

# LIVING ENGLISH STRUCTURE

A PRACTICE BOOK FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS  
AND KEY

*By*

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## **LIVING ENGLISH STRUCTURE**

*By the same author*

LIVING ENGLISH SPEECH

LIVING ENGLISH STRUCTURE FOR SCHOOLS

## INTRODUCTION

THE common problems of English language structure have to be overcome by all students, and the difficulties they find are similar in all parts of the world. Regional differences can always be dealt with by the teacher, who should be aware of the particular problems of his students. The following general principles are self-evident:

1. All students want to speak, write and read the normal accepted English of today.

2. This can only be achieved by constant practice of existing forms, with some rational explanation of the grammatical devices employed, wherever this is possible.

The exercises in this book have been devised over a period of eight years, and are the results of practical experience with classes of foreign adults, including students of Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic, and Arabic origin. All the exercises have been tried out and found practicable, and I hope they will prove useful and valuable to many other teachers of English.

### How the book should be used

This book is an attempt to answer the foreign student's grammatical problems empirically, and to give him a large number of appropriate exercises to practise them. An English schoolboy does "grammar" as an analytical exercise, but the foreign student needs to learn the mechanics of the language. Most existing grammar books are designed for the English schoolboy, and even a large number of those that are intended for foreigners have not managed to free themselves entirely from the purely analytical point of view.

Teachers will find in this book a great deal that is unconventional, perhaps even revolutionary, for it does not pretend to tell the student what he OUGHT TO SAY in English, but tries to show him what IS ACTUALLY SAID. Many of the exercises are based on the results of personal "structure-counts"—in

imitation of "word-counts"—carried out while listening to the speech of educated English people over considerable periods. A great deal of thought has been given to the use of tenses and auxiliary verbs, and a proportionately large amount of space devoted to them.

The division of the exercises into Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced is a rough guide to their suitability for various classes. The approximate grading is as follows:

*Elementary:* Up to 1½ or 2 years of English.

*Intermediate:* Up to about the standard demanded for the University of Cambridge Lower Certificate in English.

*Advanced:* Up to and beyond the University of Cambridge Proficiency in English Examination.

People may ask why the book has not been divided accordingly into three parts. But the only advantage of this would be an apparent tidiness, for experience has shown that grouping the exercises by subject is far more practical. An immediate practical advantage of this is that most cross-references in the notes will be found within a page or two of the exercise being done; whereas with a "tidy" division of the book into three graded sections such important references would send the teacher and students flying from one end of the book to the other; or in order to avoid this, the notes would have to be duplicated wastefully in each section. A less apparent advantage is a psychological one for the student. Any teacher of foreign adults knows that their standard can only be very roughly graded. An "intermediate" students' class for instance, finds it very comforting if the "elementary" exercise on a point they are not very familiar with is found only a page or so back; and it is very encouraging to be told that one has done an exercise very well, and instead of leaving out the next exercise, marked "advanced," to be allowed to have a shot at that also.

The vocabulary is graded as well as the structures used, but advanced exercises do not necessarily contain difficult words. Emphasis is on form throughout, and as much variety

as possible has been introduced without concealing the structure to be practised among a welter of unnecessarily complicated words. The material is arranged in rough structural groups, the subject-matter and grading of the exercises being linked together within each group. The index at the back is very full, and for the sake of simplicity references are all to exercise numbers instead of pages.

The purpose of this book is to provide ample material for teaching classes of adult students. As the exercises are designed primarily for oral practice, teachers may make whatever changes they think necessary if they wish to use some of them for written work. Much of the material in the notes will be familiar, and so no space has been wasted in needless elaboration. Many ideas appear for the first time in a form that can be practised, e.g. "fairly and rather," the unreal past, certain response devices, etc., etc. Some ideas are new, or frankly unorthodox, and here the teacher's notes are more fully set out. For example, in order to help promote a clearer and less clumsy spoken style, "which" and "whom" have been rigorously excluded from the Defining Relative, and end-prepositions insisted on; but end-prepositions are not allowed in the Non-defining Relatives. The bias towards speech structure has made me banish "whom" altogether from Interrogatives. Teachers who still have a liking for "To whom do you think you are talking?" or "For whom do you take me?" may reinstate the word where they think fit! The future tense is approached from a new angle, notionally instead of formally, bringing several familiar speech devices into a rational form for the first time.

Since ninety per cent. of this book consists of practice for the student, the notes should be developed where necessary into appropriate blackboard work prior to working through the exercise.

"My boy-friend Cyril" and "my girl-friend Maisie" of the Intermediate exercises are, needless to say, quite fictitious. I hope no zealous teacher ever asks for a character sketch of Cyril or Maisie from his students—I shudder to think of the consequences.

## INTRODUCTION

Grateful acknowledgements are due to several people. Firstly, to my wife, who did invaluable work copying, adding to, compiling from and checking the original manuscript, and without whose help this book would probably never have been completed. Ideas and advice were freely given by some of my colleagues in the British Council, notably Mr. A. C. Cawley, Mr. David Hicks, Mr. Norman Whitworth, and Mr. Rylands. Nor should I forget the very thankless task of Miss Porteous, of the Egypt Office of the British Council, who typed out the hundreds of manuscript pages of the first draft. My sincere thanks are due to all of them.

W. STANNARD ALLEN

## REFERENCE BOOKS

THERE are few reliable reference books for problems of living English structure. The following can be safely recommended and are indeed invaluable to any teacher of English to foreigners:

*A Grammar of English Words*, Harold E. Palmer  
*A Grammar of Spoken English*, Harold E. Palmer.  
*Essentials of English Grammar*, Otto Jespersen.  
*Modern English Usage*, H. W. Fowler.

## NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THIS edition contains a key to all the exercises, and not only to the more difficult ones.

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## Section 1

### COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES

#### EXERCISE 1. Elementary

*Note:* Things we cannot count have no indefinite article, and usually no plural.

*Examples:* ink, water, wood.

*Put into the plural:*

1. A dog is an animal.
2. A potato is a vegetable.
3. A student is not always good.
4. A chair is made of wood.
5. A husband is a man.
6. A pencil is like a pen.
7. An eye is blue or brown.
8. A fish can swim.
9. A cow gives milk.
10. A picture is pretty.
11. A room is a bedroom, a sitting-room or a dining-room.
12. A garden has a tree.
13. We drink tea out of a cup.
14. An apple grows on a tree.
15. A mother is kind to a little child.
16. A girl likes a sweet.
17. A teacher is a man or a woman.
18. A fly is an insect.
19. A dog hates a cat.
20. A box has a lid.
21. A chicken is a bird.
22. A cat eats meat.
23. We can make a cake with flour, milk and an egg.
24. We fill our pen with ink.
25. A writer writes a book.

**EXERCISE 2. Elementary**

*Put into the singular:*

1. Horses are animals.
2. Balls are toys.
3. Novels are books.
4. Boots are kinds of shoes.
5. Watches are small clocks.
6. Tables are pieces of furniture.
7. Roses are beautiful flowers.
8. Frenchmen are Europeans.
9. Girls wear dresses.
10. Children are not always good.
11. There are always tables and chairs in dining-rooms.
12. Exercises are not always easy for beginners.
13. Hungry boys eat large dinners.
14. Stockings are long socks.
15. Soldiers are brave men.
16. Coats have collars.
17. Nouns are words.
18. Houses have roofs.
19. Postmen wear caps.
20. Oranges are good to eat.
21. Classrooms have blackboards.
22. Dogs are good friends to men.
23. Pounds buy more than shillings.
24. Cities are big towns.
25. Schools are large buildings.

**EXERCISE 3. Elementary**

*Note:* Remember that only countables take "a" or "an".

*Add "a" or "an" where necessary:*

1. . . . cigarette is made of . . . tobacco and . . . paper.
2. . . . milk comes from . . . cow.
3. We make . . . butter and . . . cheese from . . . milk.
4. . . . window is made of . . . glass.
5. . . . handkerchief is made of . . . piece of cloth.

6. . . . grass always grows in . . . English field.
7. . . . chair is made of . . . wood.
8. . . . cat has . . . tail.
9. . . . man eats . . . meat.
10. . . . ring is made of . . . gold or . . . silver.
11. . . . coffee is . . . drink.
12. . . . coat is made of . . . wool
13. . . . fish swims in . . . water.
14. We can write . . . letter on . . . paper.
15. . . . piano makes . . . music.
16. . . . iron is . . . metal.
17. . . . bread is made from . . . flour, and . . . flour is made from . . . wheat.
18. . . . orange grows on . . . tree.
19. . . . child must have . . . food.
20. . . . sugar is nice in . . . cup of tea.
21. We eat . . . soup with . . . spoon.
22. . . . knife is made of . . . metal.
23. . . . cow eats . . . grass in . . . summer.
24. I like . . . jam on . . . piece of . . . bread.
25. I can write . . . letter in . . . ink or with . . . pencil.

#### EXERCISE 4. Elementary

*Note:* Uncountable nouns, and countables in the plural are preceded by "some" when "a certain quantity, or number" is implied.

*Examples:* Bread is good for us. (All bread, in general.)  
Give me some bread. (A certain quantity.)

*Add "a," "an," or "some" where necessary:*

1. . . . table has four legs.
2. We can write on . . . paper or on . . . blackboard.
3. . . . apple has . . . sweet taste.
4. . . . fruit is very good to eat.
5. Please give me . . . milk.
6. There is . . . dirt on this plate and . . . dirty mark on the tablecloth.

7. ... man gave me ... books this morning.
8. ... good pupil is never late for ... lesson.
9. ... book about ... philosophy is not good for ... child.
10. Put ... lemon in your soup instead of ... salt.
11. I want ... glass of ... lemonade with ... sugar in it.
12. ... bed made of ... iron is better than one made of ... wood.
13. ... Australian sheep give us ... very good wool.
14. You must write in ... ink; here is ... pen.
15. Give me ... ink to write ... letter.
16. Do you take ... sugar in ... tea?
17. ... garden usually has ... flowers in it.
18. I like ... music very much.
19. ... house made of ... stone can be very pretty.
20. There is ... pencil and ... writing-paper.

### EXERCISE 5. Intermediate

*Note:* Some words are countable or uncountable according to context.

*Say which of the following words take the indefinite article; notice which words can be either countable or uncountable; make sentences with these.*

air	darkness	breath	literature	soup
bacon	class	artist	marmalade	sunshine
book	foreigner	friendship	camel	sleep
beef	daytime	pin	music	tennis
shop	dirt	hair	mutton	smoke
butter	mountain	help	news	truth
apple	dress	corner	poetry	wireless
step	fish	vacuum	poem	rain
cheese	drink	ice	sand	glass
clothing	grass	ink	sea	onion
coffee	stupidity	storm	sky	garlic

Can you suggest why this last word is an apparent exception; why is it so rarely a countable? Consider other words like it; mint, celery, rhubarb, etc.: what have they in common?

**EXERCISE 6. Intermediate**

Exclamations with "What a . . . !" (= countables singular).

"What . . . !" (= plural, and uncountables).

(Notice in particular No. 20.)

*Complete the following exclamations:*

1. . . . good idea!
2. . . . grand ideas you have!
3. . . . name to give a dog!
4. . . . horrible song!
5. . . . awful news!
6. . . . nonsense he speaks!
7. . . . charming girl!
8. . . . lovely eyes she has!
9. . . . cheek! . . . impudence!
10. . . . silly mistake to make!
11. . . . hard sentences these are!
12. . . . clever student you are!
13. . . . bad time he has had!
14. . . . beautiful music they are playing!
15. . . . fun your girl-friend Maisie is!
16. . . . strange name to give a dog!
17. . . . funny thing to say!
18. . . . dark hair you have!
19. . . . good meat this is!
20. . . . pity your boy-friend Cyril couldn't come!

**EXERCISE 7. Elementary**

*Note:* We rarely say "A chair is in the corner." The existence of any indefinite person or thing is usually introduced by "There is," etc.

*Examples:* The broken chair is in the corner (= chair defined).

There is a chair in the corner (= any chair).

See also Exercise 221.

*Supply "a," "an," "the" or "some" where necessary:*

1. . . . children love . . . fruit.
2. . . . child ran across . . . street

3. . . . red book is on . . . table by . . . window.
4. It is pleasant to read . . . book in . . . afternoon.
5. . . . books are interesting for . . . child.
6. There is . . . garden behind . . . house.
7. I have . . . pen and . . . pencil.
8. . . . tea is very hot, I must put . . . milk in it.
9. . . . postman has just put . . . letter under . . . door.
10. Give me . . . knife and . . . small spoon.
11. . . . cat loves . . . milk.
12. . . . cats often sit on . . . roof of our house.
13. Mary wants . . . doll with . . . blue eyes.
14. You must give him . . . food and . . . cup of coffee.
15. . . . car made . . . loud noise.
16. Can you play . . . violin?
17. . . . vegetables are good for . . . health.
18. . . . girls do not often wear . . . hats.
19. I have . . . new dress with . . . long sleeves.
20. . . . door of . . . garage is broken.
21. There are . . . beautiful flowers in . . . park.
22. I want . . . glass of . . . milk.
23. . . . student at . . . back of . . . class is reading . . . newspaper.
24. It is not good to smoke . . . cigarette before . . . meal.
25. . . . page of . . . book is torn.

### EXERCISE 8. Intermediate

*Note:* Compare the following:

- (a) There is *a* horse in the garden (= any indefinite).
- (b) *Horses* are animals (= all).
- (c) Perhaps we shall see *some* horses there (= indefinite, not all).
- (d) *The* horses are ready (= definite horses we know about).

*Supply "a," "an," "the," or "some" where necessary:*

1. There is . . . fly in . . . lemonade.
2. . . . luggage is on . . . platform.
3. . . . birds can fly very high in . . . sky.



4. ... book on that shelf is ... interesting one about ... history.
5. ... life without ... wife is ... life without ... strife.
6. It is pleasant to play ... game of ... tennis on ... summer afternoon.
7. He makes ... toys in ... evening.
8. ... butcher opposite ... library always sells ... good meat.
9. ... cat may look at ... king.
10. ... donkeys are ... stupid animals.
11. Put ... butter on ... potatoes.
12. I am fond of ... apples with ... cheese.
13. ... honesty is ... best of all ... virtues.
14. He took up ... swimming as ... sport ... last year.
15. He always smokes ... cigarette with ... cup of ... coffee.
16. I should like ... house in ... country.
17. We had ... dinner at ... new restaurant ... last night.
18. Let's get ... strawberries for ... tea.
19. Take ... umbrella with you to ... office, it may rain.
20. ... car is ready now.
21. Jack and Jill went up ... hill to fetch ... pail of ... water.
22. Do you prefer ... book of ... poetry or ... stories of ... adventure?
23. I want ... tin of ... peaches, ... sugar, and ... pound of ... raspberry jam.
24. ... clouds over ... sea are lovely today.
25. My girl-friend Maisie travelled in ... third-class carriage with ... Americans.