



8190508

Oral Drills

IN

Sentence Patterns

won't! (very dogmatically)

If the 'Would you mind —
the student may reply:

I would! or I certainly

We are having tea. Have you
Have you had a piece of cake?
We are at a supper. Have you
Have you had any of those?
You are recovering from
sickness?

not likely to see her tomorrow

HELEN MONFRIES



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CORRECT EVERYDAY ENGLISH

1064

*How to Avoid Grammatical Errors in
Speech and Writing*

By

P. L. STEPHEN, M.A.



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CORRECT EVERYDAY ENGLISH

IF IT is your desire to express yourself well and correctly, express yourself clearly, neatly and even beautifully, you must know the rules of grammar. Grammar is not the dry-as-dust bore that many people consider it to be. Actually, there is much fun to be had from grammar if you tackle it in the right spirit. In fact when you have read this book you will, to your surprise, find that learning grammar can even be entertaining.

Correct Everyday English, written by an experienced Professor of English, is a non-scholastic grammar for adults, explaining the basis of the English language to those who wish to write and speak correctly. And for those who wish to remember rules and principles which may have been forgotten in the rush of everyday life. This book is written in a human and interesting manner. Here is scholarship that is at once sympathetic and illuminating. It is a concise manual of information and advice concerning grammar, idiom, use of words, points of style, punctuation, pronunciation and other practical matters. Examples have been given liberally and they simplify the understanding and remembering of the rules.

If your grammar has gone hazy with time and if you yet desire to speak and write correctly and well, *Correct Everyday English* is just the book for you.

CORRECT
EVERYDAY ENGLISH

THE CHIEF AIMS OF THIS BOOK

1. To give *ONLY* the *ESSENTIALS* of English Grammar.
2. To give *ALL* the essentials.
3. To be as brief as possible.
4. To be familiar and interesting.
5. To draw special attention to the more Common Mistakes *MADE IN INDIA*.

ADVICE

The very busy reader may skip the first forty-eight pages and begin with Part the Second.

SOME FLASHES ON GRAMMAR THAT HAVE INFLUENCED THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK

"Good English follows clear thinking rather than that system of rules called Grammar, which youth loathes and maturity forgets."

—*Wilfred Whitten.*

"In all grammar, you must use your head ; in fact, you will find that grammar is easy if you retain your head on your shoulders, and not let it slink to the Cinema when it's supposed to be in a class-room or engaged in study."

—*Eric Partridge.*

"Correct speech is less a matter of grammatical rules than of clear thinking."

—*Lindley Murray.*

"The remedy for an inaccurate class is not more grammar, but more practice within the vocabulary already acquired."

—*Dr. West.*

WELCOME TO THE READER

I could well imagine the reader looking with unbelieving eyes on the title of this book if I had called it *A Grammar without Tears*. He would have asked: Is THIS possible, even in this wonder-working age? A GRAMMAR *without TEARS*! And yet, that is what this book really is: A GRAMMAR WITHOUT TEARS.

It is but too true that little children all through the ages have shed hot tears over their grammar books. Grammar has been to them almost a Moloch "horrid king besmeared with blood of human sacrifice." Some tears of the parents also have perhaps mingled with those of the children! But like most human tears, the tears drawn by grammar have often been avoidable ones. At least, it is with that idea this book is written.

At the same time, in fairness to the writer—and the reader—it must not be forgotten that nothing of value in human life is ever realized without labour and sweat. The more valuable a thing is, not only are labour and sweat demanded, but blood and tears too. That is a law of human life. "No pains, no gains," may be a worn out saying now. It is none the less as true now as ever. So, in Grammar, no one can know all that one needs to know by the mere wish. Only, there is no reason why grammar should claim more sweat and tears than many other good things of life. It can be as pleasant as any other item of study; and, with the right understanding of its nature, it may even be more interesting than certain other forms of knowledge.

After all, what is grammar? It certainly is not, as some imagine, a set of rules and regulations laid down by some enemy of human happiness. It may almost be called the history of man's talent for expression—that talent which

exalts him above other living beings. From the days of his remote origin man has been expressing his thoughts by means of words; and the grammarian, far from laying down rules, has been simply observing that activity, and describing for the less observant the details of that activity in order to help them in their own efforts at expression.

The grammarian's work, therefore, must be both pleasant and useful. It must be pleasant because it satisfies that natural curiosity which every healthy mind has to know about all human activities.

Besides, the grammarian's work is something like what an intelligent gardener does when he notes and describes the colours and shapes and characteristics of different plants and flowers and fruits. Only, the grammarian tells us of the fruits and flowers of the mind as they appear in the form of words and sentences.

His work is useful because without the knowledge he has gathered and given of the way men and women express themselves there can be no certainty of meaning in what we say or write. Imagine my saying, "His success gained Rama his friend," and you not being able to understand whether it means that on account of his success Rama secured his friend, or whether it was his friend that enabled Rama to get his success, or something else. In the same way, if there is no understanding of the significance in the arrangement of words, "Rama beat Krishna" may mean either that Rama beat Krishna or that Krishna beat Rama!

By merely putting together a few words we cannot get any certain or clear meaning. It is only by knowing how men and women have been accustomed to put words together that we can get at what the combinations of words mean.

Looked at this way, a grammarian is something like a mechanic who tells us how the screws and bolts and other parts we have are put together so as to make the machine we are interested in. Just as the machine will not work unless its parts are properly put together our groups of words will

be of little use unless we know how they are joined together. Once we know that, we are sure to get the same pleasure as (if not a much higher pleasure than) the mechanic who has put together his favourite machine, or as the architect who has erected the building of his dreams.

A knowledge of grammar must therefore be sought by all intelligent people with earnest expectation. The necessary toil can certainly not be worse than that of the mechanic who works at his machine, or of the garden-lover who labours among his plants and flowers. Approached with a due sense of its nature the study of words and sentences must be attractive.

But even then grammar can appear forbidding on account of the heaping up of much dead matter that may not be needed by ordinary mortals. There may also be a lack of human touch between the author and the reader. I have made some effort to make the following pages not altogether unattractive. In a sense I have tried to keep in mind two aims, which are perhaps contradictory: to be as brief and business-like as possible, and at the same time to make the book readable. With the first object in view, everything that is not absolutely necessary for practical purposes is kept out without omitting anything that is important. With the second object in view, an attempt is made to avoid the soul-less scientific form of writing and to follow the more human and personal presentation of the matter. It is for the reader to see how far this effort to be brief and business-like, and at the same time human and familiar, has succeeded. So, without further ado I invite the reader to see for himself what is prepared for him.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Welcome to the Reader	xiii
-------------------------------	------

Part I OF WORDS

The Tools of Expression

CHAPTER

I	Parts of Speech	1
II	Nouns	3
	Proper Nouns	4
	Common Nouns	5
	Collective Nouns	5
	Nouns Changing Cases	6
	Abstract and Other Nouns	8
III	Verbs	9
	Putting the Verbs in Their Places	11
	Object	12
IV	Adjectives	13
V	Adverbs	14
	Adverbs from Adjectives	15
VI	Conjunctions	16
VII	Pronouns : Personal, Reflexive, Relative, Interrogative, Demonstrative	18
VIII	Number	21

IX	Number of Nouns : Plurals Formed	
	by Adding <i>es</i>	22
	by Changing <i>f</i> or <i>fe</i> to <i>ves</i>	25
	by Changing <i>y</i> into <i>ies</i>	25
	Plurals in <i>en</i>	26
	Plurals by Change of Vowel	26
	Singular and Plural the Same	26
	Fish and Fishes; People and Peoples	27
	Plural Form for Singular Also	27
	Two Plural Forms with Different Meanings	28
	Only Singular; Different Meanings in Singular and Plural	28
	Plural but Used as Singular	29
	Singular Used for Plural in Certain Com- binations; Plurals of Compound Words	29
	Foreign Words	30
	Collective Nouns	30
X	Number of Pronouns. Demonstrative Pro- nouns; One—Ones; Such; Interrogative and Relative Pronouns; Possessive Pro- nouns; Reflexive Pronouns	31
XI	Number of Adjectives: Some Adjectives Are Singular	34
XII	Number of Verbs: Auxiliary Verbs	35
XIII	Gender: Some Special Points; How Gender... is Denoted; Gender of Pronouns	35
XIV	Tense: Formation of Tenses	39
XV	Other Forms of Verbs, Present Participle, Infinitive	40
XVI	Degree	42

Part II

OF THE USE OF WORDS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII Use is Everything: Use Decides Transitive and Intransitive; Adverb or Preposition? ..	44
XVIII Sentence	47
XIX Clause	49
XX Phrase	51
XXI Parts of a Sentence	52
XXII Concord	53
XXIII Agreement between Subject and Predicate ..	54
And; As Well As; With; Or	55
Tyranny of the Nearest Word	56
XXIV Some Snags in Concord } When <i>or</i> joins Singular and Plural Nouns; Am or Is?	58
There Is or There Are?	59
Deceptive Singulars :—Every One, No One, Each, Many A	59
Predicate to Agree with Subject and Not with Object	61
<i>Were</i> with Singular Subject	61
XXV Adjective Sequence	62
XXVI Pronoun Sequence	63
XXVII Sense than Words	63
XXVIII Sequence of Tense	64
Where two Tenses are Right in the Same Sentence; Historic Present; Past or Present Perfect?	66

Part III

THE PARTS OF SPEECH IN ACTION

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXIX Auxiliary Verbs : Voice	68
May and Can; Will and Shall	69
xxx Pronouns: I, Me; You and I: I or Me After Comparison? Me and My; Myself; He—Him; Who—Whom; Who— Which; Which—That; And which; Im- personal Pronouns; You and We; One ..	72
xxxI Forming the Possessive: Yours, Ours, Mine. Possessive as Adjective	82
xxxII The, A and An ; The Editor and Manager ..	84
xxxIII Adverbs:	87
Modifying Prepositions	87
Modifying Conjunctions	87
xxxIV Comparative and Superlative Degrees; More and Most: <i>-er</i> and <i>-est</i> ; Rounder; Wisest of the Two; Older and Elder	87
Farther and Further	91
xxxV Prepositions. Some Helpful Rules	91
With; About and Around; Prepositions Used as Conjunctions; Like	92
In and On	94
Between and Among	94
xxxVI Conjunctions:	97
But; Or, Either, Neither	98
Incorrect Conjunctions	100

Part IV

AN ASSORTMENT OF IMPORTANT RULES

CHAPTER	PAGE
xxxvii Position of Words :	101
Modifiers and Modified; Split Infinitive; Subject and Predicate; Position of Im- portance; Only	101
Forlorn Words; Beginning with a Present Participle	104
xxxviii Negatives:	105
When to Say 'No'	105
Double Negatives	105
Negative with <i>Hardly</i> and <i>But</i>	106
xxxix Some Common Errors: Words	106
Plural or Singular; <i>Both</i> ; <i>Doesn't</i> or <i>Don't</i> ?	106
Deny or Decline? Defend the Enemy; Fear; Revenge; Too Kind; Searched the Man	107
Would You Mind? In or Under the Circumstances	108
Study or Read? Follow or Accompany? That Why; That How; Few; Little; Means	109
xl Chameleon Words:	
Lie; Hang	110
Rise and Raise	112
Soon and Quickly	112
Special and Especial	112
xli A List of Words People Trip Over	113
Same Sound but Different Spelling and Meaning	113

CHAPTER	PAGE
Same Spelling and Sound but Different Meaning	115
Different Sounds and Meanings but Similar Spelling	115
Similar but Different; Related in Meaning but Really Different	116
XLII Common Mistakes in Sentences	118
XLIII Reported Speech	120
XLIV Some Principles of Spelling	130
Capital Letters: <i>S</i> or <i>Es</i> in the Plural?	
Ys or Ies? Y + able; -able or -ible? ei or ie? ..	131
Doubling the Final Consonant	133
Why All Right but Already?	134
Fulfil, Skilful	134
C in Noun and S in Verb	135
Different Spellings in Different Parts of Speech; -Us and -Ous	135
When to Drop <i>e</i> ; Some Commonly Misspelt Words	136
XLV Punctuation:	137
Full Stop; Comma; Semi-colon	138
Colon; Hyphen; Dash; Apostrophe; Quotation marks	143
XLVI Some Essentials of English Pronunciation	148
XLVII Correct English Tests	151

PART I

OF WORDS

The Tools of Expression

CHAPTER I

PARTS OF SPEECH

THE old grammarians began with what they called Parts of Speech. They were quite right in doing so.

Words are tools of expression; and no sensible workman will ever start on his work without understanding the nature of the tools he is to use.

Besides, we begin our adventure in speech with words—single words; and then only, combinations of them—whether phrases, clauses or sentences.

A little child begins to show its dawning intelligence by strident appeals to its Mamma and then to its Papa. Food engages the young animal's attention, and words like *milk*, *water*, *bread* and *orange*, are shaped by the baby lips with such originality as wins the parents' hearts. These first words that the baby lips are all names of persons or things. And these words which are names are called *NOUNS*.

Very soon in the life of the child there comes the need of speaking about doing something. It has to ask its mother to come or to go. Somehow the child manages to express its wish, and the words used to show the doing of something are *VERBS*.

I believe the next stage in the growth of the child's intellectual activity is the denoting of effects produced upon its five senses. Colours, taste, size and sound call for expression. The red fruit, the hot milk, the big cup—all these the little child will have to speak of. Thus is reached a third