
Practical English Handbook

Watkins / Dillingham

Sixth Edition



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Reference Chart

for use in marking and revising papers

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and Fused
Sentence

cs/fus

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vb

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Sequence of
Tenses

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sub

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Verb:
Agreement

agr

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Preface

This sixth edition of the *Practical English Handbook* comes in the twenty-second year of the book. By this time it is of age and has its own identity. Like a character in a good novel, it remains true to its old self, and certain things cannot be changed. Some of them are the helpful diagrams, the pocket size that fits the hand, exercises based on meaning rather than mere mechanical application of rules, an effectively concise section on writing a literary paper, close adherence (with a few adaptations) to the system of documentation of the *MLA Handbook*, and a practical (as opposed to theoretical) section on logic.

The preservation of traditions in the book is almost matched by the changes in this edition: a new section on grammar, more and better vocabulary tests, a new device to replace the model literary paper, a substantially rewritten composition section, a new model research paper, new varieties of exercises, and some small surprises on many pages. Few things get better and better all the time, but we are confident that each version of the *Practical English Handbook* has been better than the last. Within the given limits, each edition of the book has had special qualities all its own.

This is the first edition of the book without the name of the late Edwin T. Martin as one of the authors. Nevertheless, his teaching and his attitudes toward writing still form the basis of much of the usefulness and practicality of the book.

Directly and indirectly, perhaps nearly all of the more than a million users of this book have had some small hand in making it what it is. Our debts to helpful advisers are enormous and incalculable. A number of individuals offered their assessments of the fifth edition and their suggestions for change. We are grateful to M. Elaine Bell, Harcum Junior College; Peggy F. Broder, Cleveland State University; June Bugg, Gadsden State Junior College; Polly Glover, The University of Tennessee at Martin; Eugene K. Hanson, College of the Desert; Yvonne McLravy, Michigan State University; Lois Poule, Bridgewater State College; Joel D. Rudinger, Bowling Green State University; and Rodelle Weintraub, The Pennsylvania State University. In preparing this edition we have been particularly indebted to John T. Hiers, Marie Morris Nitschke, Eric Nitschke, Peter W. Dowell, Sally Wolff, and Oakley Coburn. We want also to thank the following for their thoughtful reading of the manuscript of the sixth edition and their constructive recommendations: Gregory P. Meyer, The Troy State University System; Steven F. Wozniak, Palomar College; and Shirley Saint-Leon and Joyce Lipkis, Santa Monica College.

We must express our special appreciation to Leon Mandell, Chairman of the Department of Chemistry at Emory University, and to his faculty and staff for their generous hospitality in furnishing two alien English professors with a quiet place in which to contemplate the formulas of grammar and composition. Finally, we believe that our patient wives have been more long-suffering over many years than most spouses who receive the last thoughtful thank you in prefaces.

Floyd C. Watkins

William B. Dillingham

Writing and Revising

Whether the instructor uses this book as a basis for class discussions and exercises or for student self-help, it can be of great use in correcting and revising papers. The model theme on the following pages illustrates how an instructor may mark a paper for revision. The numbers in the margins refer the student to sections in the book which indicate the ways to correct errors. Some instructors prefer to use abbreviations (see a list of them inside the back cover) rather than numbers, and some prefer to use neither but to write brief notes. Often combinations will be used.

Whatever method the instructor uses to mark papers, the student should study the relevant sections with their explanations and make appropriate corrections and revisions as shown on the model theme. These may range from simple to extensive revisions.

It is helpful to keep a chart of the numbers or abbreviations used for errors in order to see how the frequency of errors diminishes and how new kinds of errors occur in later themes.

If the instructor writes overall comments on cover sheets, the student might keep these together and in order; they will provide information about improvement, change, and ways to study and revise. The student or the instructor should keep all themes until the end of the term and study the changes in the writing.

Whether the instructor uses this book as a guide for class discussions and exercises or for student self-help, it can be of great use in correcting and revising papers. The model theme on the following pages illustrates how an instructor may mark a paper for revision. The numbers in the margins refer the student to sections in the book which indicate the ways to correct errors. Some instructors prefer to use abbreviations (see a list of them inside the back cover) rather than numbers, and some prefer to use numbers but to write brief notes. Often combinations will be used.

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The Trouble With Perfectionists

Of all kinds of people, perfectionists are the kind that bother me the most. 30

They ³⁷ ~~won't~~ to get things right; that is ^{admirable} ~~great~~. They are certainly 49
not like ^{a lot} ~~alot~~ of people who just do not care about their jobs or anything
else. But once you get to know a perfectionist, I ~~guarantee you~~ ³⁸ you 30
will feel the same way as ³⁹ ~~me~~. 9c

Many people seem to believe that it is ^{complimentary} ~~complementary~~ to call 31
someone a perfectionist. They seem to think that the term means a
person who is ³⁷ ~~conscientious~~. ³⁸ ~~in my opinion~~, a true perfectionist is not
really ³⁹ ~~conscientious~~ but troubled. 31

³⁷ ~~Perfectionists have two problems above all others.~~
Two problems above all other are had by perfectionists. The first 5
is social; the second is mental. It is hard for a perfectionist to make
friends and keep them because he or she usually is ^{really} ~~real~~ fussy. The 10
house of a perfectionist has to ^{be} ~~kept~~ like a museum or something, and 38
if you sit a certain place or drop a crumb on the rug, you get the distinct
impression that you will not be welcome in that house again. If a
perfectionist happens to be an executive or an employer, those who work
on a lower level find that no matter how hard they try, they ^{can never} ~~cannot never~~ 10
seem to please the perfectionist. So this type of person is likely to 38

be more unpopular than a wine. 37a

The second problem that ^{perfectionists have} ~~are had by perfectionists~~ is not social but 5
within the person. Although one might expect a perfectionist to go far
in life, to ³⁷ ~~succeed~~ at almost any occupation or ^{profession} ~~profession~~, that is not
the case. Perfectionists are probably ³⁹ ~~less successful~~ ^{successful} than better adjusted 31

people. Why is this so? In my opinion, it is because they become in a way paralyzed. What I mean by that is that they will not turn loose of a piece of work until they feel it is just like they want it; therefore it is hard for them to finish anything.

? In the end, perfectionists tend to quit trying to take on anything important because they know that what they produce cannot live up to their own high standard. You can see how they often end up in an unhappy state.

Let me just say this. The time to correct this way of thinking is when it first gets started. It will not become a problem if it is not allowed to go on for very long. Everyone should recognize that on this earth there is not such thing as perfection and be content with something less.

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