



Cooking with Clarity

Special Grammar Ingredients: Brackets, Parentheses, and Ellipses



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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	250 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	4-5 class periods
Course	A.P. Language and Composition		

Essential Question

How are brackets, parentheses, and ellipses used across content areas?

Summary

In this grammar and punctuation lesson, students will explore the proper usage of brackets [], parentheses (), and ellipses ... in writing. From ELA to math, science, music, and social studies, students will explore how brackets, parentheses, and ellipses are used across the curriculum. This exploration will solidify students' understanding of how these punctuation marks are used and assist in improving their communicative effectiveness and ACT language scores.

Snapshot

Engage

Students brainstorm where they have seen brackets, parentheses and ellipses using Mentimeter.

Explore

Students develop rules for brackets, parentheses, and ellipses using the Affinity Process.

Explain

Students explain how different texts use brackets, parentheses, and ellipses using the Jigsaw strategy.

Extend

Students view a video, analyze and discuss a script, and add brackets, parentheses, and ellipses as appropriate, then write a food-related script using brackets, parentheses, and ellipses.

Evaluate

Students complete a Choice Board demonstrating their understanding of brackets, parentheses, and ellipses.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - English (6-12)

PUN 302: Use appropriate punctuation in straightforward situations (e.g., simple items in a series)

PUN 503: Use punctuation to set off complex parenthetical elements

PUN 602: Use punctuation to set off a nonessential/nonrestrictive appositive or clause

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

L&C 602: A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Compose sentences with clear and consistently varied structures -Produce writing that is free of all but a few minor errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 12)

12.3.W.1: Compose narratives reflecting real or imagined experiences that:

- include engaging plots involving well-developed, complex characters resolving conflicts
- establish narrator(s) that enhance(s) the narrative
- are intentionally sequenced in a way to achieve a specific effect (e.g., create suspense, establish mood, reflect theme)
- provide clear descriptions, using precise language, sensory details, and dialogue
- include varied syntax to enhance readability
- emulate literary elements and/or literary devices from mentor texts

12.5.W.2: Demonstrate command of Standard American English (i.e., grammar, mechanics, and usage) in writing, presentations, and/or multimodal literacies to convey specific meanings and ideas, intentionally departing from standard usage to achieve a specific effect.

12.5.W.8: Use an ellipsis to indicate omission from quoted material and brackets to indicate an addition or clarification to quoted material.

Attachments

- [Choice Board \(Key\)—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Choice Board \(Key\)—Cooking with Clarity.pdf](#)
- [Choice Board—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Choice Board—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Choice Board—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Choice Board—Cooking with Clarity.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Cooking with Clarity.pptx](#)
- [Note Catcher—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Note Catcher—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Note Catcher—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Note Catcher—Cooking with Clarity.pdf](#)
- [Rubric—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Rubric—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Rubric—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Rubric—Cooking with Clarity.pdf](#)
- [Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses—Cooking with Clarity.pdf](#)
- [Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish .docx](#)
- [Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish .pdf](#)
- [Script for Lessons in Chemistry Key—Cooking with Clarity .pdf](#)
- [Script for Lessons in Chemistry Key—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Script for Lessons in Chemistry—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Script for Lessons in Chemistry—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Script for Lessons in Chemistry—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Script for Lessons in Chemistry—Cooking with Clarity.pdf](#)
- [Station Task Cards \(Key\)—Cooking with Clarity .pdf](#)
- [Station Task Cards \(Key\)—Cooking with Clarity.docx](#)
- [Station Task Cards—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.docx](#)

- [Station Task Cards—Cooking with Clarity - Spanish.pdf](#)
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Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Station Task Cards Key (attached; for instructor use)
- Choice Board Key (attached; for instructor use)
- Script Lessons in Chemistry Key (attached; for instructor use)
- Station Task Cards (attached; one per station)
- Note Catcher (attached; one per student)
- Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses (attached; one per student)
- Script Lessons in Chemistry (attached; one per student)
- Rubric (attached; one per student)
- Choice Board (attached; one per student)
- chart paper
- sticky notes

20 minutes

Preparation

Teacher's Note: Making It Clear

This lesson covers standard American usage of brackets, parentheses, and ellipses. There are a few brackets that are not covered in this lesson, including angle brackets $< >$, braces or "curly brackets" $\{ \}$, and specialized brackets used in music and science. Instead, it focuses specifically on uses and rules for square brackets, commonly referred to as simply "brackets."

At some point, you may need to explain the easily confused "ellipse" and "ellipsis." In math, an "ellipse" is a shape that looks like a stretched circle, where every point on it is the same distance from two fixed points. An "ellipsis" refers to the three dots (...) used in English grammar. The plural is ellipses.

15 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to facilitate the lesson. Begin by displaying **slides 1–5** to present the title, essential questions, and the learning objectives in as much detail as needed.

Using the [Mentimeter](#) tech tool, have students make a [Collaborative Word Cloud](#) of the places they have seen brackets, parentheses, and ellipses. To begin, go to [Mentimeter.com](#) to make a word cloud presentation. When ready, move to **slide 6** to use the 5-minute timer. If you believe students need more or less time, additional timers are available on the [K20 Center's YouTube Channel](#). When you are ready to present and discuss the word cloud, select the "Present" button in Mentimeter and discuss the results with the class.

Teacher's Note: Setting up a Mentimeter Word Cloud

1. Go to [Mentimeter.com](#) and select "Sign up" or "Log in" in the top right corner.
2. Select "New Menti" and then "New Survey."
3. Choose "Blank survey" and then "Start from scratch."
4. From the pop-up window, select "Word Cloud" from the dropdown list.
5. Enter the prompt, "Where have you seen brackets, parentheses, and ellipses?" in the "Question" field.
6. Choose "Present" when you are ready to share the prompt with the class.

30 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 7** with students and share the [Affinity Process](#) instructional strategy with them. Pass out stacks of sticky notes to the class. Have students write down as many rules that apply to brackets, parentheses, and ellipses as they know. They should limit themselves to one rule per sticky note. There is a [3-minute timer](#) on the slide.

Move to **slide 8** once students have exhausted their knowledge. Ask students to work with a partner to compare their sticky notes. Instruct them to group similar sticky notes together. Label these as a category. You may use the 3-minute timer on the slide.

After pairs have completed their groupings, display **slide 9**. Have each pair combine with another pair, resulting in a group of four. Have these groups of four repeat the process. Then, have groups share their main categories for the rules associated with brackets, parentheses, and ellipses. Again, the slide has a 3-minute timer you may wish to use. Display **slide 10** and create a whole class list of rules on the board or on chart paper for students to refer to at a later time.

40 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Setting Up Stations

Before class, set up six or more stations in your classroom. Use the **Station Task Cards** (attached) to provide a card at each station which students can refer to.

Grouping Strategies

This is a good time for a grouping strategy that mixes students into groups they wouldn't normally choose, such as the alternate instructions in [Sweet Talk](#).

Display **slide 11** if you would like to use the [Sweet Talk](#) strategy. If not, go on to **slide 12** to introduce the students to the [Jigsaw](#) strategy and explain the instructions for moving through stations. The stations include examples from the main content areas:

- Academic /formal writing
- Closed Captioning / script
- Math
- Science
- Music (song titles)
- Ellipses

Divide the students into groups, provide them with the attached **Note Catcher** handout, and direct them to examples posted around the room.

At each station, have students examine the task card and create, adjust, or validate a rule for each form of punctuation (brackets, parentheses, and ellipses) on their Note Catcher. Make sure that each student is writing on their own Note Catcher, as they will need them for the next activity. After 3 minutes, rotate the groups to the next station, leaving the task cards at each respective station.

Once students have visited each station, instruct them to say goodbye to their group partners and form completely new groups. These new group members will compare the rules they wrote, noting similarities and differences in their observations.

Bring the whole class back together to revise the original class set of rules they wrote in the Explore. The students will look at their copies of the rules while comparing them with the set of rules on the board.

Now pass out copies of the **Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses** (attached). Compare the rules the class generated with those on the Rules sheet. Discuss any new knowledge gained from examining the correct rules.

45 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 13** and show the students a video clip from *Lessons in Chemistry*.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=4gk1BkjB2K8>

Now distribute the **Script Lessons in Chemistry** handout and display **slide 14**. Assign partners and ask students to analyze the script, making punctuation additions (parentheses, brackets, and ellipses) where necessary. After an appropriate amount of time, review and make corrections to the script as a class. **Slide 15** provides examples of correct usage. You may also use the attached **Script Lessons in Chemistry (Instructor's Key)** if you choose.

Teacher's Note:

The point of this activity is two-fold: 1) to get students thinking about when parentheses, brackets, and ellipses are used, even if rarely, and 2) to establish the storyline and themes that they will expand upon.

Explain to students that they will be working with the same partner to write an extension script, either continuing the episode or creating a scenario with the characters in a new situation. The script should include a dialogue between a minimum of two characters. Show **slide 16** and provide each student with the **Rubric** handout and review your expectations. Emphasize the importance of using punctuation correctly for this activity.

Optional Extension Activity: Have students present their extension script for the class in a Reader's Theater format.

60 minutes

Evaluate

Go to **slide 17**, and while referring to the [Choice Board](#) strategy, distribute copies of the **Choice Board** handout to students. Review the options, explaining that they may choose to complete any three in a row. Encourage students to be creative with their responses. You may refer to the attached **Choice Board Key** where the answers are fixed.

Resources

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The Official Guide to APA style* (7th ed.).
- Center for Academic Success. (2019, December 19). *Parentheses*. Butte College. <https://www.butte.edu/departments/cas/tipsheets/punctuation/parentheses.html>
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). *3 Minute Timer* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iISP02KPau0&list=PL-aUhEQeaZXLmf3ftNDxiuSkEr0pq0c2&index=6>
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Collaborative word clouds. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/103>
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- Music Theory. (2023, July). Reddit [Post]. https://www.reddit.com/r/musictheory/comments/1ebrwar/what_does_this_bracket_and_3_mean_in_violin_music/
- Ningthouhanu. (2025). *Lessons in chemistry Season 1 Episode 4 highlight* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gk1BkjB2K8>
- "Rules for Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses" prompt. Claude, 2.0 version, Anthropic, 15 December 2024, <https://www.anthropic.com/>
- School of Composition. (2025). Beginner's Guide to 4-Part Harmony. <https://www.schoolofcomposition.com/beginners-guide-to-4-part-harmony/>
- University of Chicago Council of Science Editors. (2007). *Scientific style and format: The CSE manual for authors, editors, and publishers* (7th ed.).