

ENGLISH COMPOSITION

FOR

SENIOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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PREFACE

When teaching the senior students English, I always felt the want of a satisfactory textbook on English composition. The pressure of the teaching hours which frequently amounted to more than thirty a week, again, restrained me from writing one. The alternative I resorted to was classroom lectures in the course of teaching classics or modern writings, and the blackboard became my manuscript. That is my experience some seven years ago.

To-day there is still no English composition textbook for the Chinese student. There is indeed a lot of such books written by and for the English or the Americans, but applied to the practical teaching or learning of us Chinese, their organization as well as the emphasis they put on instruction, does not seem to me to be of any great avail. This impels me to the writing of this book. In writing this book, I have constantly kept one point as my criterion, namely, training the student to be able to write simple and clear English. Truly, no writing can be good without simplicity and clearness, and the modern tendency is especially towards these two qualities. With its unserviceableness the old pedantic style of bombastic, long-drawn structures is now out-of-date; it must be swept aside.

Clearness and simplicity are, or rather is, the primary aim of this book. This aim speaks for itself throughout all the lessons it contains. All the lessons and examples

try to give a clear and thorough exposition of the simple and clear organic of a sentence, a paragraph, or a composition. They are so proportioned as to leave, in each hour, upon the student's mind an integral impression of a part of correct structure. A complete knowledge of the good structure of a whole composition is what this book intends to furnish the student.

Many books on English composition begin with the discussion of whole composition, and end with that of sentences. I do not think such arrangement is practically good. I do not believe the student can write good compositions before he can write good sentences. This book tells first how to compose words into sentences, and then how to compose sentences into paragraphs, and lastly how to compose paragraphs into whole compositions. This arrangement is based on the practical process of learning, and I hope it may be practically beneficial to the student.

The examples and exercises in this book, I must say, are merely suggestive. The teacher is recommended the use of his own, if any, examples and exercises selected from the classics or modern writings he teaches and the use of subjects which, he thinks, are more familiar and interesting to the students or more suitable to the occasion.

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CHAPTER I

SIMPLE SENTENCE

LESSON I

AGREEMENT BETWEEN SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

The sun rises. The flowers bloom. We take a walk
along the seashore. The waves roll on. The birds
send melodies into the air.

In each of the foregoing examples there is one subject and one predicate only. A sentence that consists of one subject and one predicate is a simple sentence.

The subject and the predicate of a sentence must agree in person and number. The subject may be singular or plural, or singular in form but plural in sense, or plural in form but singular in sense. In any case, the predicate must agree with the subject in number. That is, if the subject is singular, the predicate must be singular; if the subject is plural, the predicate must be plural.

The *Pacific Ocean* WASHES the shores of Asia and America.

The *aëroplanes* PROTECT the country from air raid.

The *people* in Greenland HUNT whales for living. The
committee ARE unanimous on the adoption of this bill.

The *news* from the front HAS STIRRED the people all over the country. The *means* for the maintenance of this association IS sufficient for another ten years.

The subject of a sentence may be the speaker himself, or the person spoken to, or the person or thing spoken of. Whatever person it may be, it must have its particular predicate. The first person cannot take the predicate of a second or third person; nor can the second person take that of the first or third; nor can we apply that of the first or the second to the third.

I row a boat on the lake every moony night. We shall reach the summit of the mountain by noon.

You have delivered an excellent address. You must assemble in the hall every Monday morning.

Fletcher intends to complete the course in three years.

They study engineering in Denmark. To build ten thousand miles of railway across the hinterland costs thirty million dollars. It is impossible for the self-abandoned people to stand against the powerful nations. Flying from London to Singapore takes about one week. Only the far-sighted is really independent and free from care. Exploitation of the weak by the strong, of the poor by the rich, is, eventually, the suicide of humanity.

EXERCISE 1

Fill the blanks with the correct verb forms:

1. The public at large — (to be) growing steadily more restive.
2. From America to the Northwest Frontier of India and from Northern Australia to France there — (to be) movements of importance to the peace and prosperity of mankind in birth or in being.

3. European capitalism of the two most original kinds — (to be) the rationalized economy of Germany and the traditional economy of England — (to be) dying.
4. The remarkable mail facilities along this road — (to be) an entertainment to delight any person weary of watching an endless string of mallee flash by.
5. The people of these parts — (to have), as a post-box, a fruit-packing-case attached to a stake by the roadside.
6. In summer there — (to be) a number of excellent steamer services up and down the river.
7. The charm of Switzerland in winter — (to be) its wonderful scenery, the keen mountain air, the great expanses of snow glistening in the sun, the social life at the hotels and, above all, the thrill of the sports.
8. This locust swarm — (to have) plagued ever since Moses' time.
9. The small surplus above bare necessities — (to be) not left to its producers, being appropriated by priests and warriors.

LESSON 2

SUBJECTS OFTEN MISTAKEN

The student should pay attention to the agreement between subject and predicate especially when the subject is modified by a long phrase and thus separated from its predicate. The subject is not necessarily expressed in a single word. In many cases a number of words, or even a number of phrases is required to give a complete expression of a subject idea: as, *The mineral wealth of the Three Eastern Provinces of the Republic of China.*

The people on the other side of the river. A collection of rare volumes on the social organization and the prevailing social sentiments. The Purple Cloud Hollow in the vale rich in the autumnal foliage. In the foregoing examples each idea is complete with its modifiers or descriptions. Stripped of the modifiers or descriptions, it would be a puzzle to the reader as to what the mineral resources, what the people, what the collection, is or are meant and where the Purple Cloud Hollow is. As these modifiers or descriptions are so closely associated with the principal substantive, they naturally form a part of the idea. As they are but the accompaniment of the principal substantive, therefore, they cannot take a predicate of its own. The predicate must agree in number with the principal substantive of the subject idea.

The customary drawing of *departmental lines in a hard and fast way* is a most serious drawback.

The worship of *power and riches* WORKS all sorts of vices and calamities in the world.

The aspiration for *spiritual independence, intellectual enlightenment, and conscientious integrity* MAKES a happy glorious habitation out of filthy corrupted world.

Mr. Tucker in the midst of thousands of cheering delegates from all parts of the country ASSUMES the office of president of the association.

A tremendous dike together with deep dredging, careful conservancy, and wide afforestation HAS RELIEVED the country from flood.

The beams from the lighthouse to the last THROW far and wide across the rough sea.

The vital part of a community CONSISTS of the workers, the farmers, and those wage-earners by honest labor.

Contrasted with this ruling of the National Labor Board ARE the *efforts* of some National Republican Association official to outlaw those unions suspected of left-wing leadership.

At the bottom of all these troubles EXISTS the suicidal selfishness of humanity.

Between the sacrifice of immediate mercenary ends and the gratification of temporary corporeal pleasures LIES a sagacious discernment backed by a great determination.

EXERCISE 2

Fill the following blanks with the correct verb forms:

1. The cult of the heartless machines — (*to be*) surrendered to the forces of normal emotions and common sense.
2. The return of beer, and now of other beverages — (*to have*) brought about a new era of "old-fashioned" expensiveness.
3. The danger of political and economic domination of Austria's six millions by Germany's sixty millions strictly disciplined citizens, — (*to be*) a very real one.
4. The differences in the people noticed by the traveler from Bagdad to Stockholm — (*to be*) not illusions.
5. The racial peculiarity, together with the sunny and vivacious atmosphere, the mountain setting, and a foliage of southern richness, — (*to combine*) to give Capetown an air that is foreign but cordial.
6. The parable of the laborers in the vineyard and the penny a day — (*to make*) no appeal to him.

LESSON 3

AGREEMENT IN THE VERB TENSE

The time of an action or of a state of being is denoted by the tense of the verb. The forms of verb tense most commonly used are nine: The past perfect denotes some action done before some particular point of the past time. The Ch'ing dynasty *had tried* some reformation before the outbreak of the revolution at Wuchang. The past indefinite denotes some past action or state of being without reference to some particular point. We *had* a pleasant voyage across the Pacific and the Atlantic two years ago. The past progressive denotes some action proceeding at some particular point of time in the past. The rain *was pouring* down on my arrival at the station. The present perfect denotes some action already done by the time of speaking. I *have waited* for you about two hours. The present indefinite denotes some action which is neither past nor future. The problem of economic depression *weighs* heavy upon the mind of the capitalists. This tense may also denote some action or state of being which holds true for all the time without particular reference to the present time. The valleys of Tigris and Euphrates *are* the cradle of our civilization. The present progressive denotes some action now proceeding on. We *are studying* the different uses of the different tenses of the verb. The present perfect continuous denotes some action or state of being which took place in the past but is now still going on and seems to continue for sometime in the near future. The violent storm *has been laying* waste many houses in

the vicinity. The future perfect denotes some action that will be done before some particular point of time in the near future. The ship *will have crossed* the Suez Canal before 5 o'clock to-morrow morning. The future indefinite denotes some action in the future without reference to a particular point. We *shall have* a gigantic navy and a powerful air fleet next year.

For regular verbs the various tenses are formed as follows:

(We, I, you, you, she, he, they) *had* conducted a thorough research into the matter before (our, my, your, your, his, her, their) joining the commission.

(We, I, you, you, he, she, they) *joined* the society last year for scientific researches.

(We, you, they) *were* preparing; or (I, he, she) *was* preparing a vast scheme for the last few years.

(We, I, you, they) *have* conquered, (he, she) *has* conquered, the difficulty, insurmountable in the general opinion.

(We, I, you, they) *live*, (he, she) *lives*, to work to help the progressive evolution of humanity.

(We, you, they) *are* making, (I) *am* making, (he, she) *is* making, a clean sweep of the corrupted impediments in the development of peaceful and prosperous society.

(We, I) *shall have* gathered, (you, he, she, they) *will have* gathered, a sufficient strength before the inauguration of the new program.

(We, I) *shall*, (you, he, she, they) *will*, start a wide campaign for mob education in the rural districts.

(We, I, you, you, they) *have been* advocating, (he, she) *has been* advocating (our, my, your, their, his, her) cause with all necessary explanations and arguments.

For irregular verbs, the formation of the various tenses is almost identical with that for the regular verbs with the singular exception in past tense and past participle; such as, *sink, sank, sunk, run, ran, run*, etc. The accessories as *will have, shall have, have, had*, are practically the same as for the regular verbs. For the correct use of the past, and past participle of the irregular verbs, the student better refer to a complement dictionary for correct information.

Ever since the building of the Transsiberian, Chinese Eastern, South Manchuria, and Peiping-Mukden railways, Manchuria *has served* as the bridge between the Far East and Europe.

An apprehensive world *is watching* the maneuvering for an A-B alliance and the course of C-B relations.

EXERCISE 3

Fill the blanks with verb forms in their proper tense:

1. The defendant — (*to break*) the law for the past seven years by employing a male servant without license.
2. Since the Great War Arabia — (*to become*) definitely good "copy" of yielding stirring, "human" stories of great courage and adventure.
3. In the War and the post-War years old cities, old routes, old civilizations of Arabia — (*to be*) then plentifully discovered.
4. The fame of "opprobrium to modern adventure" — (*to be*) the result of years of careful planning and of shrewd calculation, combined, of course,

with immense courage, endurance, and knowledge of the land.

5. Every now and then, he — (*to tire*) of the bustle and hurry of American life. He — (*to return*) to his delightful home in Frekke, a village in the Lebanon, to write books on Arabia.
6. Ever since the Revolution, Schleicher — (*to be*) the political spirit behind the War Office of Germany.
7. What — (*to be*) the position fifty years hence?
8. Thirty years later we — (*to witness*) enormous strides in the perfection and extension of signalling devices both on rail and road.
9. Russia's threat to dump a vast quantity of timber in England and in Australia — (*to cause*) these days considerable agitation in the Press.
10. Determined to capture the British market for yet another year, the Soviet timber merchants — (*to will*) vary their price so as always to undercut the lowest Scandinavian price.
11. By this time disorders — (*to become*) more prevalent.

LESSON 4

AGREEMENT IN THE VERB TENSE

(*continued*)

In the last lesson we have studied the various forms of the verb tense in the indicative mood. In English the expression of an idea has four different moods. The indicative mood indicates some idea. The imperative

mood enforces some idea upon the person spoken to. The subjunctive mood expresses an idea as a supposition. The infinitive mood expresses an idea without reference to a particular person or merely completes an idea conveyed by an action or state of being.

The use of the infinitive is limited to the present or to the present perfect, that is, to an action or state of being corresponding with or prior to the action or state of being denoted by the principal verb. He seemed *to rally* his spirits for a final struggle. They proved *to have been* greatly reinforced. You continue *to keep* your own way.

The imperative mood is to express a command: *Get* out of my way; or a precept, *Come* round to enjoy the concert with me; or an entreaty, *Help* me over the brook; *Let* us take a refuge here in this storm. Thus far this mood is limited to the present indefinite, and to the second person only, and is therefore very simple. However, *shall* and *should* used with the second and third persons are also signs of imperative. In this instance, *shall* implies a present command, *should* a duty. You *shall* report for duty punctually at 9. The first regiment *shall* launch a frontal attack on the left wing of the enemy troops. You *should* help the weak to defy the strong, and the poor to secure their product of labor. The youngsters *should* support their disabled parents.

The subjunctive mood is comparatively more complex in its contents; but so far as it is limited to the statement of a consequence with the condition understood.

I should like to have an auto-drive to Hangchow. We would never tolerate any alien to encroach upon our