

# ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Lee D. Rossi  
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# PREFACE

The purpose of this textbook is to prepare students for the academic classroom at universities where English is the medium of instruction. To this end the student is provided with a variety of exercises: reading textbook-type material in different academic disciplines; listening to academic lectures; and writing essays, reports, and answers to test questions. This text is designed primarily for international students whose first language is not English and who wish to study in a country where English is the medium of instruction, but it may also be used profitably by English-speaking students who wish to improve their reading, note-taking, and writing skills.

A necessary companion to this volume is the *Teacher's Guide*, which contains the lectures, suggestions for using and sequencing the different exercises, and answers to the more difficult exercises. Any instructor wishing to make full use of the resources of this textbook should also have a copy of the *Teacher's Guide*.

Finally, we would like to thank the following individuals and organizations: our wives, Eileen and Mayumi, for their patience and encouragement; our artist, Kathy Cahill, for her promptness and concern for detail; our first editor, Pam Kirshen, who saw us through several revisions of this text; our current editor, Marianne Russell, who helped us see the book into print; our colleagues at West Coast University and UCLA Extension for their suggestions and support; the American Marketing Association for permission to reprint "Trends in Sex Roles in Television Commercials," by Kenneth C.

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**Lee D. Rossi**  
**Michael Gasser**

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## Introduction

As you look through this textbook, you may find that it differs in several ways from other English textbooks which you have used. Perhaps most noticeably the titles of the chapters are taken from academic fields rather than from areas of English grammar. The book is designed in this way in order to provide a bridge between your previous English courses and the courses you will take in a university. The aim is not to teach you biology, physics, or history—although you will certainly learn something about these fields—but rather to teach you the language you will need when you study these fields. In the past you have learned a great deal about English grammar, but you probably still have difficulty using your knowledge. For example, you probably know how to form the past perfect tense, but you may not know when to use it. This book attempts to fill this gap by concentrating on the meanings or uses of grammatical forms. Thus another characteristic of the book is that grammar as well as vocabulary is always taught in the context of a particular category of meaning or language use. For example, past perfect is taught under the heading of **NARRATION**—that is, telling about a series of past events. In the book we will call these categories of meaning or use *notions*, and we will write their names in **SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS**. **NARRATION**, **DEFINITION**, **SIZE**, and **FREQUENCY** are examples of notions.

The book is divided into three units entitled “The Biological Sciences,” “The Physical Sciences and Mathematics,” and “The Social Sciences and History.” If you are an undergraduate student at an American or Canadian

university, you will probably be required to take courses in all of these areas. If you are a graduate student, you will be more interested in the sections on your major, but studying the other sections of the book will also be useful because they contain work on notions which are important in your field.

Of course you will know more about some of the topic areas than about others. For example, if you are majoring in engineering, the concepts from physical sciences and mathematics (Unit 2) should be easy for you to understand although they might be difficult for a student majoring in business. In such a case you may be able to help the business student understand these concepts. In the social sciences unit the business student may be able to help you. In this way the class will give you many opportunities to exchange information in English.

Each of the units contains from two to six chapters. Each chapter begins with a reading passage or lecture which is meant to be a slightly simplified version of the kind of reading or lecture you will face at the university. (The lectures are contained in the Teacher's Guide and will be read to you by your teacher or played on a tape.) After each lecture or reading there are exercises to develop your understanding of the passage. This section is followed by the section called "Language Use," in which particular notions are introduced and practiced. Both vocabulary and grammar are taught in this section, always with the emphasis on their uses. Except for Chapter 6, the last section in each chapter is called "Paragraph Writing." Here you are expected to use what you have learned to write paragraphs and short essays.

As you probably know, vocabulary is very important in understanding the lectures and textbooks you will find at the university. For this reason this book includes many opportunities to learn and use new vocabulary. Besides the words which are explained in the book, you will probably find other words which you do not know, especially in the Language Use exercises. It is important that you understand the meaning of the sentences in these exercises. Therefore if you cannot guess the meanings of these words from the context, you should either look them up in a dictionary or ask another student or the teacher. Besides a bilingual dictionary you should have an English-English dictionary. You might buy a good paperback edition, such as *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, *Webster's New World Dictionary*, or *The American Heritage Dictionary*. In addition it will be useful for you to record important new words in a special vocabulary notebook or on note cards. For each new word you should write the pronunciation, part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, and so on), other forms of the word, a definition, and an example sentence. In this book the pronunciation of many new words is given. (The pronunciation symbols are those used in *Webster's New World Dictionary*; they are explained in the Appendix.)



# THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

## unit one

In the biological, or life sciences, we study living things. *Biology* is the most general of the biological sciences. *Zoology*, the study of animals, and *botany*, the study of plants, are two other important biological sciences. The medical sciences—for example, *medicine* and *dentistry*—are usually categorized as biological sciences.

The reading passage for Chapter 1 is about one-celled animals (*protozoans*) and illustrates the use of DESCRIPTION, CLASSIFICATION, and DEFINITION. The Language Use and Paragraph Writing sections of Chapter 1 deal mainly with DESCRIPTION. The reading passage for Chapter 2 deals with the classification of the horse and gives numerous examples of CLASSIFICATION, the topic of the Language Use and Paragraph Writing sections of the chapter. The lecture for Chapter 3 is about the study of environments (*ecology*) and involves mainly DEFINITION and EXAMPLE, both of which you will study in the Language Use and Paragraph Writing sections of the chapter.

Of course there are other notions which are important in the biological sciences, in particular the description of PROPERTIES (Chap. 4), REASON-RESULT (Chap. 7), PROCESS (Chaps. 5 and 7), and COMPARISON/CONTRAST (Chap. 10). You may meet examples of these notions in this unit, but you won't study them formally until later in the book.