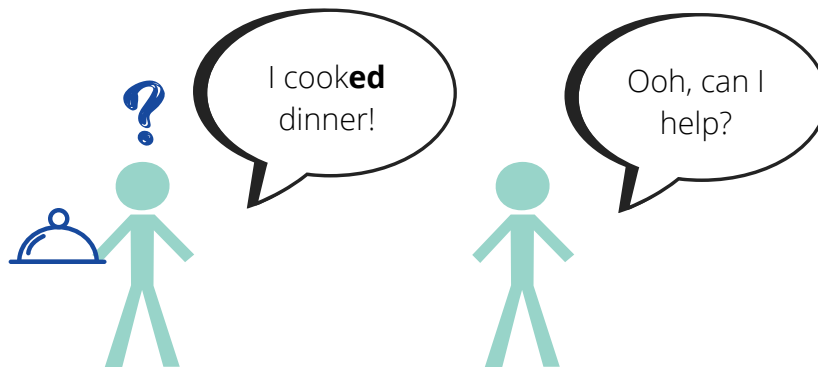




What is Syntax?

- How words and parts of words (e.g. suffixes like -ed or -ing, etc.) combine to form sentences



FACT:

Children with hearing loss often have delays in using complex *spoken* syntax/sentence structures as compared with their hearing peers.¹

WHY might this be?

- Children with hearing loss may **miss 'bits and pieces'** of words/sentences that result in misunderstanding and not using similar constructions in their speech. For example, the child may miss the "-ed" at the end of a verb and miss the past tense usage.²
- Children with hearing loss tend to **use more 'content' words** (nouns and verbs) and **fewer 'grammatical' words** (prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, etc.) -- possibly because they hear these more often and have more chances to hear them correctly and learn them.³
- One study showed that children with hearing loss tend to **focus on the end of spoken sentences**, making them less proficient at understanding clauses inserted into sentences.³ For example, when told "the sheep that chased the man ate the grass," and asked to identify the picture that matched, most chose the picture of a man eating grass.³

True or False: Children who use signed languages don't develop complex syntax like children who use spoken language do.

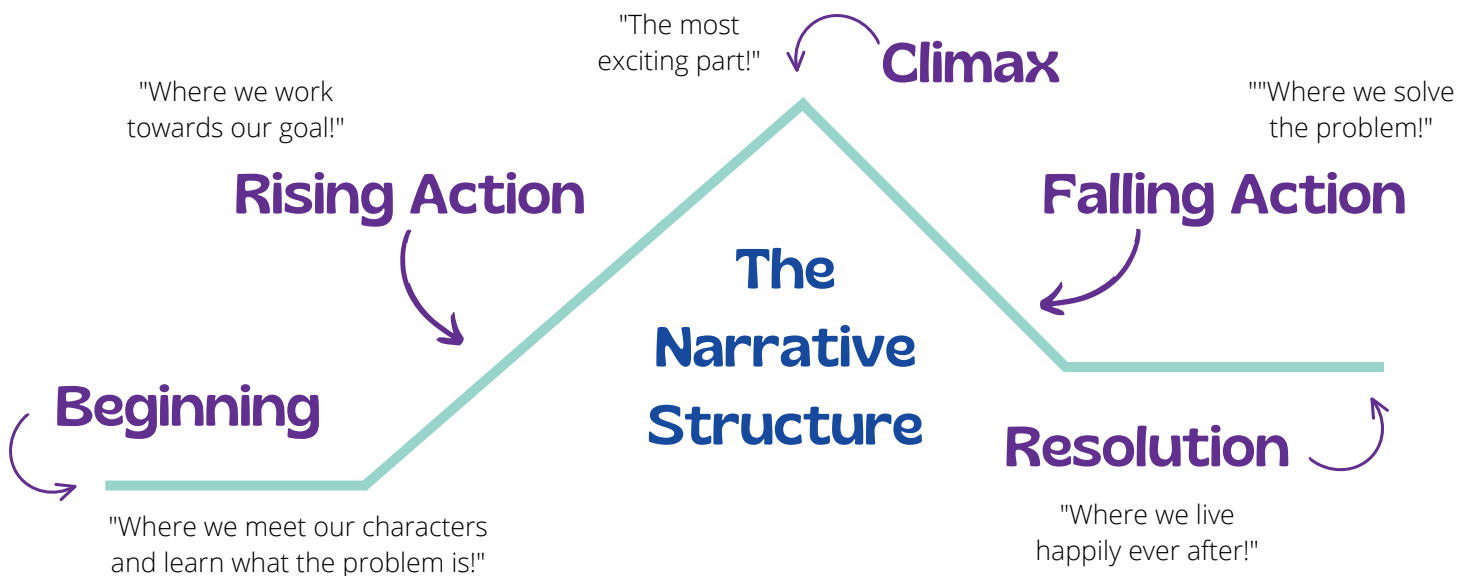
False!

Signed languages have complex syntactic structures that are different from those of spoken languages--and they vary BETWEEN different signed languages too!⁴

What's one thing families can do to help their child's spoken language development (specifically with syntax)?

Work on storytelling! Narrative-based literacy intervention (NBLI) is a research-based system for teaching literacy skills through storytelling---and **new research points to its benefits in helping children with cochlear implants improve their syntax!**⁵

Try reading stories to your child and having them retell them to you, asking your child what they think will happen next in a story, and creating your own stories together using the narrative structure!⁶



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