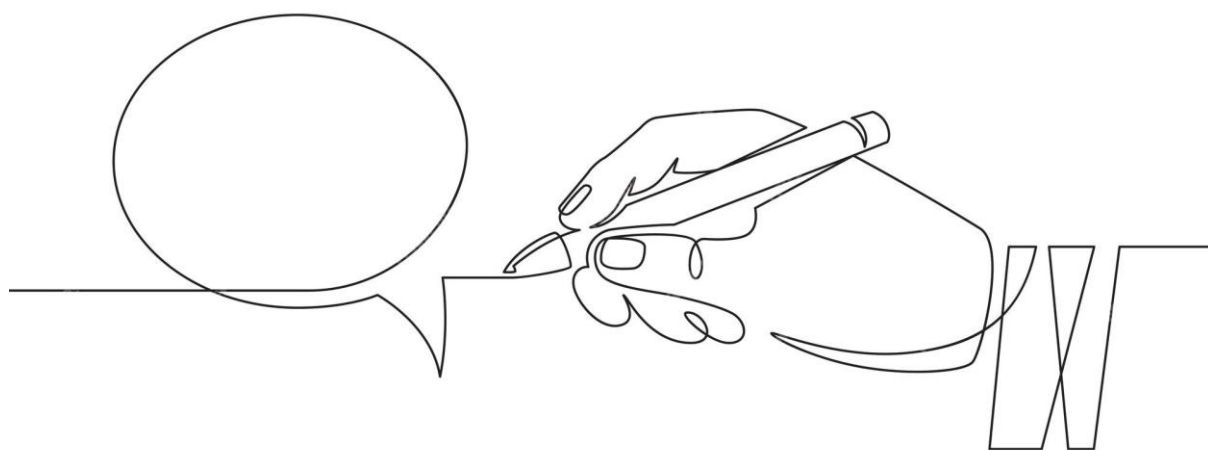


Grammar Assessment



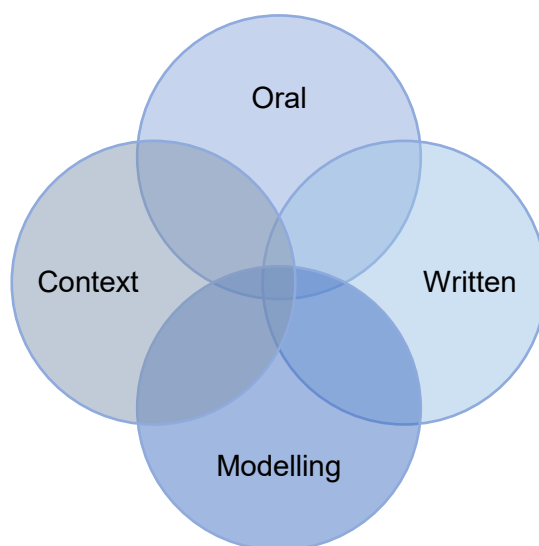
Guidance for Practitioners

CfE and Grammar Development

Grammar is essential for clear, accurate, and effective communication. It supports both spoken and written language and plays a key role in literacy development. Unlike spoken language, grammar is not acquired naturally and requires explicit teaching and sustained practice.

With high-quality instruction, learners can make steady progress in grammar. Teaching should be developmental, building on prior knowledge and supporting learners through modelling, scaffolded practice, and real-life application. As learners move from speech to writing, they benefit from seeing grammar used in meaningful contexts.

CfE outlines that learners should write 'most sentences' in a grammatically accurate way and so, schools should ensure learning, teaching and assessment is intentional and responsive. It should begin with oral language and progress to written accuracy, focusing on consistency and clarity. Assessment should reflect both spoken and written use, be age-appropriate, and inform future teaching. A contextualised, developmental approach helps all learners become confident users of grammar.



Myhill (2021)

Taking all of this into account, schools should adopt an approach which:

- Recognises grammar requires explicit, structured teaching.
- Builds from spoken language and progresses toward accurate written form.
- Integrates instruction into authentic reading, writing, and speaking tasks.
- Assesses grammar in both speech and writing, considering age and stage.
- Supports learners to see the importance of grammar for communication.

Age and Stage Appropriate Expectations

At Early Level learners will:

- Begin using basic grammar structures through spoken language.
- Begin to use articles, though usage may be inconsistent in early attempts.
- Show awareness of regular plurals, more in speech than writing.
- Begin using simple subject pronouns, though not always consistently.
- Begin to use subject–verb agreement, though not always consistently.
- Show awareness of tense, using present and past forms mainly in speech.

Grammar development is primarily oral, supported by modelling, real contexts and practice.

At First Level learners will:

- Use a wider range of grammar structures in both speech and writing.
- Apply articles more consistently, though occasional errors may still occur.
- Use regular plurals accurately and begin to learn irregular plural forms.
- Use subject and object pronouns more reliably in spoken and written texts.
- Use subject–verb agreement more consistently.
- Show control of tense, using present and past forms more accurately.
- Begin to use simple conjunctions to link ideas.

Grammar use transfers more to writing, supported by modelling, real contexts and practice.

At Second Level learners will:

- Use a broader range of grammar with greater accuracy and control.
- Apply articles, plurals, and pronouns consistently in speech and writing.
- Demonstrate secure subject–verb agreement.
- Use a range of tenses appropriately.
- Use conjunctions more appropriately.
- Begin to use subordinate clauses.
- Edit and revise grammar in writing with increasing independence.

Grammar use becomes more consistent in writing, supported by modelling, real contexts and practice.

At Third Level and beyond learners will:

- Demonstrate more refined use of grammar in both spoken and written texts.
- Use articles with more precision.
- Apply plural forms accurately, including complex and irregular patterns.
- Use a wide range of pronouns to enhance cohesion.
- Maintain subject–verb agreement in complex/compound sentence structure.
- Maintain control of tense with flexibility for clarity and effect.
- Reflect on and adapt grammar for clarity, style, and impact.

Grammar use becomes more sophisticated in writing, supported by modelling, real contexts and practice.

Assessment and Professional Judgement

To support with assessment and professional judgement, the source below provides some further information to be considered.

Grammar	Early Level	First Level	Second Level	Third Level and Beyond
Articles	Begins using "a" and "the" in speech and simple writing.	Uses "a", "an", and "the" more consistently in speech and writing.	Understands and applies correct article use in varied contexts.	Uses articles accurately in complex sentences and understands exceptions (e.g. "an hour").
Plurals	Begins adding -s to make plurals (e.g. "cats").	Learns some common irregular plurals (e.g. "mice", "children").	Uses a range of regular and irregular plurals with increasing accuracy.	Understands and applies a range of plural rules in speech and writing.
Pronouns	Uses basic pronouns (I, you, he, she, it).	Expands to include we, they, us, them, etc.	Understands subject and object pronouns and uses them correctly.	Uses relative pronouns (who, which, that) and reflexive pronouns (myself, themselves) accurately.
Subject/Verb Agreement	Matches simple subjects and verbs (e.g. "I ran").	Begins to correct mismatches (e.g. "They is" → "They are").	More consistently applies subject/verb agreement in various tenses.	Maintains agreement in complex and compound sentences.
Tense	Uses present tense in speech and early writing.	Uses past tense (e.g. "walked") and future (e.g. "will go").	Uses a variety of tenses (past continuous, present perfect) as appropriate.	Manipulates tense for consistency or effect in speech and/or writing.

Questions to Support Moderation

When assessing your learners' use of grammar, it may be helpful to use the following questions to support your professional judgement and moderation:

- What characteristics does this learner's use of grammar demonstrate?
- Does their oral and written language align with the grammar we would expect them to understand and use for their age and stage?
- Considering their use of grammar, age and stage of development, what would now be the most appropriate next steps for learning?