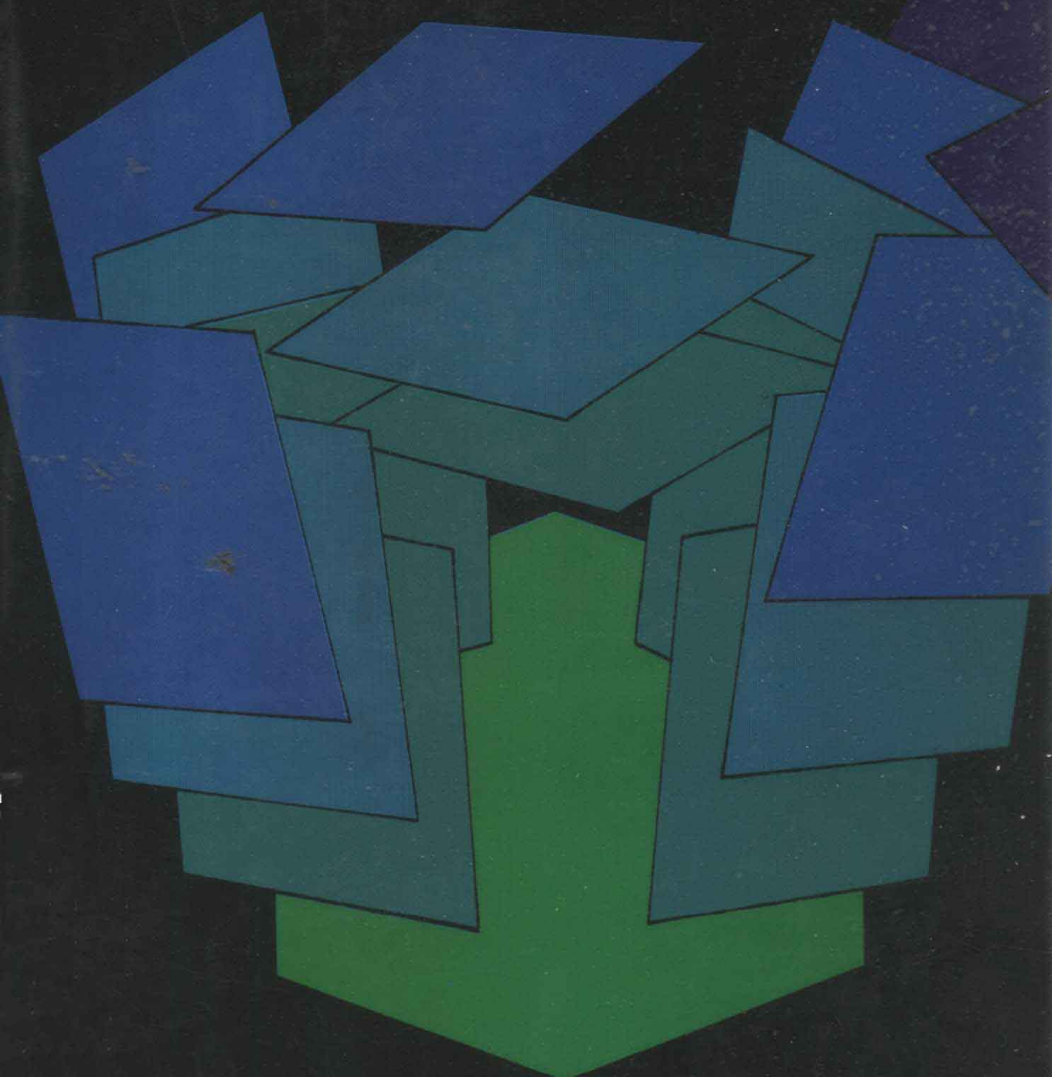


Michael Swan

**Practical  
English Usage**

牛津英语用法指南



★学生英语文库★

# 牛津英语用法指南

M·斯旺 著

牛津大学出版社

外语教学与研究出版社

**牛津英语用法指南**

**M. 斯旺著**

牛津大学出版社 出版发行  
外语教学与研究出版社

(北京西三环北路19号)

北京第二新华印刷厂印刷

新华书店总店北京发行所经销

开本 850×1168 1/32 17.5 印张

1991年2月第1版 1991年2月第1次印刷

印数 1—10000 册

ISBN 7-5600-0772-4/H·328

定价: 8.40 元

取得重印权 限国内发行

## 学生英语文库出版说明

中国人学英语的进程，可以说大致有三个境界。第一个境界是要依靠本族语（对大多数人来说是汉语）明的或暗的帮助来学习英语，如依靠汉语讲解、注释，口头、笔头、心头的翻译，英汉词典以及其他用中文编写的参考书等等来领会英语。第二个境界是能够通过英语学习英语，如读英文注释，听英语讲解，使用英英词典，阅读英文原著参考书等等，亦即能借助浅近的英语学习艰深的英语，并进而直接从英文书刊、英语讲话中吸收英语知识，掌握英语规律。第三个境界是能在英汉两种语言系统之间建立联系（不是个别孤立词语的对号），最后达到能在两种语言中间自如地来回转换的境地。

以上三种境界，虽然可能有交叉或平行，但是大体上可以代表由低到高的三个阶段。代表第一个境界的阶段，可以尽量缩短，有人甚至主张跳过或绕开。第三个境界严格说已经属于翻译专业修养的范围。唯有第二个境界是英语学习的中心。尽早达到这一境界，是学习成功的要诀。英语学习者在入门阶段结束之后，就应当逐步学会阅读原文著作，听原声讲话，使用英英词典，阅读原著参考书，敢看爱看原版书刊。一句话，要日夕涵泳于英语之中，养成通过英语学英语的能力、爱好、信心和习惯。

经验证明，阅读译本看似省力，实际常有雾里看花之憾；钻研原著，起初不免吃力，但是唯有如此，才能识得庐山真面目。文学作品是这样，一般语文参考书也是这样。从研究外国文化的目标着想，必须立志精通外语；从学习外语的方法着眼，应当早读多读原文著作。

因此，多读精选的英语原著，是精通英语的一个最重要的途径。学生英语文库的出版，就是为了给中级以上的学习者提

供一部分这样的基本书籍。

收入**学生英语文库**的都是英语国家著名出版社所出的有价值著作，在世界上享有盛誉。其中有关于语言的，也有关于文学的；有教程和读物，也有参考书和工具书。每一种都是针对我国学习者的需要精选，并根据最新版本影印的。

**学生英语文库**中的书籍，除一两种教程酌加中文注释和参考译文外，其余都是英语原著的翻版。这些著作，绝大多数都是屡经修订再版，或年复一年地重印，成了各国英语学习者和使用者案头、架上常备之物。所收文学作品，都是名著杰作；在英语国家是家弦户诵，在其他国家是一切英语和文学爱好者所不可不读的。熟读这些作品，既有助于掌握英语的精髓，又可深入了解英语国家的社会历史文化背景。

**学生英语文库**第一辑和第二辑约 20 种，定于近期陆续和读者见面。以后还将逐步扩充选目。我们希望这个小小文库能成为我国广大英语学习者的良师益友。

## 本书内容介绍

非英语国家的人在学习和使用英语中常会遇到许多问题，有时候在理论上似乎弄懂了，但在实际运用时又会出错。《牛津英语用法指南》正是着重解决学英语的人在英语习惯用法、词义辨析、语音、语法、文体修辞、英国英语和美国英语的重大区别、某些基本常识（如称呼、写信、报纸标题）等方面遇到的实际问题。

《牛津英语用法指南》是一本由牛津大学出版社最新出版的英语用法专著。书中对 639 个经常使学英语的外国学生感到困难的问题做了解释。如果一个学生在使用英语中犯了错误，想知道错在哪里，如果一个教师想为一个语法或词汇难题找到明确的解释，都可以在本书中查找到正确答案。

本书不同于一般的英语语法教程，在编排体例上采用条目按字母顺序排列，书后附有条目索引，因此更象一本词典。作者在编写此书时力求实用，每个条目都有解释、正确的例句、有些还举出典型的错误例句，供学习使用者对照。书中对语言难点的解释使用的是平易的现代英语，例语例句丰富多样，反映了英美的现实生活，语言难点的程度由浅到深，适合各种水平的学习者使用。因此，这确实是一本十分实用的现代英语用法参考指南。不失为英语学习者手头必备之参考工具书。

# Introduction

## The purpose of this book.

English, like all languages, is full of problems for the foreign learner. Some of these problems are easy to explain – for instance, the formation of questions, the difference between *since* and *for*, the meaning of *after all*. Other problems are more tricky, and cause difficulty even to advanced students and teachers. How exactly is the present perfect tense used? What are the differences between *at*, *on* and *in* with expressions of place? We can say *a chair leg* – why not *a girl leg*? What are the real rules for the use of *like* and *as*? When can we use the expression *do so*? When is *of* used after *both*? What is the difference between *come* and *go*, between *each* and *every*, between *beach*, *coast* and *shore*, between *fairly*, *quite*, *rather* and *pretty*? Is it correct to say *There's three more bottles in the fridge*? How do you say  $3 \times 4 = 12$ ? And so on, and so on.

This book is a practical reference guide to problems of this kind. It deals with over 600 points which regularly cause difficulty to foreign students of English. Most of the questions treated are grammatical, but there are also explanations of a certain number of common vocabulary problems (e.g. the difference between *big*, *great* and *large*).

## Level

The book is intended for intermediate and advanced students, and for teachers of English. Being a reference book, it contains information at various levels, ranging from relatively simple points to very advanced problems.

## Organization

Problems are mostly explained in short separate entries; the book is more like a dictionary than a grammar in form. This makes it possible to give a clear complete treatment of each problem, and enables the user to concentrate just on the point he needs information about. Entries are arranged (roughly) alphabetically by title, and numbered in sequence; a comprehensive index shows where each point can be found.

## Approach and style

I have tried to make the presentation as practical as possible. Each entry contains an explanation of a problem, examples of correct usage, and (when this is useful) examples of typical mistakes. More complicated problems are divided into separate entries: a general explanation first, followed by more complete information for advanced students and teachers. Explanations are, as far as possible, in simple everyday language. Where it has been necessary to use gram-

mathematical terminology, I have generally preferred to use traditional terms that are well known and easy to understand. Some of these terms (eg *future tense*) would be regarded as unsatisfactory by many modern grammarians, but I am not writing for specialists. There is a dictionary of language terminology (including the terms used in this book) on pages xii–xxiv.

### **The kind of English described**

The explanations are mainly of standard modern British English, and the examples are as realistic as I can make them. Stylistic differences (eg between formal and informal usage, or spoken and written language) are mentioned where this is appropriate. Some information is given about American usage, but the book is not intended as a systematic guide to American English.

### **Correctness**

If we say that a form is 'incorrect', we can mean two different things. We may be referring to a form like *\*I have seen her yesterday*, which only occurs in the English of foreigners; or we may be talking about a form like *ain't*, which is used by many British and American people, but which is considered 'wrong' or substandard. In this book, I am mainly concerned with the first sort of incorrectness (the differences between British or American English and 'foreign' English), but I have mentioned a few examples of the second kind. Sometimes a form is used by some educated people, but considered wrong by others (eg *me* in *It was me that found your keys*). When this is the case, I have said so, but I have not tried to suggest who is right.

Incorrect forms are indicated by asterisks (\*\*\*) . Asterisks, and the word 'mistake', are also occasionally used to identify forms which may be marginally acceptable, but which students are advised not to use.

### **How to use the book**

This is a reference book, not a systematic course in English grammar. It will be most useful to a student who has made a mistake and wants to find out why it is wrong, or to a teacher who is looking for a clear explanation of a difficult point of grammar or vocabulary. The best way to find a point is to look in the index at the back: most problems are indexed under several different names, so it is not usually difficult to locate quickly the entry you need. (For instance, if you want to know what is wrong with *\*It's time you go now*, you can find the number of the section where this is explained by looking in the index under *time*, *it's time*, *tense*, or *past tense with present or future meaning*.)

### **Other reference books**

This book gives explanations of individual points of usage, but does



- not show how the separate points 'fit together'. For a systematically organized account of the whole of English grammar, students should consult a book such as *A Practical English Grammar*, by Thomson and Martinet (Oxford University Press, 1980) or *A University Grammar of English*, by Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum (Longman, 1973). For a detailed treatment of English vocabulary, see the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford University Press, 1980) or the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Longman, 1978).

### **Comments**

I should be very glad to hear from students or teachers using the book who find mistakes or omissions, or who have comments or suggestions of any kind. Please write to me c/o Oxford University Press (ELT Reference), Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

## Phonetic alphabet

It is necessary to use a special alphabet to show the pronunciation of English words, because the ordinary English alphabet does not have enough different letters to represent all the sounds of the language. The following list contains all the letters of the phonetic alphabet used in this book, with examples of the words in which the sounds that they refer to are found.

### Vowels and diphthongs (double vowels)

i:	seat /si:t/, feel /fi:l/	ə	another /ə'nʌðə(r)/, consistent /kən'sɪstənt/
ɪ	sit /sɪt/, in /ɪn/	eɪ	take /teɪk/, wait /weɪt/
e	set /set/, any /'eni/	aɪ	mine /maɪn/, light /laɪt/
æ	sat /sæt/, match /mætʃ/	ɔɪ	oil /ɔɪl/, boy /bɔɪ/
ɑ:	march /mɑ:tʃ/, after /'ɑ:ftə(r)/	əʊ	no /nəʊ/, open /'əʊpən/
ɒ	pot /pɒt/, gone /gɒn/	aʊ	house /haʊs/, now /naʊ/
ɔ:	port /pɔ:t/, law /lɔ:l/	ɪə	hear /hɪə(r)/, deer /dɪə(r)/
ʊ	good /gʊd/, could /kʊd/	eə	where /weə(r)/, air /eə(r)/
u:	food /fu:d/, group /gru:p/	ʊə	tour /tʊə(r)/, endure /ɪn'dʒʊə(r)/
ʌ	much /mʌtʃ/, front /frʌnt/		
ɜ:	turn /tɜ:n/, word /wɜ:d/		

### Consonants

p	pull /pʊl/, cup /kʌp/	tʃ	cheap /tʃi:p/, catch /kætʃ/
b	bull /bʊl/, rob /rɒb/	dʒ	jail /dʒeɪl/, bridge /brɪdʒ/
f	ferry /'feri/, life /laɪf/, cough /kɒf/	k	king /kɪŋ/, case /keɪs/, take /teɪk/, back /bæk/
v	very /'veri/, live /lɪv/	g	go /gəʊ/, rug /rʌg/
θ	think /θɪŋk/, bath /bɑ:θ/	m	my /maɪ/, come /kʌm/
ð	though /ðəʊ/, with /wɪð/	n	no /nəʊ/, on /ɒn/
t	take /teɪk/, set /set/	ŋ	sing /sɪŋ/, finger /'fɪŋgə(r)/
d	day /deɪ/, red /red/	l	love /lʌv/, hole /həʊl/
s	sing /sɪŋ/, rice /raɪs/	r	round /raʊnd/, carry /'kæri/, fire /'faɪə(r)/
z	zoo /zu:/, days /deɪz/	w	well /wel/
ʃ	show /ʃəʊ/, wish /wɪʃ/	j	young /jʌŋ/
ʒ	pleasure /'pleʒə(r)/, occasion /ə'keɪʒn/	h	house /haʊs/

(r) In spoken British English an r at the end of a written word (either as the final letter, as in *fur*, or before an e, as in *fire*) is not sounded unless another word that begins with a vowel sound follows immediately in the same sentence. To show this, words which end in r or re have (r) at the end of the phonetic spelling, as in *beer* /bɪə(r)/.

\* represents strong or *primary* stress. } as in *goodbye* /,gʊd'baɪ/.  
 , represents weak or *secondary* stress

## Language terminology

These are some of the commonest words and expressions used in talking about grammar and other aspects of language.

**abstract noun** (the opposite of a concrete noun) the name of something which we experience as an idea, not by direct physical contact or perception. *doubt; height; geography.*

**active** An active verb form is one like *breaks, told, will help* (not like *is broken, was told, will be helped*, which are *passive* verb forms). The subject of an active verb is usually the person or thing that does the action, or is responsible for what happens.

**adjective** a word like *green, hungry, impossible*, which is used when we describe people, things, events, etc. Adjectives are used in connection with nouns and pronouns. *a green apple; I'm hungry.*

**adjective clause** a clause (introduced by a relative pronoun) which does the same job as an adjective. Compare: *a hungry baby* (*hungry* is an adjective); *a baby that wants to eat* (*that wants to eat* is an adjective clause).

**adjectival participle clause** a participle clause which does the same job as an adjective. *Anybody wanting to eat should help themselves now.*

**adverb** a word like *tomorrow, once, badly, there, also*, which is used to say, for example, when, where or how something happens. There are very many kinds of adverbs, with different functions; see sections 10-12.

**adverb clause** a clause which does the same job as an adverb. Compare: *I'll see you tomorrow* (*tomorrow* is an adverb). *I'll see you when you get back* (*when you get back* is an adverb clause). Other examples: *I telephoned Robin because I didn't know what to do* (adverb clause of reason). *Ask me if you need anything* (adverb clause of condition).

**adverb particle** a word like *up, out, off* used as part of a phrasal verb. *clean up, sold out, tell off.*

**adverb phrase** a short group of words which does the same job as an adverb. *on Tuesday; in the bathroom.*

**adverbial** a group of words that does the same job as an adverb; the same as *adverb phrase* or *adverb clause*.

**adverbial participle clause** an adverb clause introduced by a participle. *Not knowing what to do, I telephoned Robin.*

**affirmative** An affirmative sentence is one that is not negative. Compare: *I agree* (affirmative). *I don't agree* (negative).

**affix** In the words *anti-American, anticommunist, postwar, postnatal, older, younger, greenish, mannish*, the elements *anti-, post-, -er* and *-ish* are affixes. (*Anti-* and *post-* are prefixes; *-er* and *-ish* are suffixes.)

**agent** In a passive sentence, the agent is the expression that says who

- (or what) an action is done by. *This picture was probably painted by a pupil of Rubens.*
- anaphora** In a sentence like *I put the money back in my pocket*, the article *the* (in *the money*) shows that the money has been mentioned before. This use of articles (and pronouns) to 'point backwards' is called *anaphora*, or *anaphoric reference*.
- antecedent** the noun with which a relative pronoun or relative clause is connected. In the sentence *There's the child who broke my window*, the expression *the child* is the antecedent of *who (broke my window)*.
- anticipatory subject, anticipatory object** the same as *preparatory subject, object*.
- apposition** In a sentence like *Harry, my brother-in-law, is a policeman*, the descriptive expression *my brother-in-law* is not connected to the subject by any preposition or conjunction. We say that it is in *apposition*.
- article** *A, an* and *the* are called *articles*. *A/an* is called the *indefinite article*; *the* is called the *definite article*.
- aspect** In English, verb forms can be used to show, for example, whether an action was going on at a particular time, or whether it had been completed (compare: *it was raining*; *it had rained*). The use of verb forms to show this kind of meaning is called *aspect* (e.g. *progressive aspect, perfective aspect*).
- assertive** The words *some, somebody* etc are used most often in affirmative sentences. In other kinds of sentence, they are often replaced by *any, anybody* etc. *Some, somebody* etc are called *assertive forms*; *any, anybody* etc are called *non-assertive forms*. Other non-assertive forms are *yet; ever*.
- attributive** Adjectives placed before nouns are in *attributive position*. *a green shirt; my noisy son*. See also *predicative position*.
- auxiliary verb** a verb like *be, have, do* which is used with another verb to make tenses, passive forms etc. *She was writing. Where have you put it?* See also *modal auxiliary verbs*.
- bare infinitive** the infinitive without *to*. *Let me go*.
- base form** the simplest form of a verb. *go; work; remember*.
- case** the use of different forms of nouns or pronouns to show their function in a sentence. The difference between *I* and *me*, or *who* and *whom*, are differences of case; forms like *John's, the earth's* are examples of the *possessive case* or *genitive case* of nouns.
- clause** a part of a sentence which contains a subject and a verb, usually joined to the rest of the sentence by a conjunction. *Mary said that she was tired*. The word *clause* is also sometimes used for structures containing participles or infinitives (with no subject or conjunction). *Not knowing what to do, I telephoned Robin. I persuaded her to try a new method*.
- cleft sentence** a sentence in which special emphasis is given to one part (e.g. the subject or the object) by using a structure with *it* or *what*. *It was you that caused the accident. What I need is a beer*.
- collective noun** a singular word used to refer to a group. *family; team*.

- colloquial** a *colloquial* word or expression is used mainly in informal speech, not in careful, formal or literary language. *How's life? Where's the loo* (= 'the toilet')?
- common noun** a noun which is not a proper name. *car; idea; electric guitar. John; Brighton* are proper names (or nouns), not common nouns.
- comparative** the form of an adjective or adverb made with the suffix *-er* (*older; faster*); also the structure *more* + adjective/adverb, used in the same way (*more useful; more politely*).
- complement** a part of a sentence that gives more information about the subject (after *be, seem* and some other verbs), or, in some structures, about the object. *You're the right person to help. She looks very kind. The President appointed Bristow his confidential adviser.*
- compound** A compound noun, verb, adjective, preposition, etc is one that is made of two or more parts. *bus-driver; get on with; one-eyed; in spite of.*
- concession, concessive** These words are used for grammatical structures (e.g. with *although* or *may*) in which we admit the truth of something that goes against the main argument of the sentence. *Although Spurs did not play as well as usual, they had no difficulty in winning. She may be an annoying person, but she has a lot of character and energy.*
- concord** Sometimes verb forms change according to whether the subject is singular or plural (*he thinks*, but *they think*), or according to whether the subject is first, second or third person (*I am, you are, he is*). This 'agreement' of the verb with the subject is called *concord*.
- concrete noun** (the opposite of an abstract noun) the name of something which we can experience by direct physical contact or perception. *cloud; petrol; raspberry.*
- conditional** (1) a verb form made by using the modal auxiliary *would* (also *should* in the first person). *I would run; she would sing; I should think.* (2) a clause or sentence containing *if* (or a word with a similar meaning), and often containing a conditional verb form. *If you try you'll understand. I should be surprised if she knew. What would you have done if the train had been late?*
- conjunction** a word like *and, but, although, because, when, if*, which can be used to join clauses together. *I rang because I was worried about you.*
- continuous** the same as *progressive*.
- contraction** a short form in which a subject and an auxiliary verb, or a verb and the word *not*, are joined together into one word. *I'm; who'll; can't.*
- conversational** the same as *colloquial*.
- co-ordinate clause** one of two or more clauses of equal 'value' that make up a sentence. A co-ordinate clause does not function as a subject, object, complement or adverbial in another clause. *Shall I*

- come to your place** or **would you like to come to mine?** *It's cooler today and there's a bit of a wind.* See also *subordinate clause*.
- co-ordinating conjunction** a conjunction (e.g. *and, but, or*) that joins co-ordinate clauses.
- copula** the verb *be*, used simply to link a subject to its complement. *My mother is in Jersey.*
- count noun** or **countable noun** a noun like *car, dog, idea*, which can have a plural form, and can be used with the indefinite article *alan*. See also *uncountable noun*.
- dangling participle** the same as *hanging participle*.
- declarative question** a question which has the same grammatical form as a statement. *That's your girl-friend?*
- defective verb** a verb (like *can, ought, must, abide*) which does not have all the forms that a normal verb has (*can* has no infinitive or participles; *ought* and *must* have no infinitive, participles or past forms; *abide* has no past participle). Modal auxiliary verbs are defective.
- defining relative clause** the same as *identifying relative clause*.
- degree** adverbs of degree are for example *quite, rather, very, too*.
- demonstrative adjective/pronoun** *this/these; that/those*.
- dependent clause** the same as *subordinate clause*.
- determiner** one of a group of words that are normally used at the beginning of noun phrases. Determiners include *alan, the, my, this, each, either, several, more, both, all*.
- direct object** see *object*.
- direct speech** speech reported 'directly', in the words used by the original speaker (more or less), without any changes of tense, pronouns etc. *She looked me straight in the eyes and said, "This is my money."* See also *reported speech*.
- discourse marker** a word or expression which shows the connection between what is being said and the rest of the 'discourse' (e.g. what came before or after, or the speaker's attitude to what he is saying). *on the other hand; frankly; as a matter of fact*.
- double negative** the use of two negative words in the same clause, especially when the meaning is a simple negative one. *I shouldn't be surprised if we didn't have some rain. You ain't heard nothing yet* (sub-standard).
- duration** the length of time something lasts. The preposition *for* can be used with an expression of time to indicate duration.
- dynamic** Dynamic verbs express actions, not states; they can usually be used in progressive tenses. *fly; shout; plan*. See also *stative verbs*.
- ellipsis** (adjective *elliptic*) leaving out words when their meaning can be understood from the context. *(It's a) Nice day, isn't it? It was better than I expected (it would be)*.
- emphasis** giving special importance to one part of a word or sentence (e.g. by pronouncing it more loudly; by writing it in capital letters; by using *do* in an affirmative clause; by using special word order).
- emphatic pronoun** *myself, yourself, himself* etc used to emphasize a

- noun or pronoun. *I'll tell him myself. I wouldn't sell this to the King himself.* See also *reflexive pronouns*.
- ending** a grammatical suffix, e.g. *-er, -ing, -ed*.
- finite** a finite verb form is one that can be used with a subject to make a verb tense (e.g. *breaks, broke, is singing, has been*). Most sentences contain at least one finite verb form. See also *non-finite*.
- first person** see *person*.
- formal** the style used when talking politely to strangers, on special occasions, in some literary writing, in business letters, etc. For example, *commence* is a more formal word than *start*.
- frequency** Adverbs of frequency say how often something happens. *often; never; daily; occasionally*.
- fronting** moving a part of a clause to the beginning in order to give it special emphasis. *Jack I like, but his wife I can't stand.*
- future (or future simple) tense** a verb form made with the auxiliary verb *will/shall*. *I shall arrive. Will it matter?*
- future perfect tense** a verb form made with *shall/will + have + past participle*. *I'll have finished by lunchtime.*
- future progressive** a verb form made with *shall/will + be + ...-ing*. *I'll be needing the car this evening.*
- gender** the use of different grammatical forms to show the difference between masculine, feminine and neuter, or between human and non-human. *he, she, it; who, which*.
- genitive** the form of a noun made with 's or s', used to show (for instance) possession. Also called *possessive*. *the earth's gravity; birds' nests*.
- gerund** the *-ing* form of a verb, used like a noun (for instance, as the subject of a sentence, or after a preposition). *Smoking is dangerous. You can't get there by walking.*
- gradable** *Pretty, hard or cold* are gradable adjectives: things can be *more or less* pretty, hard or cold. Adverbs of degree (like *rather, very*) can be used with gradable words. *Perfect or dead* are not gradable words: we do not usually say that something is more or less perfect, or very dead.
- grammar** the rules that say how words change to show different meanings, and how they are combined into sentences.
- hanging participle** a participle which does not have a subject in the sentence. *Looking out of the window, the mountains seemed very close.* The construction is usually avoided, because of the possibility of misunderstanding.
- head** the head of a noun phrase is the main noun, which is qualified by all the other words, (e.g. *car* in *the best sports car ever made*). In a verb phrase, the head is the main verb (at the end of the phrase), e.g. *invited* in *She should never have been invited*.
- hypothetical** The conditional is often used to talk about *hypothetical* situations – that is to say, situations which may not happen, or which are not real. *What would you do if you had three months free?*

**Identifying relative clause** a relative clause which identifies the noun it refers to – that is to say, it tells us which person or thing is being talked about. *There's the woman **who tried to steal your cat**.* (The relative clause *who tried to steal your cat* identifies the woman – it tells us which woman is meant.) See also *non-identifying relative clause*.

**Idiom** a group of words with a special meaning, which cannot be understood by taking the meanings of the words one at a time. *get on with; off his head; over the moon*.

**imperative** the base form of a verb used to give orders, make suggestions, etc. ***Bring me a pen. Have a good holiday.***

**Indefinite article** *an*.

**Indirect object** see *object*.

**Indirect speech** the same as *reported speech*.

**Infinitive** the base form of a verb (usually with *to*), used after another verb, after an adjective or noun, or as the subject or object of a sentence. *I want **to go home**. It's easy **to sing**. I've got a plan **to start a business**. **To err is human, to forgive divine**.*

**Infinitive particle** *to*, used with the infinitive.

**Informal** the style used in ordinary conversation, personal letters, etc, when there is no special reason to speak politely or carefully. *Get is used mostly in an informal style; start is a more informal word than commence*.

**-ing form** the form of a verb ending in *-ing* (especially when used like a noun). *finding; keeping; running; firing*. See also *gerund, present participle*.

**Initial** at the beginning. *Sometimes* is an adverb that can go in *initial position* in a sentence. *Sometimes I wish I had never been born*.

**Instrument** (in a passive sentence) the noun phrase referring to the tool or other instrument with which something is done. *It was written with a ball-point pen*.

**Intensifying** making stronger, more emphatic. *Very* and *terribly* are *intensifying adverbs*.

**Interrogative** Interrogative words and structures are used for asking questions. In an interrogative sentence, there is an auxiliary verb before the subject (e.g. *Can you swim?*). *What, who* and *where* are interrogative words.

**Intransitive** An intransitive verb is one that cannot have an object or be used in the passive. *smile; fall; come; go*.

**Introductory subject, Introductory object** the same as *preparatory subject, object*.

**Inversion** a structure in which a verb comes before its subject. ***Have you seen John?** Under no circumstances **are visitors** allowed to feed the animals*.

**Irregular** not following the normal rules. An irregular verb has a past tense and/or past participle that does not end in *-ed* (e.g. *swam, fallen*); *children* is an irregular plural.

**lexical verb** a verb that is not an auxiliary verb. *look; overtake; disturb*



(but not *will* or *can*).

**lexis** words; vocabulary.

**main clause** Some sentences consist of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. A subordinate clause acts like a part of the main clause (e.g. like a subject, or an object, or an adverbial). **Where she is doesn't matter.** (The subordinate clause *Where she is* is the subject of the main clause.) **I told you that I didn't care.** (The subordinate clause *that I didn't care* is the direct object in the main clause.) **Wherever you go, you'll find Coca-cola.** (The subordinate clause *Wherever you go* acts like an adverb in the main clause – compare *You'll find Coca-cola anywhere.*) See also *subordinate clause*.

**main verb** the verb which is used as the basis for the main clause in a sentence. In the sentence *Running into the room, she started to cry*, **started** is the main verb.

**manner** an adverb of manner describes how something happens. *well, suddenly, fast.*

**mass noun** the same as *uncountable noun*.

**mid-position** If an adverb is in *mid-position* in a sentence, it is between the subject and the main verb. **I definitely agree with you.**

**modal auxiliary verb** one of the verbs *can, could, may, might, must, will, shall, would, should, ought* and *need*. *Dare, used to* and *had better* are sometimes included in this group.

**modification or qualification** changing the meaning of something. Adjectives are said to *modify* or *qualify* the noun they refer to; adverbs are said to *modify* or *qualify* verbs, adjectives, adverbs or whole sentences.

**negative** a negative sentence is one in which the word *not* is used with the verb. **I don't know.**

**nominal relative clause** a relative clause (usually introduced by *what*) which acts as the subject, object or complement of a sentence. **I gave him what he needed.**

**non-assertive** see *assertive*.

**non-finite** a verb form that cannot be used with a subject to make a tense. *to break, breaking, broken, being broken*. See also *finite*.

**non-defining relative clause** the same as *non-identifying relative clause*.

**non-identifying relative clause** a relative clause which does not identify the noun it refers to (because we already know which person or thing is meant). **There's Hannah Smith, who tried to steal my cat.** (The relative clause, *who tried to steal my cat*, does not identify the person – she is already identified by the name *Hannah Smith*.) See also *identifying relative clause*.

**non-restrictive relative clause** the same as *non-identifying relative clause*.

**noun** a word like *oil, memory, arm*, which can be used with an article. Nouns are usually the names of people or things. Personal names (e.g. *George*), and place-names (e.g. *Birmingham*) are called *proper*