

Elocution Module 4: Basic Editing—Subjects

This module is designed for use in Lesson 4: Basic Persuasive Essay with Amplification (see chart, Year-at-a-Glance). You should expect to use at least one class period to complete this module.

Getting Ready

To teach this module, you will need to:

Be able to

- Guide your students to identify the three common subject errors.
- Enable your students to correct the three common subject errors.

Understand

- That choosing a clear subject clarifies the entire sentence.
- What we mean by a “non-particular subject.”
- What we mean by a “hidden subject.”
- What we mean by a “missing subject.”
- That “basic editing” requires attention to correct subject use. Basic editing involves finding weaknesses or mistakes and fixing them. To correct subjects we look for three common problems and learn the solutions for each.
- That sometimes when we revise a subject we must also revise the verb in the sentence.

Know

- The three common subject errors listed on Elocution Worksheet 2: Subjects.
- The steps needed to solve the errors listed in Elocution Worksheet 2.

To teach this module, you will need the following materials:

Elocution Worksheet 2: Subjects

Samples of sentences and/or essays with regrettable subjects (the more you have available the better. You can find samples on the CiRCE Institute web site, but we highly recommend you create a good supply of your own)

When they complete this module, your students will

Be able to

- Identify the three common subject errors.
- Correct the three common subject errors.

Understand

- That choosing a clear subject impacts the clarity of the entire sentence.
- What we mean by a “non-particular subject.”
- What we mean by a “hidden subject.”
- What we mean by a “missing subject.”
- That “basic editing” requires attention to correct subject use. Basic editing involves finding weaknesses or mistakes and fixing them. To correct subjects we look for three common problems and learn the solutions for each.
- That sometimes when we revise the subject in a sentence, we must also revise the verb in the sentence.

Know

- The three common subject errors listed on Elocution Worksheet 2: Subjects.
- The steps needed to solve the errors listed in Elocution Worksheet 2: Subjects.

Presenting the Material

Pre-Grammar

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Goals: Review the previous Elocution Module on Basic Editing: Verbs Help your students realize that they prefer specific and clear subjects</p> <p>Prepare ahead of class Turn your model outline into an essay in which your subjects are unclear, and in which you use the passive voice often.</p> <p>In class Read your essay to your students.</p>	<p><i>I turned my outline into an essay. Let me read it to you.</i></p>

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<p><u>Ask them whether they thought it was well-written.</u> (Give them a copy if you think it will help.)</p> <p>Ask for positives and negatives.</p> <p>If no one mentions them, ask what they thought of the subjects. Ask what was wrong with them.</p> <p>If these seems to be a stumbling block for your students, pick out specific sentences from your essay. Ask them what the action is, and who is doing this action.</p>	<p><i>What do you think? Do you like it?</i> <i>What parts did you like?</i> <i>What parts do I need to work on?</i> <i>Are my sentences clear?</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any suggestions for how I could improve my essay?</i></p>
<p>Transition to Grammar</p> <p>Direct your students to Elocution Worksheet 2: Subjects. Ask the “Forethought” questions.</p>	<p><i>What aspects do you think are most important for writing a clear sentence?</i></p> <p><i>How can you fix a disappointing subject?</i></p> <p><i>During this lesson we are going to learn three common problems we encounter when we write subjects. We are also going to learn how to solve them.</i></p> <p><i>What do you think those three problems might be?</i></p>

Grammar:

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Goal: Give your student clear types, or examples, of the process of improving subjects that are non-particular, hidden, or missing from the sentence.</p>	

First type

Place or post the example sentences from EW2, “Sentences to Contemplate,” where your students can read them.
Read them together.

Identify the subjects in each sentence.
Discuss their quality.
Discuss what makes them work.

If students answer “no” to the second question, ask what is wrong with the subject and how they might improve it. Embrace criticism, thus setting an example for your students.

(Remember to address particular students by name when you ask these questions)

You will use these three sentences as a sort of standard by which you can measure other subjects.

Provide an opportunity for your students to fix each sentence in section B. Then look at the improved sentences and compare—with your students—how they match up.

First type:

Let’s read some sentences with high-quality subjects.

*Tell me the subject in the first sentence.
Describe the subject. How did you identify the subject?
Does this subject satisfy you? Or do you need to know more about the subject?
Why do you think it works so well?*

What is the subject in the second sentence?

*What do you think of this subject?
Why does it fit so well?*

What about the third sentence?

*What are the subjects?
Are they good? Why?*

Now let’s read some sentences that are less satisfying.

How would you change these sentences to improve them?

<p>Correct the first sentence by creating a more specific subject: not just “girl” but “Lucy,” for instance. Replace general subjects with more specific ones. (If they are confused, give them more examples of this pattern before you go on to the second type of error.)</p> <p>Second type:</p> <p>Ask questions about the second sentence, identifying the error.</p> <p>Correct the second sentence by following one of the three explanations on the following pages.</p> <p>Discuss how we repair the subject—and the whole sentence—in each example. The error in the second sentence is Error #3 (a missing subject).</p> <p>Explain the improvements, following the explanations on the student worksheets.</p> <p>Third type:</p> <p>Ask questions about the third sentence, identifying the error.</p> <p>Correct the third sentence by following one of the three explanations on the following pages.</p> <p>Discuss how we repair the subject—and the whole sentence—in each example. The</p>	<p><i>What is the subject in the first poor sentence?</i></p> <p><i>Why doesn't it work? What is wrong with it?</i></p> <p><i>Let's correct the sentence by using one of the three explanations.</i></p> <p><i>What is the subject in the second sentence?</i></p> <p><i>Why doesn't it work? What is wrong with it?</i></p> <p><i>Let's correct the sentence by using one of the three explanations.</i></p> <p><i>What is the subject in the third sentence?</i></p> <p><i>Why doesn't it work? What is wrong with it?</i></p> <p><i>Let's correct the sentence by using one of the three explanations.</i></p>
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<p>error in the second sentence is Error #2 (a hidden subject).</p> <p>Explain the improvements, following the explanations on the student worksheets.</p> <p>Instruct your students to complete section C. If you judge it best, let them discuss section C in groups after they have written their answers.</p> <p>Once you determine that your students grasp the process, proceed to the dialectic stage of the lesson.</p>	<p>Ask the same questions through #6.</p> <p><i>Let's look at some more sentences that choose their subjects carelessly. Turn to section C .</i></p>
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Dialectic:

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Goal: Show your students how to identify sentences with poor or missing subjects and how to fix them by analyzing section B in “sentences to contemplate.”</p>	<p><i>Compare the subject in the first poor sentence with the subject in the first good sentence. Why is the latter better?</i></p> <p><i>Now compare the second sentences. Why is the second sentence in this pair better?</i></p> <p><i>Now compare the third pair of sentences. Why is the second sentence in this pair better?</i></p> <p>Continue through #6.</p> <p><i>What was wrong with all of the regrettable sentences?</i></p> <p><i>What exactly was the problem with the first sentence?</i> <i>How did we revise it?</i></p> <p><i>What was the problem with the second sentence?</i> <i>How did we revise it?</i></p> <p><i>What was wrong with the third?</i></p>

	<p><i>How did we revise it?</i></p> <p>Etc. through #6.</p>
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Rhetoric A: Explanation

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Student states the concept</p> <p>Instruct your students to complete the explanation section of the worksheet. Then discuss what they wrote. If you have time, you may want them to break into groups of three or four to discuss their observations and improvements with each other.</p> <p>Ask them to describe each subject problem separately. Then ask them how to fix each one.</p> <p>If your students cannot answer the question “Why does a subject matter?”, press on anyway. This is a difficult question.</p>	<p><i>Complete the Explanation section on the worksheet.</i></p> <p><i>Describe one of the three subject mistakes identified in this lesson.</i></p> <p><i>Describe how to fix it.</i></p> <p><i>Describe the second.</i></p> <p><i>Describe the third.</i></p> <p><i>Why does a subject matter?</i></p> <p><i>How does the subject effect the rest of the sentence?</i></p>

Rhetoric B: Practice/ Application

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Students work on their essays by applying this lesson.</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Instruct your students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the practice exercise. <p>Observe their work</p>	<p><i>Let’s turn to the practice section on the worksheet. First, complete practice exercise A.</i></p>

2. Now complete exercise B

3. Examine the 10 regrettable sentences, correct each one, and identify the subject error committed in each one.

You may find it helpful to have more “regrettable sentences” available for further practice. You can write them easily by building a sentence around a regrettable subject.

4. Examine their practice essays for subject mistakes. Exchange essays with a classmate. Underline all subjects, and circle those that may need improvement.

Provide opportunities for students to explain their assessments and suggestions. Students who are inexperienced in giving and receiving healthy criticism may need a great deal of oversight.

Now underline the subjects in exercise B.

Now look at exercise C. Examine each one, by identifying the problem. Then change the subject into something more clear.

Now turn to your practice essays.

- 1. Exchange papers.*
- 2. Scan your classmate’s essay and underline all the subjects.*
- 3. Circle any sentences that may need a more clear subject.*

Return the papers to their creators.

Following the three solutions you learned on EW2, correct each sentence as follows:

- 1. Write the sentences with regrettable subjects on a separate sheet of paper.*
- 2. On the next line, write the sentence using with a better subject.*
- 3. In the margin to the left of the sentence pair, write the number of the error pattern identified on EW2.*
- 4. Now rewrite your practice essays with the improved sentences.*
- 5. Hand in the separate page.*

<p>Application</p> <p>Instruct your students to edit their current essays. If they haven't written their current essays yet, have them do so as step one of their homework assignment. The assigned revision then becomes step two.</p> <p>Elocution Worksheet 2 should be used as a reference for the rest of the year.</p>	<p><i>Now edit your current essays by finding any inadequate subjects and correcting the sentences to include better subjects.</i></p>
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Assessment

Evaluate the worksheet, the practice essay sentence revisions, and the current essay sentence revisions. Ensure that your students can identify which of the three errors a subject commits and how to solve each of them. Do not grade the worksheets; just observe them. They are practice.

This lesson may seem more clear-cut than the verb lesson. Remember that the passive voice is almost always a red flag for an **unclear subject**. Although writers can sometimes use the passive voice effectively, inexperienced writers often use the passive voice to avoid discovering or revealing a subject.