

Basics of English

GRAMMAR
and
USAGE

Lee C. Deighton

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Introduction

To get what you want or to get where you want to go, you have to ask the right questions and give the right answers. And you have to put your questions and answers in words that people understand and accept.

Not only that, but you also have to arrange these words in ways that make sense. Language is not just a collection of words. It is a set of structures as real as the steel framework that holds a building together. Certain kinds of words go into definite spots in these language frameworks.

Grammar is the study of language structures and their parts. This book was set up so that you can see the practical use of this study as you go along. Each lesson that describes a kind of word or sentence part is followed by lessons that put this knowledge to work. You make a practical gain at once.

Whatever your goal in studying grammar—to complete a course, to pass an examination, or just to improve your skills—this book will help you. It was designed so that you can learn from it on your own. To make the best use of it, do all the lessons, and do them in order. The first lesson helps with the second, the second helps with the third, and so on.

First, read the lesson introduction carefully and study the example sentences. Then try your hand at the sentences that follow. They will give you a chance to see if you have understood each point of grammar. Check your answers with the key at the end of the book. Correct any errors right away, and try to understand why you made the mistake. The key can help you best in meeting your objectives if you use it as a teaching tool and not as a crutch.

Every few lessons along the way, there is a lesson called "Check Your Progress." It will help you pull together what you have learned before going on to the next group of lessons. Be sure to do all these lessons. The review they provide is important in fixing the material in your mind.

Following Lesson 22 is a Midway Check. If you have done all the lessons thoroughly up to this point, you will be pleased to see how much you have learned. You will be ready to move on to the second half of the book with confidence, and by the time you take the Final Test, you will pass it with ease.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | vii |
| I. Classes of Words | 1 |
| Lesson 1. The Noun | 3 |
| 2. Noun Plurals | 7 |
| 3. Possessive Form of Nouns | 11 |
| 4. The Verb | 14 |
| 5. Irregular Verbs | 21 |
| 6. Check Your Progress | 24 |
| 7. Modifiers | 28 |
| 8. Adjectives and Adverbs in Comparisons | 35 |
| 9. Words That Join: Prepositions and Conjunctions | 40 |
| 10. Personal Pronouns | 45 |
| 11. Other Pronouns, and More Irregular Verbs | 49 |
| 12. Check Your Progress | 55 |
| II. The Sentence and Its Parts | 61 |
| Lesson 13. The Verb and Its Subject | 63 |
| 14. Verbs and Their Objects | 68 |
| 15. Linking Verbs and Subject Complements | 72 |
| 16. <i>ing</i> Words | 76 |
| 17. Check Your Progress | 80 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 18. Verbal Phrases | 84 |
| 19. Joining Sentences, and Still More | |
| Irregular Verbs | 88 |
| 20. Dependent Clauses | 94 |
| 21. Incomplete Sentences | 98 |
| 22. Check Your Progress | 103 |
| Midway Check | 106 |
| III. Good Usage | 113 |
| Lesson 23. Agreement of Subject and Verb | 115 |
| 24. The Use of Pronouns | 121 |
| 25. Who or Whom? | 127 |
| 26. Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent | 131 |
| 27. A Final Look at Irregular Verbs | 136 |
| 28. Placing Modifiers | 141 |
| 29. Check Your Progress | 147 |
| IV. Punctuation Marks and Capitals | 153 |
| Lesson 30. The Period and Other End Marks | 155 |
| 31. The Comma in Series and Compounds | 159 |
| 32. Commas with Interrupters | 163 |
| 33. Other Uses of Commas | 168 |
| 34. The Apostrophe | 172 |
| 35. Capital Letters | 176 |
| 36. Check Your Progress | 181 |
| A Glossary of Usage | 185 |
| Final Test | 192 |
| Key | 198 |

PART

I

Classes of Words

Any large dictionary of English lists more than 500,000 words. After each word appears a label such as *n.* or *prep.* that names the **class** to which the word belongs. A class is a group of things or people that have something in common.

Every word in the language can be put in one class or another. There are eight of these classes:

| | | | |
|------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| noun | pronoun | adverb | conjunction |
| verb | adjective | preposition | interjection |

We will skip interjections—words such as *oh*, *ah*, *yuk*. They cause no problems.

Each class of words acts in its own way, differently from the rest. Some of them change form and spelling:

big → bigger cat → cats want → wanted

Some make no change at all:

and from

Each class of words has a certain job to do in a sentence. Some act as directors, some as followers, some as joiners, and so on.

You can think of a sentence as made up of words. Or you can think of it as made up of *classes* of words. This is the better way. It gives you a better idea of what is going on in a sentence.

Our first goal, then, is to find out how word classes differ from each other. The next goal is to learn what each word class does in the sentence.

Lesson 1. The Noun

In order to talk about something, you have to give it a name. You can't just go on saying, "That thing over there," or "This thing on the back door." The need to use names may explain why the largest class of words is the **noun**.

A noun gives a name. Nouns are used to name

persons: employer, referee, Effie Morse

places: street, park, Maine

things: tree, car, freedom

Nouns are used to name

things that can be seen: smoke, fire, ice

things that can't be seen: heat, justice, idea

In naming something, you can use a general word such as *bridge*. This word refers to everything of the same sort in the world. Such a general word is called a **common noun**.

You can also refer to one particular bridge: *Golden Gate Bridge*. You can do the same with people: *woman* or *Carmen Arroyo*. Names of particular, individual persons or things are called **proper nouns**.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| John J. Sullivan | The Daily News |
| Lincoln Park | The First National Bank |

As you see, a proper noun may be made up of two or more words which act together. When two or more words act together as a unit, they are called a **phrase**. Thus, *The New York Times* is a **noun phrase**. A noun phrase may also act as a common noun: *son-in-law*. A noun phrase may contain several words, but it acts as *one* noun.

When *the* is the first word in a name, it is capitalized. Neither *the* nor *of* is capitalized if it appears elsewhere in a name.

The Museum of Natural History
School of the Applied Arts

Many nouns have endings not found in other word classes.
Here are a few noun endings:

| | | | | |
|------|-----|------|------|-----|
| ance | ist | ment | or | ure |
| ence | ity | ness | tion | |

If you see one of these endings on a word, you can be pretty sure that it is a noun; for example:

| | | | | |
|------------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| appliance | pianist | statement | actor | treasure |
| difference | purity | likeness | section | |

Another way to tell a noun is that it often has a *signal word* such as *the*, *a*, or *an* before it.

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <i>the</i> tree | <i>a</i> boy | <i>an</i> apple |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|

If it does not have a signal word, the noun can be tested to see if a signal word would fit.

Apples are ripe. → *The* apples are ripe.
but not

The are... The ripe are...

TRY IT OUT



A. Which of these words are nouns? Place an *x* on the line after each noun. *Clue:* Try putting *the*, *a*, or *an* before each word. If it sounds right, you have a common noun. For example: *The art* but not “the gloomy”. Item 2 has an *x* but item 1 does not.

- | | | | | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 1. gloomy | _____ | 4. furniture | _____ | 7. govern | _____ |
| 2. art | <u> x </u> | 5. very | _____ | 8. government | _____ |
| 3. furnish | _____ | 6. often | _____ | 9. druggist | _____ |

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|----------------|-----|---------------|-----|
| 10. pure | ___ | 17. now | ___ | 24. would | ___ |
| 11. failure | ___ | 18. loyalty | ___ | 25. piano | ___ |
| 12. differ | ___ | 19. purity | ___ | 26. statement | ___ |
| 13. friendly | ___ | 20. inform | ___ | 27. correct | ___ |
| 14. likeness | ___ | 21. acceptance | ___ | 28. off | ___ |
| 15. actor | ___ | 22. made | ___ | 29. beauty | ___ |
| 16. write | ___ | 23. why | ___ | 30. courage | ___ |



B. Which of the words below are proper nouns? Write each proper noun correctly. Write *common* after each common noun. The first two items are done for you.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. newspaper | _____ <i>common</i> |
| 2. the chicago tribune | _____ <i>The Chicago Tribune</i> |
| 3. wilson riles | _____ |
| 4. government | _____ |
| 5. drugstore | _____ |
| 6. new year's day | _____ |
| 7. jose iturbi | _____ |
| 8. aunt | _____ |
| 9. ford motor company | _____ |
| 10. yellowstone national park | _____ |

- 11. brother _____
- 12. eartha kitt _____
- 13. college _____
- 14. stanford university _____
- 15. lake _____
- 16. mountain _____
- 17. atlantic ocean _____
- 18. o. j. simpson _____
- 19. lake michigan _____
- 20. secretary _____



C. Each word below can be made into a noun by adding the ending given. Add the ending and write the new word. The first one is done for you.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| 1. depart + ure | <u>departure</u> | 6. conduct + or | _____ |
| 2. fail + ure | _____ | 7. bright + ness | _____ |
| 3. like + ness | _____ | 8. equal + ity | _____ |
| 4. accept + ance | _____ | 9. inform + ation | _____ |
| 5. require + ment | _____ | 10. govern + or | _____ |

Lesson 2. Noun Plurals

Most of the nouns you use show whether you are talking about one thing or more than one thing. They are spelled in one way for the **singular** (one) and in another for the **plural** (more than one).

The plural of most nouns is made by adding *s* to the singular form. But if the singular ends *s*, *x*, *z*, *ch*, or *sh*, the plural is made by adding *es*.

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> | <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| paper | papers | lunch | lunches |
| taxi | taxis | dress | dresses |
| idea | ideas | quiz | quizzes |
| menu | menus | brush | brushes |
| game | games | box | boxes |

Words that end *o* are different. If a **vowel** comes just before the *o*, only *s* is added: studios, cameos. The vowel letters are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*. The other letters are **consonants**. If a consonant comes just before the *o*, usually only *s* is added. But in some words, *es* is added. You should memorize these common *es* words:

| | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| cargoes | mosquitoes | potatoes | torpedoes |
| echoes | mottoes | tomatoes | vetoes |
| heroes | Negroes | tornadoes | volcanoes |
| hoboes | | | |

Words that end *y* form the plural in two ways. If a vowel comes just before the *y*, the plural is made by adding *s*.

trays monkeys joys buys

If a consonant comes just before the *y*, the *y* is changed to *i* and *es* is added.

country → countries company → companies

Notes: 1. A few nouns form the plural by change of a letter or

letters in the middle of the word: *tooth* → *teeth*, *woman* → *women*, *goose* → *geese*.

2. A few nouns are the same in singular and plural: *sheep*, *deer*.

3. For some nouns there is no plural: *wealth*, *happiness*, *furniture*.

4. Some nouns are plural in form but singular in meaning: *news*, *politics*, *measles*.

NOW TRY THESE



A. Which of the following words have a plural form?

Write *yes* or *no*.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1. baked | _____ | 6. gladly | _____ |
| 2. home | _____ | 7. which | _____ |
| 3. goodness | _____ | 8. nation | _____ |
| 4. tricky | _____ | 9. argument | _____ |
| 5. trick | _____ | 10. entrance | _____ |



B. Write the plural form for each word. The first two items are done for you.

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| 1. alibi | <u>alibis</u> | 7. canoe | _____ |
| 2. movie | <u>' movies</u> | 8. torpedo | _____ |
| 3. potato | _____ | 9. orchestra | _____ |
| 4. hero | _____ | 10. splash | _____ |
| 5. opera | _____ | 11. mess | _____ |
| 6. piano | _____ | 12. tooth | _____ |

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 13. foreman | _____ | 17. menu | _____ |
| 14. fox | _____ | 18. Bliss | _____ |
| 15. bench | _____ | 19. foot | _____ |
| 16. rabbi | _____ | 20. echo | _____ |



C. Write the plural for each word.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1. donkey | _____ | 11. jersey | _____ |
| 2. country | _____ | 12. veto | _____ |
| 3. camera | _____ | 13. radio | _____ |
| 4. turkey | _____ | 14. army | _____ |
| 5. century | _____ | 15. ski | _____ |
| 6. property | _____ | 16. pulley | _____ |
| 7. goose | _____ | 17. entry | _____ |
| 8. motto | _____ | 18. tomato | _____ |
| 9. apology | _____ | 19. attorney | _____ |
| 10. scene | _____ | 20. ceremony | _____ |



D. Write the plural for each word.

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------|------------|-------|
| 1. mass | _____ | 4. cross | _____ |
| 2. rookie | _____ | 5. lady | _____ |
| 3. comma | _____ | 6. scratch | _____ |

7. melody _____

9. valley _____

8. veto _____

10. luxury _____