

PAINLESS **English**

for Speakers of Other Languages

Jeffrey Strausser and José Paniza

If you think correct grammatical English is difficult and confusing, open this book — and think again!



**An enjoyable, completely painless examination of
parts of speech • sentence construction • punctuation**

Plus extra help with essay writing
for students of English as a second language

BARRON'S

PAINLESS
English
for Speakers of
Other Languages



© Copyright 2007 by Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by photostat, microfilm, xerography, or any other means, or incorporated into any information retrieval system, electronic or mechanical, without the written permission of the copyright owner.

All inquiries should be addressed to:

Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

250 Wireless Boulevard

Hauppauge, New York 11788

www.barronseduc.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-7641-3562-0

ISBN-10: 0-7641-3562-7

Library of Congress Catalog No.: 2006018471

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Strausser, Jeffrey.

Painless English for speakers of other languages / Jeffrey Strausser,
José Paniza.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7641-3562-0

ISBN-10: 0-7641-3562-7

1. English language—Study and teaching—Foreign speakers.
2. Middle school students—Language. 3. English language—
Textbooks for foreign speakers. I. Paniza, José. II. Title.

PE1128.S885 2007

428.0071—dc22

2006018471

PRINTED IN CANADA

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

PAINLESS
English

**for Speakers of
Other Languages**



Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife, Beth, and my children, Katie and Matt. Thank you for being my inspiration and motivation. May you never stop learning.

Jeff

This book is dedicated with love to my wife, Betty Jo, and my daughters, Jennifer and Lauren.

José

Introduction: What This Book Will Do for You

Learning a new language is a lifetime challenge that can be lots of fun, but sometimes it can be very frustrating. Many times, your school textbook doesn't help you because it assumes you are already familiar with all the basics of the English language. The good news is this book can help. It starts from the beginning with *parts of speech* and then moves on to *spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation*. Once you have firmly established this foundation, you will be ready to write *sentences*, and later, *essays* and *stories*. Every section has lots of examples and an exercise group to help make sure that you understand the material. In addition, nearly 75 percent of the 62 sets of exercises have a theme associated with Social Studies or Science, so at the same time you are learning English, you are also learning Social Studies or Science. It's easy to find the areas you have questions about because all the basics are right here in this book. Finally, for the **Internet** surfers, each chapter contains web addresses where you can surf to read additional information about the topics discussed. It is not necessary to refer to these sites, as each section is concisely but thoroughly explained within the pages of the chapter. Nonetheless, if surfing through the ocean of cyberspace is fun for you, just look for the ***Surf's Up!*** box and check out the web pages listed there.

Do you want to improve how you speak and write in English? If so, start in wherever you feel comfortable. Everything is here waiting for you. You'll discover just how ***painless*** it is to improve your English skills!

Web Addresses Change!

You should be aware that addresses on the World Wide Web are constantly changing. Although every attempt has been made to provide you with the most current addresses available, the nature of the Internet makes it virtually impossible to keep abreast of the many changes that seem to occur on a daily basis.

If you should come across a web address (URL) that no longer appears to be valid, either because the site no longer exists or because the address has changed, don't panic. Simply do a **key word search** on the subject matter in question. For example, if you are interested in finding out more about compound-complex sentences and the particular address appears to be

invalid, do a search for various words related to **compound-complex sentences**. These are the key words. A key word search might include, for example, **sentence types**. If an initial key word search provides too many potential sites, you can always narrow the number of choices by doing a second key word search that will limit your original search to only those sites that contain the terms from both your first and second searches.

WARNING: Not every response to your search will match your criteria, and some sites may contain adult material. If you are ever in doubt, check with a parent, teacher, or librarian who can help you.

CONTENTS

Introduction: What This Book Will Do for You	xi
---	-----------

PART ONE: PARTS OF SPEECH 1

Chapter One: Nouns 3

What Is a Noun?	5
Proper and Common Nouns	7
Concrete and Abstract Nouns	9
Singular and Plural Nouns	11
Possessive Nouns	16
Functions of Nouns in Sentences	21

Chapter Two: Pronouns 27

What Is a Pronoun?	29
Personal Pronouns	29
Pronoun Cases	34
Possessive Pronouns	39
Reflexive Pronouns	43
Demonstrative Pronouns	46
Relative Pronouns	49
Interrogative Pronouns	53
Indefinite Pronouns	56
Making Pronouns Agree	58

Chapter Three: Verbs 63

What Is a Verb?	65
Action Verbs	65
Linking Verbs	67
Helping Verbs	70
Verb Tenses: Expressing Past, Present, and Future	72
Active and Passive Voice	73
Confusing Verb Pairs	75
Verbals	78

Chapter Four: Modifiers 83

What Are Modifiers?	85
Adjectives	85
Proper and Common Adjectives	86
Improving Your Writing with Adjectives	88
Articles	96
Demonstrative Adjectives	99
Indefinite Adjectives	102
Pronouns as Adjectives	104
Adverbs	106
Recognizing Adjectives and Adverbs	109
Degrees of Adjectives and Adverbs	112

Chapter Five: Prepositions 117

What Are Prepositions?	119
Simple and Compound Prepositions	120
Prepositional Phrases	123
Prepositional Phrases as Modifiers	125
Common Preposition Errors	126

Chapter Six: Conjunctions 133

What Are Conjunctions?	135
Coordinating Conjunctions	135
Correlative Conjunctions	140
Subordinating Conjunctions	142

Chapter Seven: Interjections 147

What Are Interjections?	149
Using Interjections	149

Chapter Eight: Spelling and Vocabulary 153

Active Listening	155
Learning the Vowel Sounds	156
Learning the R Sounds	169
The Silent Letters	172

The Final E	173
Homophones	174
Parts of a Word	176
Compound Words	177

PART TWO: WRITING 179

Chapter Nine: Sentence Endings and Pauses 181

Sentence Endings	183
Periods	183
Question Marks	184
Exclamation Points	185
Quotation Marks	188
Sentence Pauses	191
Commas	191
Semicolons	196
Colons	197
Dashes	197
Parentheses	198

Chapter Ten: Writing Sentences 201

What Is a Sentence?	203
Subjects and Predicates	204
Subject-Predicate Agreement	206
Types of Sentences	211
Writing Simple Sentences	214
Beyond the Simple Sentence	217
More Sentence Writing	219
Watch Out for Run-ons!	222

Chapter Eleven: Writing Essays and Stories 227

What Is a Paragraph?	229
Writing Paragraphs	229
Essays and Stories	234
The Structure of Essays and Stories	235

CONTENTS

The Writing Process	236
Plagiarism	241
It's Up to You	241

Appendix 243

The American Heritage College Dictionary	
Pronunciation Guide	243
Further Reading	245

Answer Key 247

Index 271

PART ONE

Parts of Speech

Nouns



The English language divides words into eight *parts of speech*: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. These parts of speech are the “building blocks” of good English. All of these building blocks are necessary for you to understand so that you can better speak and write English. Let’s start out with one of the most important parts of speech—the **noun**.

WHAT IS A NOUN?

Nouns are important because without them you wouldn’t be able to name anything. You wouldn’t have a name, and neither would your friends! Thankfully, you have nouns. A *noun* is a part of speech that names

- A person
- A place
- A thing
- An idea
- An animal
- A quality
- An activity

Below are some examples of nouns. Notice their variety.

Juan is reading. (a person)

Dallas is north of *Houston*. (a place, a place)

The *rock* is very heavy. (a thing)

Philosophy is very interesting. (an idea)

My *cat* is chasing the *mouse*. (an animal, an animal)

Overcoming *fear* requires great *courage*. (a quality, a quality)

Finally, we have:

Writing is important. (an activity)

This last example is a little confusing. *Writing* is a noun because it names an activity; it isn’t *performing* the activity, which is what a verb does. By contrast, notice how *writing* is used in the following sentence:

Roberto is *writing* his name.

Here, *writing* is a verb, rather than a noun because it is the *action* Robert is performing.

This variety makes the noun important in the English language. We can name so many things! Before we go on, try the following exercises. They will give you a chance to identify the different types of **nouns** and what they name.



BRAIN TICKLERS!

Set #1

READING AND WRITING IN ENGLISH

Identify the **nouns** in each of the sentences below and underline them.

EXAMPLE:

My name is Elissa.

1. Ms. Garcia is my language arts teacher.
2. She has lived in the United States for ten years.
3. Reading is an important skill to learn.
4. We read stories from all over the world.
5. Besides being a good reader, I also want to be able to write English well.
6. I think reading stories will help me to learn to write English.
7. Reading and writing English well will take time and hard work.
8. I spend time every day learning new words and using the new words in sentences.
9. I write my words and sentences in my notebook.
10. Last week, I wrote a story in my notebook and then typed it on the computer.

(Answers are on page 247.)

As you can see, there are a great many nouns. You can learn about nouns more easily by dividing them into groups and learning about those groups. Let's begin by grouping nouns into **proper nouns** and **common nouns**.