Students as “Grammarians”: Discovering Grammatical Rules
Lesson on Reduced Clauses of Reason

(Present Participle Constructions)

Lead-in

Exercise 1

In pairs, use your imagination and write answers to the following questions. All the questions are about Vincent, a very good student, who had an interesting plan.

a. Why does Vincent like to study English grammar?

b. Why does he always have a dictionary in his bag?

c. Why did he decide to study articles and prepositions until midnight on weekends?

Exercise 2

The following sentences are about Patricia, not a very diligent student, who decided to take her studies more seriously. In pairs, read the sentences and underline the clauses that inform you about reasons for her actions.

Patricia didn’t like studying English grammar because she thought it was too complicated. She didn’t have a dictionary so she always had to borrow one from her classmates. Because she wanted make fewer mistakes, she decided to do more grammar exercises at home. She now brings a dictionary to class because she knows that it is a very helpful tool.
Presentation: Discovering the Topic

Exercise 1

Work in small groups. Read the following sentences and focus on the underlined parts. What, do you think, is indicated here?

a. Patricia didn’t like studying English grammar because she thought it was too complicated.

b. She didn’t have a dictionary so she always had to borrow one from her classmates.

c. Because she wanted to make fewer mistakes, she decided to do more grammar exercises at home.

d. She now brings a dictionary to class because she knows that it is a very helpful tool.

Exercise 2

Now, in small groups, look at the following sentences and compare them with sentences from the previous exercise. Use the guiding questions below.

a. Patricia didn’t like studying English grammar, thinking it was too complicated.

b. Not having a dictionary, she always had to borrow one from her classmates.

c. Wanting to make fewer mistakes, she decided to do more grammar exercises at home.

d. She now brings a dictionary to class, knowing that it is a very helpful tool.

- Which words are not used in this reduced version?
- How has the form of the verbs “think”, “assume”, and “want” changed?
Presentation: Discovering the Rule

Once you have discussed the sentences in Exercise 1 and 2, **complete** the following summary.

*Some clauses, such as clauses expressing ________________ can be made shorter; in other words, they can be reduced. We can reduce those clauses only if the ___________ is the same in both parts of the sentence (look at Exercise 1 in Presentation). In order to reduce a clause of reason, we omit the ______________, and change the form of the verb to ___________ form (gerund).*

**Practice**

**Exercise 1**

**Read** the sentences you wrote about Vincent and **answer** these questions:

- Can they be reduced?
- Which words will you omit?
- Which words will change their form?

Now, if possible, **reduce** the first three sentences that you wrote about Vincent.

a. __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

b. __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

c. __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
When you are ready, exchange your answers with another pair. Read their sentences and check if they are correct. Share comments with your classmates.

**Production**

Write brief answers the following questions:

- **a. Why do you like or dislike studying English grammar?**

- **b. Why do you use (or why don’t you use) certain materials?**

- **c. Why did you decide to have (or not to have) some study plan?**

Now, check if you can reduce all your clauses of reason. If so, write their reduced versions below.

- **a.** ___________________________________________________________________

- **b.** ___________________________________________________________________

- **c.** ___________________________________________________________________

Share your answers with your partner. Exchange comments on each other’s sentences.