

A
*Higher Course
of
English Study*

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DONALD MACKIN DAVID CARVER

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A HIGHER COURSE OF
ENGLISH
STUDY 1

RONALD MACKIN
DAVID CARVER

LONDON
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Ely House, London W.1

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
CAPE TOWN IBADAN NAIROBI DAR ES SALAAM LUSAKA ADDIS ABABA
DELHI BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI LAHORE DACCA
KUALA LUMPUR SINGAPORE HONG KONG TOKYO

ISBN 0 19 435205 6

© Oxford University Press 1968

First published 1968

Fourth impression 1975

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
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AYLESBURY, BUCKS

Preface

This book is intended for students in secondary schools or institutes who are ready, with some assistance, to deal with passages which have not been simplified or edited in any way. It can be used immediately after the *Third Reader in A Course of English Study* by Ronald Mackin.

Although the passages are in the unsimplified form in which they were originally published, they have nevertheless been selected for their *relative* simplicity. None of them contains any problems of vocabulary or grammar that cannot be dealt with either by reference to a dictionary or to the notes which have been provided after the text. The second book in this course will deal with rather more complicated examples of English.

The plan of this book is to provide in each chapter (a) one or more passages (b) notes on the passages and (c) exercises on certain features of the language used in them.

THE PASSAGES. These are drawn from many different sources, deal with an interesting range of subjects and, above all, give the student the opportunity of seeing and comparing different *styles*. As stylistic points are best studied in contrast there are often several passages that are about the same subject—a total of thirty-one passages of varying lengths, in the fourteen chapters. They include short stories; articles from magazines, a newspaper and an encyclopaedia; passages from novels, travel books, technical books, books on language, and biographies; a translation of a Rumanian folk story, from the spoken original, and another from Swedish on Cave-Building.

This is not, therefore, a literary compilation, though many of the authors represented are well-known, established writers; it is, rather, a collection of typical examples of modern English used for a wide variety of purposes.

Opinion on the value of poetry at this stage of learning is deeply divided. We have therefore provided a small selection of poems in an Appendix. This seems to be a reasonable solu-

PREFACE

tion to the problem, as it leaves each authority, or school, or teacher to use the poems or not; if they are omitted, the book remains an entity. The poems themselves should serve as a fairly easy introduction to some of the main features of English poetry, while not presenting any great difficulties in vocabulary, grammar or imagery. They represent our choice from several thousand which we perused in search of these characteristics!

THE NOTES. These deal with vocabulary, grammar and other matters requiring explanation. It is assumed that the student will have a good dictionary, and for this reason we have not given definitions or glosses of all the words which might be new to the student; and where these are provided, it must be remembered that they apply only to the context in which the word or phrase is used in the passage under consideration. We recommend particularly *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* by A. S. Hornby, E. V. Gatenby and H. Wakefield, and *An English-Reader's Dictionary* by A. S. Hornby and E. C. Parnwell; both published by Oxford University Press. The phonetic symbols used to indicate the pronunciation of names in Appendix 2 are those given in the first of these dictionaries.

THE EXERCISES. Each passage, or group of passages, has a related set of exercises. These deal with: A. Comprehension of the subject matter; B. Vocabulary; C. Pronunciation; D. Grammar; E. Features of formal and informal language. Various techniques are used in each of these categories.

If the book can lay claim to any originality, beyond the selection and annotation of the texts, it is in the approach to stylistics at the student level. In the present book, the emphasis is on the *observation* and *selection* of linguistic features which are crucial to the appreciation of stylistic variants; in the second book, the same method will be taken a stage further. Because of this approach to stylistics through the comparison of passages it is recommended that the two or more extracts in each chapter should be carefully studied before the exercises are attempted.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the authors, publishers and representatives for their permission to use extracts from the following books:

The Bodley Head (*Literary Lapses* by Stephen Leacock); Frederick Muller Ltd. (*The True Book About Our Language* by David Brazil); Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. (*Problems and Principles in Language Study* by David Abercrombie; *The Southern Continents*, Geography for Today Series; the poem *The Dromedary* by Archibald Campbell); The Clarendon Press, Oxford (*Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia* Vols. II, III, V, XI); Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd. (*Camels and the Outback* by H. M. Barker); Blandford Press Ltd. (*Wild Animals of the World* by T. L. C. Tomkins); Methuen & Co. Ltd. (*Pacala and Tandala and Other Rumanian Folk-tales* compiled, translated and edited by Jean Ure); the Editor of Family Doctor (*Looking after Old Folk* by Dr. H. Beric Wright); William Heinemann Ltd. (*Report From A Chinese Village* by Jan Myrdal, translated by Maurice Michael); William Heinemann Ltd. and The Literary Executor of W. Somerset Maugham (*The Complete Short Stories* of W. Somerset Maugham); Funk & Wagnalls N.Y. (*The Soup Stone* by Maria Leach); Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. (*Eye Health* by Colin B. Fryer); Odhams Books Ltd. (*Press of a Switch* by George Baker); The Consumers' Association (Which report on Electric Irons, September 1962); The Observer (*A New Island for Iceland* by Matthias Johannessen); Weidenfeld and Nicolson (Educational) Ltd. (*The Crust of the Earth* by V. A. Firsoff); Lutterworth Press (*Rich in My Heritage* by Ann Blackmore); Faber and Faber Ltd. (*Three Dictators* by Stephen King-Hall; *Three Rivers of France* by Freda White); Penguin Books Ltd. (*The Ant World* by Derek Wragge Morley); B. T. Batsford Ltd. (*Valleys and Orchards in the English Countryside* by C. Henry Warren); The Executors of H. G. Wells (*The History of Mr Polly* by H. G. Wells); Hamish Hamilton Ltd. (*The White Nile* by Alan Moorehead) and the following poems:

Chatto and Windus (*The Poor Wake Up Quickly* by D. J. Enright from *Some Men are Brothers*); Jonathan Cape & Co. Ltd. and Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc. (*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost from *The Complete Poems of Robert Frost*); Jonathan Cape & Co. Ltd. and The Society of Authors (*Is My Team Ploughing* by A. E. Housman); Jonathan Cape & Co. Ltd. and Mrs H. M. Davies (*Leisure* by W. H. Davies from *The Complete Poems of W. H. Davies*); Macmillan & Co. Ltd. and Mrs George Bambridge (*The Way Through the Woods* by Rudyard Kipling from *Rewards and Fairies*); Ann Wolfe (*Thrushes* by Humbert Wolfe).

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CHAPTER 1

A. The Conjuror's Revenge

'Now, ladies and gentlemen,' said the conjurer, 'having shown you that the cloth is absolutely empty, I will proceed to take from it a bowl of goldfish. Presto!'

5 All around the hall people were saying 'Oh, how wonderful! How does he do it?'

But the Quick Man on the front seat said in a big whisper to the people near him, 'He—had—it—up—his—sleeve.'

10 Then the people nodded brightly at the Quick Man and said 'Oh, of course'; and everybody whispered round the hall, 'He—had—it—up—his—sleeve.'

'My next trick,' said the conjurer, 'is the famous Hindostanee rings. You will notice that the rings are apparently separate; at a blow they all join (clang, clang, clang)—Presto!'

15 There was a general buzz of stupefaction till the Quick Man was heard to whisper, 'He—must—have—had—another—lot—up—his—sleeve.'

Again everybody nodded and whispered, 'The—rings—were—up—his—sleeve.'

20 The brow of the conjurer was clouded with a gathering frown.

'I will now,' he continued, 'show you a most amusing trick by which I am enabled to take any number of eggs from a hat. Will some gentleman kindly lend me his hat? Ah, thank you—Presto!'

25 He extracted seventeen eggs, and for thirty-five seconds the audience began to think that he was wonderful. Then the Quick Man whispered along the front bench, 'He—has—a—hen—up—his—sleeve,' and all the people whispered it on. 30 'He—has—a—lot—of—hens—up—his—sleeve.'

The egg trick was ruined.

It went on like that all through. It transpired from the whispers of the Quick Man that the conjurer must have concealed up his sleeve, in addition to the rings, hens, and fish,

35 several packs of cards, a loaf of bread, a doll's cradle, a live guinea-pig, a fifty-cent piece, and a rocking-chair.

The reputation of the conjurer was rapidly sinking below zero. At the close of the evening he rallied for a final effort.

40 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he said, 'I will present to you, in conclusion, the famous Japanese trick recently invented by the natives of Tipperary. Will you, sir,' he continued, turning toward the Quick Man, 'will you kindly hand me your gold watch?'

It was passed to him.

45 'Have I your permission to put it into this mortar and pound it to pieces?' he asked savagely.

The Quick Man nodded and smiled.

The conjurer threw the watch into the mortar and grasped a sledge hammer from the table. There was a sound of violent
50 smashing, 'He's—slipped—it—up—his—sleeve,' whispered the Quick Man.

'Now, sir,' continued the conjurer, 'will you allow me to take your handkerchief and punch holes in it? Thank you. You see, ladies and gentlemen, there is no deception; the holes are
55 visible to the eye.'

The face of the Quick Man beamed. This time the real mystery of the thing fascinated him.

'And now sir, will you kindly pass me your silk hat and allow me to dance on it? Thank you.'

60 The conjurer made a few rapid passes with his feet and exhibited the hat crushed beyond recognition.

'And will you now, sir, take off your celluloid collar and permit me to burn it in the candle? Thank you, sir. And will you allow me to smash your spectacles for you with my ham-
65 mer? Thank you.'

By this time the features of the Quick Man were assuming a puzzled expression. 'This thing beats me,' he whispered, 'I don't see through it a bit.'

70 There was a great hush upon the audience. Then the conjurer drew himself up to his full height and, with a withering look at the Quick Man, he concluded:

'Ladies and gentlemen, you will observe that I have, with this gentleman's permission, broken his watch, burnt his collar, smashed his spectacles, and danced on his hat. If he will give
75 me the further permission to paint green stripes on his overcoat,

or to tie his suspenders in a knot, I shall be delighted to entertain you. If not, the performance is at an end.'

80 And amid a glorious burst of music from the orchestra the curtain fell, and the audience dispersed, convinced that there are some tricks, at any rate, that are not done up the conjurer's sleeve.

(From *Literary Lapses*, by STEPHEN LEACOCK)

B. 'A Trick to Show Your Friends'

The Magic Match

Open a large handkerchief out and show both sides of it to your friends. Point out that there is nothing in it; then show them both sides of your hands, which are also absolutely empty. Now ask a member of your audience to give you a match.
5 Ask him to put a mark on it with a pen or a pencil. Wrap this up in the handkerchief, and let everyone present see you do this.

Give the handkerchief to anyone in the audience and say: 'Here's the match. Can you feel it? Good! Now I want you to
10 break it into two pieces.' When your friend has broken the match, you say 'Would anyone like to feel the broken match in this handkerchief?' Several people will probably want to feel it. When they have satisfied themselves that the match really is broken, you say 'Now I'm going to make the match whole
15 again.' Perhaps your friends will say that that is impossible.

Hold the handkerchief in one hand and pass your hand or your wand over it, saying 'Abracadabra, abracadabra.' Open the handkerchief and let the match fall on to the table or floor, saying 'Presto' as it does so. When your friends examine the
20 match, they will find that it is quite whole and undamaged. The member of the audience will see his mark on the match. Everyone will be amazed!

The secret of this trick is quite simple, as in all conjuring tricks. Long before you do the trick you must do one thing—
25 you must push one of your own matches into the hem of the handkerchief. This must be pushed well along the hem so that

CHAPTER I

30 it cannot fall out or be seen (see Fig. 1). When you have wrapped up the match provided by a member of the audience you must take care that it is the match in the hem which is broken, and not the other (see Fig. 2). You should practise the trick in private, of course, before you perform it before an audience.

In the two figures the position of *your* match is shown by dotted lines. The position of the second match is shown by a solid line.

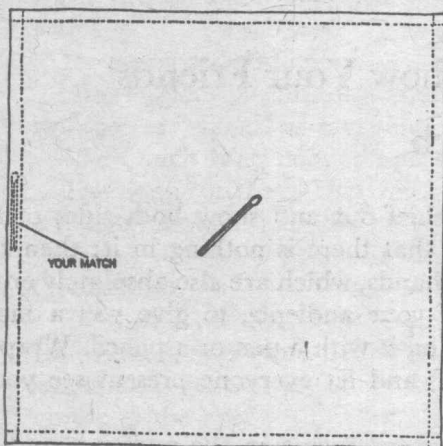


FIG 1.

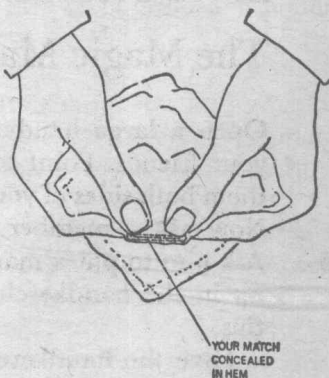


FIG 2.—How to offer the handkerchief to a member of the audience.

Notes

A. THE CONJURER'S REVENGE

Line

- 8 *brightly*: intelligently
- 11 *Hindustanee*: Indian
- 13 *at a blow*: in one sudden movement
- 15 *a buzz of stupefaction*: that is, the people in the audience were astonished and talked to each other about the trick
- 20 *brow*: forehead
- 21 *frown*: expression of annoyance, made by drawing the eyebrows together
- 29 *whispered it on*: passed on the words, in a whisper
- 31 *ruined*: completely spoilt
- 32 *It transpired*: It became evident

- 37 *reputation*: good name; fame
 38 *rallied*: gathered his strength
 41 *Tipperary*: a town in Ireland
 45 *mortar*: a strong container in which hard substances can be broken or crushed
 49 *a sledge hammer*: a very heavy hammer, with a long handle
 53 *punch*: Here, make
 56 *beamed*: shone with pleasure
 57 *fascinated him*: captured his interest, and puzzled him
 60 *passes*: movements
 61 *beyond recognition*: so that it could no longer be recognised as a silk hat
 66 *By this time*: By now
 66 *assuming*: taking on
 67 *This thing beats me*: I don't understand this
 68 *see through it*: understand how the trick is done
 69 *hush*: silence
 70 *a withering look*: a look intended to make the Quick Man feel foolish and ashamed
 76 *suspenders*: Note that in N. America 'suspenders' refers to the straps which pass over a man's shoulders and support his trousers; in Britain, 'suspenders' refers to the garters which support a man's socks. Stephen Leacock, the author, was a Canadian.
 78 *amid*: during
 79 *dispersed*: went away in various directions
 80 *at any rate*: at least

B. A TRICK TO SHOW YOUR FRIENDS

Line

- 13 *satisfied themselves that*: proved to themselves that
 17 *wand*: 'magic' stick used by magicians
 25 *hem*: the edge of a handkerchief, folded back and stitched down so as to leave an enclosed 'pocket', usually open at the ends
 28 *provided by*: given to you by
 30 *in private*: by yourself, in a place where you cannot be watched

Exercises

- I Answer these questions on *The Conjuror's Revenge*:
 1 What had the conjurer just done when the story begins?
 2 At what point in the story does the author first suggest that the Quick Man has upset the conjurer?

CHAPTER I

- 3 On what occasion did the words of the Quick Man become exaggerated as they passed round the audience?
- 4 Do you think that the conjurer may have had *some* of the objects which he produced up his sleeve? Give a reason for your answer.
- 5 Is a guinea-pig larger or smaller than a dog? (Find the word 'guinea pig' in your dictionary.)
- 6 What does the author mean when he says that the conjurer's reputation 'was sinking below zero'?
- 7 In the telling of the story, what word first reveals the conjurer's intention to take revenge on the Quick Man?
- 8 How does the author state or imply that the Quick Man has given the conjurer permission to damage his various possessions?
- 9 What is meant by the words 'the thing' in line 57?
- 10 At what point in the story must the Quick Man have realised that his property had in fact been destroyed? Give an explanation for your answer.

II Complete the following sentences with a word used in *The Conjurer's Revenge*, and with the meaning of the word given in brackets.

Example: His pockets were — empty. (completely)

Answer: absolutely.

- 1 The trick left the audience in a state of —. (great amazement)
- 2 They — their heads in agreement. (moved up and down)
- 3 How many flowers did he — from the box? (take out)
- 4 He — destroyed the gold watch. (fiercely)
- 5 How many objects do you think he had — up his sleeve? (hidden)
- 6 The — were famous for their skill with their hands. (people born and bred in a certain place)
- 7 I was — by the conjurer's skill. (greatly impressed)
- 8 How did it — that he had done the trick? (turn out)
- 9 He — the chicken firmly by the neck. (seized)
- 10 He — the cloth to the audience. (showed)

III Compare these two sentences:

- (i) There's a blackbird in the garden.
- (ii) There's a black bird in the garden.

In the first sentence **blackbird** has only one stress, and this stress falls on the first syllable. Here a **blackbird** is a kind of bird, like a **sparrow**, a **seagull**, etc.

In the second sentence **black bird** has two stresses, one on each syllable. Here **black bird** means any **bird** which is **black**.

Words like **blackbird** are called *compound words*; but some compound words are not written as single words. Some are written in

three ways, as in **tea time**, **tea-time**, **teatime**; all of these are pronounced in the same way—with one stress, on the first syllable.

Read each of the following sentences aloud; then underline the syllable or syllables which are stressed in the words printed in heavy type. Some of these form compound words, others do not.

- 1 He took a **goldfish** out of the bowl.
- 2 The **Quick Man** sat in the **front row**.
- 3 He must have had up his sleeve a **doll's cradle**, a **guinea-pig**, a **fifty-cent piece** and a **rocking-chair**.
- 4 He performed a famous **Japanese trick**.
- 5 Will you kindly lend me your **gold watch**?
- 6 He smashed it with a **sledge hammer**.
- 7 The **Quick Man** passed his **silk hat** to the conjurer.
- 8 Did you show your friends the **match trick**?
- 9 Is it true that **silkworms** produce silk?
- 10 Did the audience sit in **armchairs** or on benches?

IV Compare these two sentences:

- a They heard him whisper 'He had it up his **sleeve**'.
- b He was heard to whisper 'He had it up his **sleeve**'.

Rewrite the following sentences as in (b):

- 1 They heard him say 'I refuse to do it'.
- 2 They heard him confess that it was his fault.
- 3 They heard the man say the conjurer had the goldfish up his sleeve.
- 4 They saw him give the conjurer his watch.
- 5 They saw the conjurer smash the watch in the mortar.
- 6 Nobody made him take his collar off; he took it off willingly.
- 7 The conjurer made the **Quick Man** look a fool.

- V When a conjurer is performing tricks he usually tells the audience what he is doing and what he is going to do. Some conjurers talk all the time in order to distract the attention of the audience from certain movements of his hands and body. This talk is called his 'patter'; sometimes it is humorous and full of jokes. The conjurer in Leacock's story, however, adopts a very formal style. When he tells the audience what he is going to do he speaks as though he is making a very important announcement, in order to impress his audience. For example, in lines 22-23 he says: 'I will now show you a most amusing trick by which I am enabled to take any number of eggs from a hat.' In a less formal style he might say: 'Now I'm going to show you a trick in which I can take as many eggs as I like from a hat; it's very funny.'

Here are seven sentences written in an informal style. Write down the corresponding sentences in the story and note the differences.

CHAPTER I

- 1 'I've shown you that there's nothing at all in the cloth; now I'm going to take a bowl of goldfish out of it.'
 - 2 'Do you mind if I put your gold watch in this mortar?'
 - 3 'It's quite straight-forward; you can see the holes.'
 - 4 'May I dance on your hat?'
 - 5 'You see that this gentleman has let me break his watch, burn his collar, smash his glasses and dance on his hat.'
 - 6 'If he'll now let me paint green stripes on his overcoat, or tie his suspenders in a knot, I'll be glad to entertain you.'
 - 7 'That's the end of my performance.'
- VI From line 45 to the end of the story, there is a powerful contrast between politeness and violence in the words and manner of the conjurer. Draw a line down the middle of your paper, and make two lists, as follows:

Words and Expressions indicating politeness	Words and Expressions indicating violence
Examples: 1. Have I your permission to . . . ? 2. Now, sir, . . . 3. 4. - etc.	1. pound it to pieces 2. savagely 3. 4. - etc.

VII Describe this trick, as shown in the following figures:

THE DISAPPEARING BUTTON

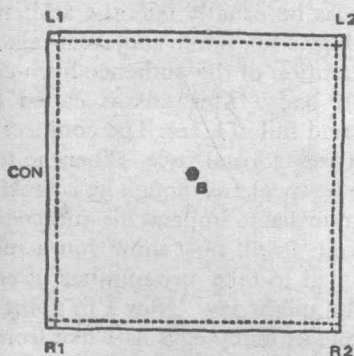


Fig. 1: CON = position of conjurer.
B = small button.

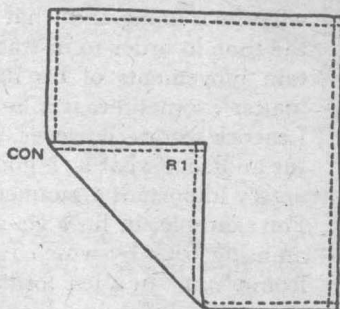


Fig. 2: Right corner placed over button. Member of audience can be invited to feel button by pressing on R.