

Teach Parts of Speech

Contributed by: Gail M. Van Tatenhove, SLP, CCC-SLP, United States

Educational television shows for children use a variety of fun and interesting characters to get the person's attention and teach language concepts in memorable ways. A similar approach can be used to teach the icons and word groups for Parts of Speech on a Minspeak® overlay.

- Create a character for each of the Parts of Speech on the person's Minspeak® overlay. Here are some possible Minspeak® characters, based on the Unity® program.
 - Verb – Mr. Action Man is known to his friends as Herb Verb. He wears a tool belt, hat, and carries a bucket. You can give anything to Herb and he knows what **TO DO** with it.
 - Noun – Grandma Hubbard keeps **THINGS** in cupboards. She is dressed like a grandmother with glasses on the end of her nose. She puts things in a homemade cupboard made out of 3 shoe boxes taped, tied, or glued together.
 - Adjectives – The Painter is known to his friends as Art Tist. He wears an artist hat and carries around 3 different sizes of paintbrushes. He likes to paint **DESCRIPTIVE** pictures with water on blackboards or paint on paper. He makes things that are *big, tall, fast, long, hot, etc.*
 - Adverb – The Pilot is the big brother of Mr. Action Man and known to his friends as Ed Verb or Al Verb. He carries about triangular banners with adverbs written on them and is dressed like an airplane pilot. He likes to tell Herb (and sometimes Art) **HOW TO DO** things. If they are going, he says *now*, if they are singing, he might say *again*.
 - Interjection – Interjector Joe is a very excitable character with a megaphone, yelling out single words, like *hello, yum, and sorry*. He often interrupts other people when he "pops-in" comments. As he says these **POP-IN** words, he likes to throw glitter, making a huge mess!
 - Determiner – The Determinator wears a pointed hat and has a wand or laser pointer used to point out things. We can figure out **WHAT THING** he is talking about by looking where he is pointing.
 - Conjunction – Connie Junction is always **JOINING** things together. For some strange reason, she likes to dress like a train engineer and makes a "toot" sound when she joins things.
 - Preposition – Bob the Builder© is a character on a US television show of the same name. He tells people **WHERE** to put things (e.g., *in, on, over, under*). He likes to do building activities with a toy bridge set.
 - Question Word – The Riddler© is the fictional character from DC Comics and the Batman series. He is dressed in a shirt with question marks on it. He always asks **QUESTIONS**, like *who, what, when, where, and why*.

- Talk about what each character might do with an object, based on the part of speech. Use the props you collected for the objects on the Minspeak® display and act out what each character would do when given the object from the Minspeak® display. Emphasize the key word(s) that are programmed in your Minspeak® device. For example,

When given an  ...

- Herb Verb **eats** it.
 - Grandma Hubbard puts it away in her **food** cupboard.
 - Art Tist draws a **hungry** person.
 - The Pilot eats it **hungrily**.
 - Interjection Joe yells out **yum**.
 - The Determinator eats **all** of it in one big bite.
 - Bob the Builder checks that you gave him an apple **without** a worm.
- Make up songs about the Parts of Speech. The book *Singing To Talking With Minspeak®* (© Van Tatenhove, 2000) has songs for Parts of Speech and Icon Families. See www.vantatenhove.com for information on this resource. One example of a song is as follows:

The DETERMINATOR Song, sung to the tune of “Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes”

This and that and these and those,
These and those,
These and those.
This and that and these and those,
I can point at what I want.

Each and none and all and some,
All and some,
All and some.
Each and none and all and some,
I can point at what I want.

- Make a color-coded board game, like Candyland®, to practice the different parts of speech. Candyland® has colored squares and, in most Minspeak® programs, the parts of speech are color-coded, so using this game is a simple strategy to learn parts of speech by color category. Make up rules for playing the game, such as the following: when you land on a green square, you have to say a verb, if you land on a yellow square, you have to say a pronoun, if you land on a blue square, you have to say an adjective, or if you land on a purple square, you have to say a preposition. Make your rules as simple or complicated as the person can follow.