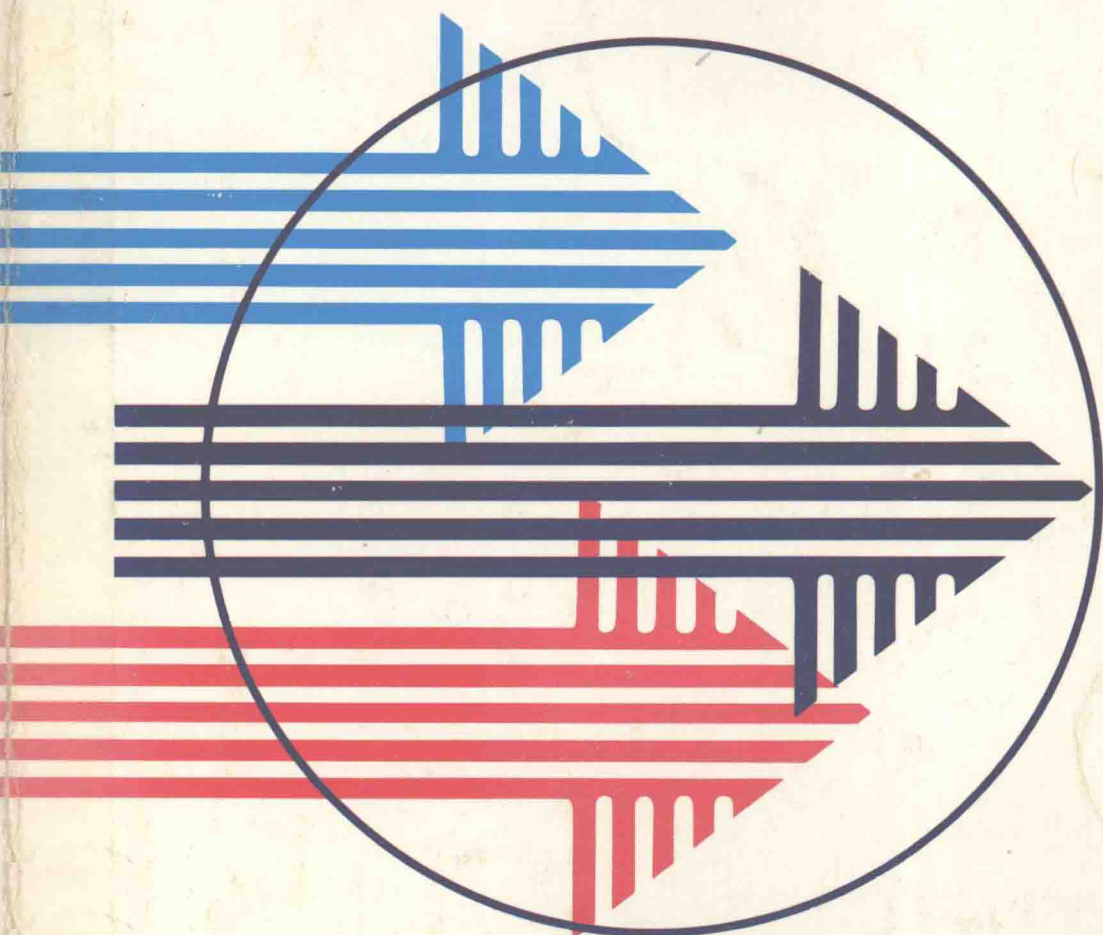


Communicate What You Mean

GRAMMAR FOR HIGH-LEVEL ESL STUDENTS



Carroll Washington Pollock

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ESL STUDENTS

CARROLL WASHINGTON POLLOCK



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Preface

Underlying Concepts of the Text

The grammatical rules of a language do not tell us *what to say*. Rather, the grammatical rules of a language tell us *how to respond correctly* within the structural system of a language. Therefore, using a language is, to a large degree, a psychological activity in that a speaker's responses depend not only upon a knowledge of structure but also upon a knowledge of the events of a "situation" and the speaker's feelings toward those events. Students (at every level) must be expected to give semantically and situationally correct responses as well as grammatically correct ones.

Although the "formal" study of grammatical analysis and meaning are often autonomous, encoding one's thoughts into a correct as well as situationally appropriate response is not. When speaking or writing, semantics and syntax work together to transmit meaning, and a message will be anomalous if there is a mistake in one or the other. For example, the student who says, "I have been arriving in the United States," understands the grammatical formation of the present perfect continuous tense, but the meaning of the verb "arrive" in this sentence limits us to an activity that occurs "one" time.

Features of the Exercises

With few exceptions, *the exercises are contextual*; that is, they are built around a "center of interest" so that the student is "talking about something" rather than simply repeating or completing a series of unrelated statements.

Although the explanations are presented deductively, *the exercises* that follow *provide oral as well as written practice*. High-level students need just as much

aural–oral practice with more complex structures as do low-level students with more basic structures.

The exercises require that the student make a grammatically correct response as well as one that is semantically appropriate. For this reason, many of the exercises allow for a number of correct responses that reflect the particular way in which a student has perceived the situation or has understood what has previously been stated. The student must “think” instead of merely filling in the blanks. Students who are only required to fill in the blanks are not provided with an opportunity to reuse previously learned structures or vocabulary.

There is a “built-in” repetition of structures from lesson to lesson so that old, previously learned material is reviewed while new material is being practiced. This built in redundancy also impresses upon the student the realization that several points of grammar operate simultaneously whenever we speak or write.

Special Features of the Text

At the beginning of each unit, introductory remarks (to the student) provide the student with a general idea of what is to be covered in the unit. This feature grew as a result of students’ questions over the years. Before beginning a unit, these remarks may be read in class or assigned to the student to be read at home, but they should not be omitted.

Each unit concludes with a practice exam. This exam provides a final review of the material covered in the lessons, and it permits the teacher to identify any remaining weaknesses.

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I am deeply grateful to Professor Mary Newton Bruder of the University of Pittsburgh for choosing to “class test” this text and to the ESL teachers at the University of Pittsburgh who used it in their classes for three semesters. I am particularly grateful to Miss Elaine Williams who coordinated the class testing and provided me with invaluable comments. I wish also to thank my colleagues Betsy Berriman who class tested the text at the University of Denver and Linda Peerson who proofread and assisted in the typing of the manuscript. Their training and years of experience in the field of ESL made their comments most valuable. A word of appreciation must be given to my former professors and colleagues at New York University, whose dedication to and professional pride in the field of ESL has always remained with me. Finally, I thank my husband Mel and son Matt for their patience and love.

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Denver, Colorado

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UNIT 1

Tense Review

To the Student Read before you begin this unit.

There are times in speaking and writing when only one tense is used predominately; however, when speaking or writing, a person generally uses several different tenses and moves from one tense to the other correctly and quickly. As you review the tenses in this chapter, remember the following:

1. Grammar rules do not tell you *what* to say. Grammar rules tell you *how* to say something correctly. Real-life events and your feelings about these events will determine what you will communicate.
2. Certain verbs cannot be used in certain tenses because of the *meaning* of the verbs. You must often think about the meaning of a particular verb as well as the meaning of the whole sentence before you use the verb in a particular tense. At all times meaning and form must fit. Look at the following sentence from a student composition.

incorrect: My parents have sent me to Stanford University after my graduation from high school.

The *form* of the present perfect tense is correct—have + past participle—but the *meaning* of the word *sent* in this sentence refers to an activity that usually happens only one time and is then finished. How many times can you graduate from high school? After graduation, how many times can your parents send you to the same university for the *first* time?

correct: My parents sent me to Stanford University after my graduation from high school.

As you review the tenses in this chapter, remember that the listener or reader does not know what you are going to say or write or how you feel about something

until you say it or write it. Your choice of tense must *correctly* express the activities of a situation as well as your feelings about the situation. Your choice of tense must express what *you* wish to communicate.

LESSON ONE

SIMPLE PRESENT

1. Makes factual statements.

The coffee bean **grows** well in warm, damp climates.

Colombia **produces** good coffee.

Roberto **is** from Colombia.

His father **owns** a coffee plantation.

2. Expresses customs and habitual activity.

Many office workers **take** a fifteen-minute coffee break every day.

I **drink** three cups of coffee every morning.

3. Expresses future time when used with a future time word or phrase.

Roberto **leaves** for Colombia next week.

Sue: What's the matter?

Bob: I didn't have time for coffee this morning.

Sue: Don't worry. The coffee cart **arrives** in ten minutes.

4. Expresses nonactions.

opinions: My landlady **makes** excellent coffee.

sense perceptions: This coffee **tastes** bitter.

emotions: I **hate** bitter coffee.

possession: This cup **belongs** to the secretary.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

1. Expresses a single activity or a series of activities happening at the moment of speaking.

I usually have a salad for lunch, but I'm **having** a sandwich now.

It's noon, and I **am sitting** in the park. It's a beautiful day, so many office workers **are eating** their lunches outside. A few people **are standing** in line in front of a park vendor. They **are waiting** for hot dogs. A little boy **is enjoying** a huge ice cream cone.

2. Expresses a single activity or a series of activities happening over a given period of time, not necessarily at the moment of speaking.

This quarter, my roommate **is working** in the dorm cafeteria. He serves breakfast from 6:30 to 8:30 every morning. **He is taking** only two night courses this quarter, so his father agreed to let him work. His mother, however, **is trying** to convince him to quit the job.

- Expresses future time. A future time word or phrase is necessary to distinguish between a present and future time reference. Sometimes an earlier statement makes the future time clear, and a future time word is not necessary.

Jim's plane **is arriving** in Denver **at 6:00 tonight**.

He and his wife **are meeting** with their lawyer **tomorrow**.

They're **leaving** Denver **next week**. They're **flying** to Texas.

PRESENT PERFECT

- Expresses an action or an emotion that started in the past and has continued into the present.

Dr. Jones **has lived** in New York for many years. (He is still there.)

He **has taught** at New York University for twenty years. (He is still teaching.)

His students **have always enjoyed** his classes. (They still do.)

- When used with the words "just" and "already," the present perfect expresses an action that started in the past but finished recently or very close to the moment of speaking.

Husband: Don't forget to mail my package for me.

Wife: I **have already** mailed it. I went to the post office this morning.
or

It's on its way. I **have just** returned from the post office.

- Indicates an action that happened at an indefinite time in the past. The time of the action is not given. When the time is given, the simple past is used.

Ana **has finished** her composition.

She **finished** it **two days ago**.

The teacher **has corrected** it.

He **corrected** it **last night**.

I **have received** my acceptance letter to the university.

I **received** it **the day before yesterday**.

Exercise 1: Complete the following paragraphs with the simple present, present continuous, or present perfect tense of the verbs. In some sentences more than one tense may be correct.

Ali and Roberto _____ (be) graduate students in the department of physics at Harvard University. They _____ (be) students at

Harvard for one year. This institution of higher learning _____ (be) the oldest university in the United States, and it _____ (have) the distinction of being a very prestigious school.

This quarter, Roberto _____ (work) in the library on Friday and Saturday nights. He _____ (take) only two courses this quarter, so he _____ (have, negative) many assignments. His girlfriend _____ (try) to convince him to quit his job so that they can go out on the weekends.

It's noon now, so they _____ (eat) lunch in the student union. Many students _____ (stand) in line and _____ (wait) for someone to take their orders. Ali and Roberto _____ (be) in line for nearly twenty minutes, and they _____ (get) a little impatient. Although they _____ (have) lunch in the union a few times a week, Roberto _____ (prefer) to eat in the dorm cafeteria because the service _____ (be) faster.

Their spring break _____ (begin) next week, and Ali _____ (fly) to his country by airplane to visit his family. He _____ (receive, already) a big check from his father, so he _____ (plan) to fly first class. His flight _____ (depart) at seven o'clock in the morning. Both Ali and Roberto _____ (register) for a course in aerodynamics next quarter because the phenomenon of flying _____ (fascinate) them since they were children.

The Present Continuous Tense: *Special Notes*

Remember that there are several verbs that do not usually occur in the present continuous tense.

Group I: Verbs expressing sense perceptions are not used in this tense.

feel (touch) hear see smell taste

The five words in this group usually refer to actions of the senses that are *involuntary*: we do not consciously think about the actions.

Involuntary Actions

1. I **feel** cold air. Close the window.
2. I **hear** voices. Someone is downstairs.
3. These shirts are too expensive. Wait a minute! I **see** a sale on shirts over there.
4. I **smell** something burning.
5. Your soup **tastes** great.

Sometimes speakers of English use these verbs to express a *voluntary* (conscious) use of their senses, and they use some of these verbs in the present continuous.

Voluntary Actions

1. Sue is **feeling** the material *to see* if it is real silk.
2. What are you doing? I'm **smelling** this meat *to see* if it is spoiled.
3. What is Bob doing in the kitchen? He's **tasting** the soup *to see* if it needs salt.

Note the use of the infinitive "to see" to express purpose.

FEEL in a medical sense can be used in the present continuous.

How is your father **feeling** now?

He's **feeling** much better.

What's the matter with you?

I'm not **feeling** well today. I have a cold.

SEE is used in the present continuous when it has the following meanings.

a. meet by appointment:

Ali is **seeing** the director today.

(Ali has an appointment with . . .)

b. visit (places of interest):

Where's Maria? She's out **seeing** the sights of Paris. She'll be back soon.

Group II: Verbs of thinking, attitudes, or opinions are not used in this tense.

appear(seem)

feel (think)

mean

remember

believe

forget

need

seem

consider

guess

prefer

sound

doubt

know

realize

think

understand

FEEL when it means "think" can never be used in the present continuous.

correct: I feel that I got an A on the reading test.

incorrect: I am feeling that I got an A on the reading test.

CONSIDER and **THINK** can be used in the present continuous if the speaker is not giving an opinion.

Not Giving an Opinion

1. What are you doing?
I'm **thinking** about the exam.
2. Jim is **considering** buying my old car.

Giving an Opinion

1. What do you think about it?
I **think** it was too long and difficult.
2. He **considers** it a good bargain.

Group III: Verbs expressing emotion are not used in this tense.

care	forgive	like	refuse	wish
desire	hate	love	want	

Notice the *simple present tense* form of these verbs as a mother speaks to her sixteen-year-old son.

1. Your father and I **care** about you. You are our only child.
2. We don't want to make you miserable. We **desire** the best in life for you.
3. Don't worry. Your father **forgives** you for wrecking the family car.
4. Remember, however, he **hates** careless drivers.
5. You realize, of course, that I don't **like** reckless drivers either.
6. We know teenagers **love** speed; nevertheless, we **refuse** to let you use the car again until you slow down.
7. We don't **want** to see you in the hospital.
8. I **wish** you would think about this conversation carefully.

Note the following use of "wish" in the present continuous.

Mother: Why do you have your eyes closed and your fingers crossed?

Little Girl: I'm **wishing** for a baby brother to play with.

Group IV: Verbs expressing possession are not used in the present continuous.

belong	have	own	possess
---------------	-------------	------------	----------------

HAVE may be used in the present continuous when it does not express possession.

Compare the following sentences:

Possession

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. We're having a grammar test today. | The teacher has the tests upstairs. |
| 2. Bob is having a party tomorrow. | He has a beautiful apartment. |
| 3. The Smiths are having a good time in Paris. | They have a lot of money. |
| 4. My sister is having a baby in June. | She already has five children. |

Complete the following dialogue with the simple present or present continuous form of the verb. Remember the use of the present continuous indicates a voluntary (conscious) use of the senses.

Voluntary versus Involuntary—TASTE

- Yuko:** This international party was a great idea.
Ana: It certainly was. Look at all the food.
Yuko: That dish from Libya _____ great. What are you doing?
Ana: I _____ the Mexican dish I cooked.
Yuko: What's the matter with it? Does it _____ all right?
Ana: No, it doesn't. It _____ terrible. I didn't put enough salt in it.
Yuko: Don't worry about it. Nobody will notice it.
Ana: Look at our teacher. He's walking from table to table. He _____ every dish.
Yuko: Yes. Except the one he brought.
Ana: Isn't it good?
Yuko: I didn't like it. American food _____ bland to me because Americans don't use enough spices.
Ana: Look. He _____ my dish now. Don't tell him I cooked it. I don't want to fail reading this quarter.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The present perfect continuous tense is used to *emphasize* the *continuous* nature of an activity that started in the past and is still going on at the moment of speaking.

What are you doing?

I'm waiting to talk to the airlines ticket agent.

I **have been waiting** for almost twenty minutes.