

SELF-AIDS IN ENGLISH USAGE

O'ROURKE

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In English Usage

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Foreword to the Teacher

The mastery of good English usage in speech and writing presents different problems for each individual. Variations in background, reading habits, and associations affect the attainment of language abilities to a considerably greater degree than they affect attainment in other subjects of study. Added to these variations are those of native mental ability that affect all learning. It is apparent, therefore, that efficient and successful teaching of correct English usage demands a method that is flexible and individualized, adaptable to the particular needs of each student. *Self-Aids in English Usage* provides such a method. One of the guiding principles in its planning and preparation has been that the student should be able to discover and to concentrate his study upon the points that he himself has not mastered.

Another guiding principle has been the recognition that points of English usage vary both in seriousness and in difficulty of mastery. It is now generally agreed that some deviations from standards of correctness are much more objectionable and a much greater handicap to those who commit them than are other deviations.

On the question of difficulty, extensive studies conducted by the author over a period of years have provided data showing relative difficulties not only of different usage principles but also of different applications of the same principles. For example, two somewhat similar applications of the rule that a singular subject requires a singular verb are of widely varying difficulty. Records obtained show that 81 per cent of eighth-grade pupils correctly use a singular verb after a subject including *one*, such as *one of the men*, while only 14 per cent use the correct form of the verb after a subject including *neither*, such as *neither of the employees*. It is noteworthy that many of the most difficult usages are also those that authorities in the field of language usage agree are least essential.

The practical application of these important principles has resulted in the development of *Self-Aids in English Usage*, which embodies method and content that have been success-

fully used for eighth- and ninth-grade language courses, for high-school and college-freshmen review, for business schools, adult classes, and for training classes of employees in industry and government.

At the start of the book (pages 1 and 2) the student takes a short Preview Test which he himself corrects, using the answer key given on page 182. This test includes typical usages that are treated in the three parts of the book. Part One of the book covers usages that are essential for a passable degree of correctness in speech and writing. In the second part are drilled usages that are of lesser importance but that should be correctly used by educated persons. In the third part the least essential correct usages are covered.

There is no passing score on this test; it is intended to aid the student in discovering some of his difficulties in English usage and to indicate how these problems may be overcome. The student may, if he wishes, merely compare his answers with those given in the Self-Correction and Guidance Section, to determine how many of his answers are correct. If he wishes to know *why* his incorrect answers are not correct, he may find in the Reference Section the numbered rule governing the answer. For example, the number 30 following item 1 refers to the explanation of the use of the verb *lie*.

Following the Preview Test there is a short section in which are given brief definitions and examples of the parts of speech and a few other fundamental grammatical concepts that are necessary for the understanding and use of correct English. Some practice exercises in recognizing them in sentences are included. All students may profitably perform these exercises in order to review and refresh their knowledge of grammatical terminology.

The usage drills in Part One begin on page 6. Before assigning these drills the teacher should read the directions to the user (pages ix to xii) with the class and make sure that all understand how to do the exercises and use the Reference Section and the Self-Correction and Guidance Section.

The Reference Section (beginning on page 108) consists of clear, brief statements of the rules of usage, each illustrated by examples that make clear its application. At the beginning of the Reference Section the parts of speech and essential sentence elements are defined and illustrated, so that the student who is not familiar with these terms may acquire sufficient knowledge of them to understand and apply the rules of their use.

In the Self-Correction and Guidance Section are given the correct answers for all the drill items. Each answer is followed by the number of the rule in the Reference Section that covers the point involved.

The organization and content of this book provide for individualized study with maximum economy of time and effort. The student, following the directions given on pages ix to xii, completes a drill exercise on, for example, verbs in Part One. He then turns to the Self-Correction and Guidance Section and compares his answers with those given in the book. The Reference Section numbers beside the incorrect answers that he has given show him just which rules he needs to study. He turns to them and studies them. He need not spend time on rules that he already applies correctly. Then he goes on to the next drill exercise. His correction of this exercise shows him whether he has mastered the points he missed in the previous exercise or whether he needs further practice on them. Subsequent review exercises show him whether he is maintaining his verb mastery or needs to go back for further practice. Practice tests which, like the drill exercises, are corrected by the student himself, enable him at frequent intervals to check on his progress. These are followed by parallel Progress Tests, administered and corrected by the teacher, which give the teacher an objective measure of each pupil's attainment and an indication of what points need to be emphasized for study by the class as a whole.

Numerous advantages of the above described organization and method will be at once apparent, but the more important ones may be stated briefly as follows:

1. The student who starts with poor mastery and whose ability is limited is enabled to concentrate on the most essential points and on the ones with which he has most difficulty. He is not handicapped by having to spend his time on points that he may never be able to master and that are of secondary importance.

2. The more advanced and more able students are not held back by someone else's difficulties. They can progress at a rate determined by their own ability and application.

3. Correction by students of their own work relieves the teacher of much of the clerical work of correcting exercises. Nothing except the Survey, Progress, and Achievement Tests (see page viii) need be corrected by the teacher. For the daily drills, a periodic inspection of notebooks or work sheets is sufficient to insure that pupils are checking their answers correctly.

4. The most important phases of usage are taken up first, and mastery of them is assured before pupils go on to less essential phases.

5. Older pupils and adult classes may use the book with a minimum of teacher aid, thus conserving time urgently needed by most teachers.

6. The book may be successfully used by individuals studying alone. For example, the employed adult may use it at home. Or a high-school

student whose class work in English is on literature or composition, but who is deficient in usage, may be given *Self-Aids* for individual study.

A Survey Test, an Achievement Test, and Progress Tests for use with the book are printed in the Teacher's Manual, which is available from the publishers of *Self-Aids*. Each teacher of a class using *Self-Aids* may reproduce these tests, by mimeograph or other method, for administration to the class. The Survey Test should be given at the start of the course and the parallel Achievement Test at the conclusion of the course. Comparison of the results of the two tests can thus form the basis for giving final grades.

The teacher should impress upon the students that they gain nothing, but rather suffer disadvantage to themselves, by using the Self-Correction and Guidance Section to find the correct answers before writing their own solutions. It should be pointed out that such evasion of study will readily be detected through the Progress Tests, which the teacher administers and scores.

Students who are poor in spelling should be referred to the spelling drills beginning on page 178. The sentences on page 181 contain additional words often misspelled by high school students and college freshmen; these words may be reviewed profitably by all students.

It is believed that, through the use of this book, teachers will achieve a noteworthy improvement in student mastery of English usage, and at the same time conserve a very considerable amount of their own teaching time and energies.

How to Use This Book

This book is intended to help you meet accepted standards of good oral and written English by concentrating your study upon the points that are troublesome to you. You study the points on which you make mistakes, and not those that you already use correctly. You thus overcome your language and grammar difficulties with the least possible waste of time and energy. By using *Self-Aids* as directed below, you will soon find that you are making rapid progress toward the goal of good English in speaking and writing.

Following the directions given at the top of page 1, take the Preview Test on pages 1 and 2. Then turn to page 182 and compare your answers with those given on that page. There is no passing score on the test, but the incorrect answers will indicate the nature of some of your difficulties in English usage which will be overcome through your use of this book.

Next, to review and refresh your knowledge of grammar, work the ten practice exercises on pages 3, 4, and 5.

The usage drill exercises begin on page 6. On each succeeding page a new exercise is presented. Simple directions are given at the top of each page, or a reference is given to directions on a preceding page. The exercises are of several different types, which should be done as follows:

I. On page 6 there are eighteen sentences, each sentence presenting two choices in parentheses. The following is an example of the kind of sentences found on page 6:

We finished the work before Mr. Harris (came—come) back.

Only one choice in each sentence is correct. Following the directions at the top of page 6, decide which you believe is correct and write it on your paper beside the number of the sentence. Do not study, before writing your answer, the rule of English usage that the sentence illustrates. Write your answers for all the items on page 6. Then turn to page 184, in the Self-Correction and Guidance Section. Under the heading *Page 6* you will find the correct answers for all the sentences on that page. Compare your answers with the ones in the book. Draw a single line through each one of your answers that is incorrect. Beside each

wrong answer write the number or numbers printed beside the correct answer in the Self-Correction and Guidance Section. On a record sheet like that given on page 202, note the number of wrong answers you had and the rule numbers that cover those items.

You have now found out which of the verbs in the lesson on page 6 you did *not* use correctly. Without spending further time on the items that you answered correctly, you can now proceed at once to find out *why* you were wrong in some cases and what rule should guide you in using the correct form in your speech and writing.

Turn to the Reference Section, which begins on page 108. Each rule in the Reference Section is numbered, and the number that you wrote after your incorrect answer is the number of the rule that will enable you to correct that mistake and avoid it in future.

Find the rule covering each incorrect choice that you made. Study each rule and see how it applies to the sentence in which you made the mistake.

In later lessons you will have opportunities to apply these rules again and again, so that you can observe your gradual mastery of each principle of correct usage.

II. On page 7 a second type of lesson is introduced. There are no choices presented in any of the sentences on this page, but most of the sentences contain one or more errors in the use of verbs. For each sentence you must decide whether there is an error; then, if so, correct it.

First decide what is wrong in line 1. Then decide how the error should be corrected, and write the correction on your paper. For example, suppose the first sentence were:

Mrs. Howell set down and talked to us.

Your correction would be: 1. *sat*

If a line contains no error, write *C* beside the number of that line on your paper. When you have finished the drill, correct your work just as you corrected your answers for page 6, record the results, and study the rules for items missed.

III. On page 9 a third type of lesson is introduced. This type is called a Reference Section Drill. It gives you practice in finding and applying rules covering items met with in preceding exercises. Lessons like

those on pages 6 and 7 are aimed especially at helping you to form the *habit* of using correct English. The Reference Section drills are planned to help you to recognize the principle on which the correct habit is based.

In the Reference Section drills, do *not* write any answers until you have looked up the rules that apply. To look up the rules, proceed as follows. Suppose the first sentence were:

John was always wrong, no matter what he (done—did).

Perhaps you feel sure that you know which choice is correct. In the Reference Section drills, however, the object is not merely to give the correct answer to the sentence, but rather to recognize the rule of usage that applies to the sentence and then to apply it. How do you find the rule that covers the correct choice between *did* and *done* in the sample sentence above? At the head of the Reference Section drill sentences is a list of rule numbers. Turn to these rules in the Reference Section. Read them over one by one. Notice the examples following each rule. You will soon come to a rule which tells when to use *did* and when to use *done*. Check this rule against the sentence, and be sure you see *why* one choice is right and the other choice wrong. Then write the correct answer in your column headed *Correct Form*. Do this for each drill sentence. Sometimes a rule will tell, for example, how to choose between the singular and the plural form of a verb, but will not specifically mention the particular verb given in the drill sentence. The rule gives the general principle covering all such verb forms, however, and so it is the rule to follow. On some pages, not all the rules listed at the top of the page are drilled. On other pages, some rules are drilled twice.

When you have completed the drill, check your work with the Self-Correction and Guidance Section.

Exercises of this type give you practice in detecting and correcting errors that you make in your speech and writing.

IV. The exercise on page 10, called a Review Test, is like the one on page 7, in that there are no choices presented. Correct it in the same way as the one on page 7.

V. At intervals throughout the book, practice tests are given. The first is on page 13. Each of them is in form very much like the review test exercise on page 10. To do the prac-

tice tests follow the directions given for the exercises on pages 7 and 10. Record the results on your record sheet, correct your work, and study the rules covering items that you missed.

If you are studying *Self-Aids* in a class, your teacher will probably give a Progress Test after each practice test. The teacher corrects the Progress Tests, which are similar to the practice tests that you yourself have corrected. The Progress Tests enable the teacher to check on your progress in mastery of the principles covered in the practice tests. Note on your record sheet your scores on the Progress Tests.

In your work with *Self-Aids*, *never* refer to the printed answers in the Self-Correction and Guidance Section until you have written your own answers to an exercise. To look up the answers before writing them would destroy the value of the exercise. If you do so when studying alone, you will cheat yourself and waste your time. If you are studying in a class directed by a teacher, each Progress Test corrected by the teacher will show your failure to master the points involved, if you have simply been copying the answers to drill exercises and practice tests. The printed answers are valuable to you only after you have first tried to give the correct answers yourself. Then the printed answers will show you exactly what points you need to study, enabling you to concentrate your efforts economically and profitably on the phases of correct English that you have still to master.

Many people who make few errors in English usage in writing make frequent errors in their daily speech. To overcome oral errors, you will find it helpful to make notes of the errors that you make or hear your associates make. From time to time, lists of errors heard might be compiled by your class, and the whole class might devote time to special study and practice of the rules covering the errors that are frequent among the members of the group. Of course, in reporting errors no mention should be made of the name of the person who made the error.

On pages 104, 105, and 106 you will find a Comprehensive Test on important points of usage. Take this test as soon as you have completed the book.

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Preview Test

Write numbers on a strip of paper to correspond to the numbers before the sentences on this page and the next. Write your answers on your strip of paper; do not write on this page.

Some of the sentences contain errors. If a sentence is correct, write C after its number on your strip of paper. If a sentence is incorrect, make the least possible change that will correct it.

Examples: We was there yesterday. ----- *were*
Where are my gloves at? ----- *Omit "at."*

1. We have just persuaded Grandmother to lay down for a nap.
2. All were surprised that he gave Harry and me credit for the idea.
3. She gave me a rare and beautiful african violet.
4. The situation was critical, the countries were on the verge of war.
5. These kind of flowers last hardly a day.
6. The director who differs from the other board members is absent.
7. Both Jane and Ann can type, but Ann is the most accurate typist.
8. Lee is the only graduate whom I was told has accepted a position.
9. Dr. Marsh said that we could refer to our textbooks if necessary.
10. The kinds of work people do may be grouped as follows, work with other people, work with ideas and symbols, and work with things.
11. Several persons answered the advertisement and the morning news-paper has a large circulation.
12. Either Mr. Sidney or Mr. Bond intend to go to the convention.
13. Hadn't you ought to plaster those holes before painting?
14. During snowstorms we have had some real bad traffic snarls.
15. The peacetime defense policy of the United States in the past, has been based on the facts of our geographic position.
16. Everyone agrees that Mr. Long is a better critic than a composer.
17. Mr. Cox is the designer and the supervising engineer of the project.
18. The experts expected the winner to be him.
19. Is each of the members to cast their vote separately?
20. This new saw cuts easier than the old one.
21. The scenery, together with the winter sports, attract many visitors.

22. John is one of those boys who likes playing more than eating.
23. He has completed the training course so that he might be promoted.
24. An essential part of the plan is, its provision for open discussion.
25. Peggy or Hazel has dropped their scissors on the floor.
26. Whoever he selects as supervisor will move into the small office.
27. The girl said that she enjoyed the book *Roof Over our Heads*.
28. Allen's and Marie's new dog has not been inoculated.
29. The heirs will sell the property and divide up the proceeds.
30. The letters are in the basket that you have already signed.
31. The peonies, that you planted last October, are blooming.
32. We shall take advantage of Bill's kindness, who has offered to drive.
33. Neither of the schools offer the four-year course he desires.
34. Like her, I noticed that the drawer had been opened.
35. The reason he has not replied is because he needs more information.
36. Anesthesia is when there is entire or partial loss of sensation.
37. Today the maid cleaned, swept, dusted, and hung the new curtains.
38. What did the contestant say was the distance around the earth?
39. I think it was he to whom the speaker referred.
40. Praising our efforts, Monday's goal was announced by the director.
41. The dog looked like he did not understand the command.
42. He will teach me indexing and how to prepare a table of contents.
43. There are many differences among the various types of containers.
44. Less than a hundred cards remain to be filed.
45. Mr. Abbott and myself will try to find the original order.
46. A Major and two privates were witnesses of the accident.
47. The table shows the number of persons who die with cancer annually.
48. The board, having made their inspection, is ready to report.
49. Until invited to enter, the big room with its costly machinery was not examined by any of the visitors.
50. We can use as many if not more than we used last month.

After you have finished, compare your answers with the answers on page 182.

Parts of Speech and Other Grammatical Terms

The classifications into which words are grouped according to their functions in sentences are called *parts of speech*. The different parts of speech are defined in the Reference Section (rules 5—14).

Names, such as *subject*, *predicate*, and *object*, are given to the parts of a sentence to describe their relation to the rest of the sentence (rules 1, 17a, 67, 68, 69, 71).

In the exercises that follow, practice is given in identifying the various parts of speech and in analyzing sentences according to their grammatical structure.

The following sentences are to be used in doing Exercise 1. Directions for the exercise follow the sentences.

1. The excited men listened attentively while their leader spoke.
2. Harry's study of mathematics and electricity is helping him in his new job.
3. Everyone who takes this course learns thoroughly a few basic mechanical principles.
4. "Oh," exclaimed Ruth, "I forgot that she was alone!"
5. Bob tries hard, but he never makes a high score when he is playing with anyone except you or me.
6. A large reward was offered by Mrs. Allen for the return of the papers that she had carelessly lost.

Exercise 1. On a sheet of paper write eight headings, as follows: Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions, Interjections. Then write each word in each of the first three sentences under the correct heading.

Example. John turned quickly to his sister when he heard the loud noise.

Nouns	Pron.	Verbs	Adj.	Adv.	Prep.	Conj.	Interj.
John	his	turned	the	quickly	to	when	
sister	he	heard	loud				
noise							

Then check your work with the Self-Correction and Guidance Section (page 183). If you made any mistakes, turn to the rules indicated and study them. Then go on to sentences 4 to 6 and list all the words in them according to parts of speech. Check your work with the Self-Correction and Guidance Section.

Sentences 7 to 15 are to be used in doing Exercises 2 to 10, which give practice in analyzing the grammatical structure of sentences. When you have finished these exercises, check your work with the answers given on pages 183 and 184.

7. My brother Charles will write Harold a letter in a few days.
8. Yesterday a girl from Indiana interviewed Mr. Sims about a job.
9. All the men who had passed the test went to the plant and began to work immediately.
10. Carlton and his brother told us that they couldn't come to the meeting.
11. Whoever made this model is an expert craftsman and has real scientific ability.
12. Martin showed Florence the phonograph and Mrs. Cole gave her some records to play.
13. We had expected the shipment on Wednesday, but now we can not promise you delivery before Monday.
14. The man who has offered to show us how to repair the radio is Ferris.
15. After a few months' training, Joan will be an expert stenographer; then she will be able to apply for the job she wants.

Exercise 2. Write the subject of each of sentences 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Then write the predicate of each sentence.

Exercise 3. Write the number of each of sentences 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13 in a column. Beside each number write the prepositional phrase or phrases that you find in that sentence. If the sentence does not contain any prepositional phrase, write "none."

Exercise 4. Write the number of each of sentences 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 in a column. Beside each number write the subordinate clause that you find in that sentence. If the sentence does not contain a subordinate clause, write "none."