

## Using *Active Grammar* for KS3 Literacy

### **Frances Gregory:**

This book covers areas in all three components in *The Literacy Kit*. It supports sentence level starters – it could be used to extend activities the starter box introduces, or revise them. For example - page 6 offers a fast-paced starter activity on types of sentences, and page 113 is a good starter activity when pupils are studying the creation of narrative tension. Many activities could be used as follow up for writing tasks to address weaknesses found in pupils' writing.

The sentence level objectives it covers also arise in the OHT packs. Thus *Active Grammar* activities could be used alongside the OHT packs as an alternative to the starter boxes. Teachers may find the text-based activity provides a welcome alternative – it reduces resource management issues, and offers a different teaching method. Page 91 begins a section on paragraphs, which is an emphasis in several of the OHT texts - the two would support each other. The texts used in *Active Grammar* also provide more models for students. The OHT texts and these texts can be looked at together to enrich understanding of text type. For example, page 78 provides a lovely contrast in creating a setting to the David Almond 'Counting Stars' passage used in the Year 8 *Imagine* OHT pack.

The introduction is an excellent - inspiring and enthusiastic! - guide to teachers, and page 4 covers some helpful hints. The glossary is helpful.

As one of the OHT writers, I feel that this book covers many supportive areas for which we did not have room in our teachers' books/notes. If it is used with the OHTs, pupils could develop many writing techniques to raise standards of writing. As the book states, boys will find the fast-paced

activities effective for learning. The book will support the grammatical understanding desired by the strategy.

Teachers will find this book helps them to use both OHT and starter boxes. But on its own, the book is a useful tool for any teacher. The strategy thrives on using a variety of approaches to all tasks - *Active Grammar* is part of that variety, and refreshingly different from the dry grammar exercise books that are still available.

As you can see, I like it.

**Jo Crewe:**

This book is excellent for picking and choosing between activities to fit in with a department's own scheme of work; to fill gaps or replace outdated plans and resources. I'd probably use it to introduce or revise skills before attempting a piece of extended writing, or maybe as part of a longer series of writing skills lessons. Whatever a department is already doing, or lacking, this fits in.

It can be used for looking for more active ways of addressing sentence and text level objectives, especially within the main part of a lesson. Ideally it would follow a short starter activity on the same objective. I think this fits in so well because it promotes the active teaching and learning style that the strategy is looking for.

A final point: it'd be particularly good for helping NQTs, because it does lead you through the teaching of the activities.