

# Using examples to teach grammar to Year 7 (Cognitive Science Teacher Choices Trial)

## Teacher Information Sheet

### What is this Teacher Choices Trial?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake a randomised controlled trial (RCT) as part of their 'Teacher Choices' programme. 'Teacher Choices' trials explore the everyday choices you as a teacher make when planning lessons and supporting pupils. The aim of Teacher Choices research is to investigate the impact of these different day-to-day pedagogical practices on pupil learning and to generate evidence that can be readily applied by teachers in the classroom. This is a new and developing strand of EEF projects.

This 'Teacher Choices' project is about using cognitive science approaches in the classroom. Using worked examples is a teaching approach grounded in cognitive science, with a strong evidence base in maths and science education. English teachers commonly use examples and many are interested in using cognitive science in their teaching. This trial seeks to understand how cognitive science principles can support English teachers in using examples. It compares different ways to use examples to teach grammatical constructions to enhance writing in Year 7 English. The trial will compare three different approaches to using examples in short lesson segments in English classes to determine which one is most effective:

Approach	Description
<b>Systematic Worked Examples</b>	Structured use of worked examples, taught as a separate 'starter' twice a week. Pupils will learn to purposefully construct each grammar pattern using a sequence of steps.
<b>Responsive Worked Examples</b>	Responsive use of worked examples, with teachers integrating worked examples within their teaching sequence, based on curriculum and pupil needs. Pupils will learn to purposefully construct each grammar pattern using a sequence of steps.
<b>Non-worked Examples</b>	Structured use of non-worked examples, taught as a separate 'starter' twice a week. Pupils will learn to analyse examples to identify grammatical patterns and explore their effect on the reader.

Year 7 teachers and pupils in English departments in schools in England will take part. The trial will recruit from January 2024, and the approaches will be implemented in school during the summer term of 2024.

### Who is conducting the study?

The EEF has commissioned and funded this study. The NFER is conducting the evaluation and working in partnership with the University of Exeter, and with the University of Birkbeck and University College of London (UCL) through the Centre for Educational Neuroscience.

### What will the project involve?

You will be randomly allocated by NFER to one of the three approaches and asked to implement the approach with each of your Year 7 English classes. You will be given a short teacher guide to enable you to implement the approach.



During the summer term 2024, you will be expected to use examples to teach Year 7 grammar for ten weeks as follows:

- content: grammar patterns for expanding noun phrases in narrative description (5 weeks, April – May 2024), and grammar patterns for clauses/sentences in persuasive writing (5 weeks, June – July 2024).
- frequency: twice a week, with each session lasting 15 minutes.
- use of examples: in line with your randomly allocated approach (see ‘What is this Teacher Choices Trial project’ for details of each approach).

You will be asked to administer a bespoke writing test towards the end of the summer term to help assess which of the three approaches to teaching grammar is most effective. To support the analysis, there will also be a short grammar assessment halfway through the term, based on teaching up to that point. There will be no specific cost to schools for participating apart from staff time to support the trial. At the end of the trial, schools will receive a payment of £100 per participating teacher as a ‘Thank You’ for the time taken in being involved in the trial.

### Which schools and teachers can take part?

The trial will involve Year 7 teachers in English departments from 65 state-funded secondary schools.

This trial requires every participating teacher to be allocated to a single grammar teaching approach. Where classes are taught by more than one English teacher, we will check whether this allows teachers to be allocated to a single approach, and will contact your school to discuss any classes where this is not possible.

To join the trial, your headteacher will sign up, with the head of English or another appropriate colleague being the main contact, and individual Year 7 English teachers will then take part. See ‘Joining the trial’ for further details.

### How will you benefit from taking part?

The trial aims to provide evidence that will be useful for teachers, departments and schools when making decisions about their teaching. Your participation will help to strengthen the evidence of the relationship of teachers’ choices to pupils’ attainment.

By participating in the trial, you will receive example texts to support the teaching of grammar patterns for writing, and written guidance to support your allocated teaching approach. You will also receive the trial report which will describe how these different approaches related to pupil attainment. We hope these resources will be useful to you in the future.

Schools that complete all the trial requirements will receive a payment of £100 per participating teacher.

### What will the evaluation involve for me?

**Joining the trial:** At your school the headteacher will sign the online Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to join the trial.

**Teacher details for joining the trials:** NFER will provide a template on the secure school portal to collect details about participating teachers (to be completed by the main contact). This will include your name, contact details, job role and Year 7 classes.

**Random allocation:** You will be **randomly allocated** by the NFER to one of the three approaches to be used with each of your Year 7 classes twice per week for the first ten weeks of the summer term 2024. This means that teachers at your school may be asked to use

different approaches. **It is very important that you do not switch approaches with another teacher in your school. This is to ensure that we can properly understand the impact of each approach.**

**Follow-up data:** You will be asked to administer a bespoke English writing test (30-40 minutes), devised by NFER, to participating pupils towards the end of the summer term. You will also be asked to undertake a short assessment (20-30 minutes) with your class(es) halfway through the term, based on teaching up to that point, and to provide the results to NFER. **It is important to have assessment data for every participating pupil in the trial.** NFER will share the results from the assessments with your school. Further details on this will be communicated with the head of English.

**Evaluation materials:** You will be asked to complete a short survey before the summer term and another survey at the end to give your perspective. You will be expected to complete a brief online form each week on how frequently the approach was used in lessons.

You and your head of English may also be invited to take part in case studies where NFER researchers will visit the school to observe delivery of their assigned approach to inform contextual understanding. The visits would also gather views from teachers and pupils on the approaches being piloted and their experience of being part of the trial.

### When will I need to get involved?

Date	Teacher activities	NFER activities
January – February 2024	Headteacher to sign-up to the trial. Details of participating teachers shared with NFER.	NFER to provide a template to schools for providing teacher and pupil data.
March 2024	Complete a short survey on your current classroom practice and on your confidence in teaching grammar.  Prepare lesson plans for the summer term using the guidance document.	NFER will send a short online survey link.  NFER to randomise the approach to teaching grammar to each teacher and share the random allocation and provide the teachers' guide.  NFER will approach schools via an email to find out whether they have any queries on the guidance document and approaches to teaching grammar.
April – July 2024	Teachers use examples to teach Year 7 grammar for ten weeks in the summer term as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• content: grammar patterns for expanding noun phrases in narrative description (5 weeks, April – May 2024), and grammar patterns for clauses/sentences in persuasive writing (5 weeks, June – July 2024).</li> <li>• frequency: twice a week, with each session lasting 15 minutes.</li> <li>• use of examples: in line with their randomly allocated approach (see 'What</li> </ul>	NFER to support schools with the delivery of the approaches.

Date	Teacher activities	NFER activities
	<p>is this Teacher Choices Trial project' for details of each approach).</p> <p>Teachers to complete a brief form every week about how frequently they have delivered the approach to teaching grammar.</p>	
May 2024	Halfway through the term, classes complete a short grammar assessment (20-30 minutes) and send test papers to NFER.	NFER will provide information to schools on how to access the short assessment.
June - July 2024	<p>Administer the bespoke English writing test (30-40 minutes) to participating pupils.</p> <p>Complete a short online survey on implementing the approach to teaching grammar.</p>	<p>NFER will provide the bespoke English writing test for each participating pupil.</p> <p>NFER will send a short online survey link directly to participating teachers.</p>
September 2024	Payment of £100 per participating teacher made to all schools once the trial requirements are fulfilled.	NFER will provide the assessment scores to schools for all of the participating pupils.
March 2025	Schools will receive the summary report from the trial.	

### How will the findings be used?

All teachers involved will receive a summary of the trial findings and this will also be freely available on the NFER and the EEF websites.

### What happens if a school, teacher or pupil wants to withdraw from the trial?

A school or teacher can withdraw from the trial and/or from data being used in the trial at any time until 1 September 2024, at which point the data will have been pseudonymised and analysed. To withdraw, you must notify your school, as they are responsible for notifying NFER of any pupils or teachers who wish to withdraw from the study.

Similarly, parents can choose to withdraw their child from the data collection of the trial at any time until 1 September 2024. They can do this by returning the form on the bottom of the parent letter to their school. Schools must not provide data about children whose parents withdraw them from the data collection. If the withdrawal takes place after the study commences, schools must notify NFER of such pupils to be removed from datasets and subsequent analysis immediately.

### How will the NFER use and protect the data collected?

All data gathered during the trial will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and GDPR and will be treated in the strictest confidence by the NFER.

No teacher or pupil-level data will be shared with the EEF.

**No school, teacher or pupil will be named in any report arising from this work.**

A School and Teacher Privacy Notice for the study is available [here](#).

A Parent/Carer Privacy Notice for the study is available [here](#).



## Who can I contact for more information?

If you want any further information, please contact Sarah Millar, the NFER Researcher at [teacherchoices@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:teacherchoices@nfer.ac.uk).