



# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

KEEPING THE STREETS SAFE FROM CRIMES TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SAMPLE



AN ENGLISH RESOURCE FOR SPARKY CLASSES



A WORD BEFORE WE START...

INSIDE THIS RESOURCE,  
WE'VE MADE TEN MISTAKES  
(GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING).

AS YOU READ THROUGH,  
CAN YOU SPOT THEM?

# THEY'VE GOT YOUR BACK

This is a sample version of *The League of Literacy*. If you're at all familiar with *The M Files*, you'll be aware of our penchant for inventing strange organisations who run things (only the truly committed will be aware of *The Alliance for Science*. Perhaps one day we'll get round to finishing that one off!).

In this particular case, *The League of Literacy* is about giving you a starting point to make the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar a little more interesting. Hopefully we've given you a suitable hook with which to reel your students into the most boring of lessons on apostrophes. And, with our present Government's love of SPaG tests, our students need all the hooks they can get.

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<http://www.sparkyteaching.com/resources/thinkingskills/leagueofliteracy.php>

## REST EASY, TEACHER...

It's a grim world out there, but be aware that, even as you read this, *The League of Literacy* are keeping our mean streets safe by picking up unwanted spellings or hunting down lost full-stops. They'd appreciate any help your class could offer in their ongoing fight with crimes against the English language.

One of the most rewarding things for us is to see how people use our resources. Never think that we won't be interested - we love it! Tweet us @SparkyTeaching.

Thanks for your support,



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## ADDITIONAL FILES

### VIDEOS ZIP FILE

This is a large zip file, so leave plenty of time to download. All three videos inside are mp4 files. If you have any trouble playing them, we'd recommend using the free VLC Media Player (which is really good and plays most audio/video file types, including mp4).

- 1\_WeAreTheLeagueOfLiteracy.mp4
- 2\_Goodspellas.mp4
- 3\_DialAForApostrophe.mp4

# WELCOME TO THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

THE WORDS YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ ARE TRUE...

...ONLY THE SPELLINGS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT.

We've long wanted to make a resource aimed at making punctuation and grammar lessons slightly more lively. The time seemed right to sit down and do it now.

For those of you not based in the UK, we've gone through quite a rapid series of changes in our education system in recent years (don't ask!). Some of these have impacted upon the learning of English:

- the introduction of a synthetic phonics test with younger pupils (including the reading of out-of-context nonsense words)
- a spelling, punctuation and grammar test at the end of Key Stage 2 (equivalent to Elementary students age 11) which includes such riveting activities as labelling the various word classes in a sentence and putting rings around subordinate clauses
- a pronounced leaning towards a more traditional curriculum and Government philosophy

Much has been written about these (and so many more) changes, but the general gist of those against these changes is as follows: we are in danger of sucking the life out of a subject that is supposed to be lively, creative and pleasurable. Many believe that the skills of reading for pleasure, playing with words and experimenting with their ambiguities are being diminished in favour of 'drier' teaching methods and content. If reading is more about out-of-context words that mean nothing rather than time spent immersed in fantastic worlds and if grammar is more about circling adverbs than using them in wonderful stories, then something has gone wrong somewhere.

Although it is important to teach spelling, punctuation and grammar - and much of this subject-matter fits specific rules - the teaching of these rules doesn't have to be dry. It's our aim to help you ensure that you foster an appreciation for these rules in your students (love may be too strong a word!) This resource should provide you a hook with which to lure your students onto the drier plains of English and out the other side.

It's always been our attitude that Governments can issue all sorts of directives, but it's what you do when your classroom door is closed that matters. Being a sparky teacher is all about taking whatever subject matter you're given and finding a key - an opportunity, a way in - to making it more relevant and memorable.

Thankfully, we know just the organisation to help you do that...



SAMPLE from

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## 1. WE ARE THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

**Objective:**

- to provide a hook for future spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons
- to encourage students to explore the role and importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar

**You will need:** 1\_WeAreTheLeagueOfLiteracy.mp4 (from Videos zip file)

The video introduces students to the concept of The League of Literacy and sets the scene by way of 1950s black-and-white footage. It's worth getting students to think of The League as an organisation that wants to stick up for the English language as opposed to laughing at people who make "hilarious" spelling mistakes or put an apostrophe in the wrong place. That's not what the resource is about and a new generation of grammar pedants is not what we're trying to develop here!

Get students exploring the concept a little.

- *How important do you think spelling, grammar and punctuation are? Why?*
- *If you had to choose one of the three as being more / less important than the others, which one would you pick and why?*
- *Is there a "correct way to write"? How do we know what it is?*

Consider the poet E.E.Cummings who wrote his poetry without capital letters. He is now referred to as ee cummings as standard in many publications. Also discuss organisations like adidas, mothercare or itv (whose current logos are all in lower-case) and brand misspellings like "Lite" and "Xtra". *Can we say these are errors if they've been done knowingly?* (a really interesting question to talk through)

- *Do you think technology nowadays is a help with writing correctly or a hindrance?*

Discuss things like spell-checkers, grammar hints, predictive text, being limited in the number of characters to use on Twitter and in text messages - all of which affect the way we think about language rules and how we use words.

Give examples of the way that different punctuation can bring a whole new meaning to sentences. For example:

- The welcoming *"Let's eat, Dave"* versus the infinitely more worrying *"Let's eat Dave"*.
- The mundane *"Most of the time, travellers stop off at my coffee shop"* versus the hugely more fascinating *"Most of the time travellers stop off at my coffee shop"*.
- The normal panda who *"eats shoots and leaves"* versus the maverick who *"eats, shoots and leaves"*.

Older students will enjoy varying these slightly and coming up with their own examples to demonstrate the effect a slight change in punctuation or spelling can have.



CRIME RECORD SHEET

THINK...

PAIR...

SHARE...

WHICH THREE "CRIMES" WOULD YOU SAY YOU NEED TO WORK ON MOST?

SAMPLE PRINTABLE CARDS  
YOU'VE BEEN VISITED BY

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

ARE WATCHING YOU



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

GRAMMAR CRIMES DON'T PAY.



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

HAVE GOT THINGS COVERED.



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

YOU'VE BEEN VISITED BY

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

ARE WATCHING YOU



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

GRAMMAR CRIMES DON'T PAY.



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY

HAVE GOT THINGS COVERED.



FIGHTING CRIMES AGAINST THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

# A SIMILE TOO FAR.

SATURDAY, 12.17AM

SOME PEOPLE THINK THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY IS AN EXCITING, ACTION-PACKED JOB. SOMETIMES THAT JUST AIN'T TRUE. SOMETIMES IT'S AS DULL AS... ER... SOMETHING VERY DULL.

I WAS OUT ON PATROL WHEN THE CALL CAME...

CALLING ALL CARS...  
CALLING ALL CARS...  
GET YOURSELF OVER TO  
THE EAST SIDE!





IN A WORLD OF DODGY APOSTROPHE'S

WE'VE GOT ~~YOU'RE~~ BACK

*your*

**THE LEAGUE OF LITERACY**



# sparky teaching

## TEACH WHAT COUNTS



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