

# BUSINESS ENGLISH TODAY

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ELIZABETH M. SWINDLE

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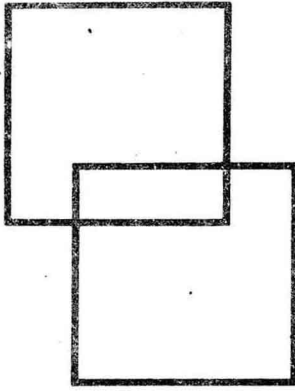
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## A Note to You, the Student !

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Did you ask or respond to questions in class today? Did you take a written test? Have you ever composed an employment letter or completed an application form? When were you last interviewed for a job? How many times a day do you engage in verbal exchanges with other students and co-workers? Do you regularly communicate with customers, suppliers, or service organizations?

Regardless of your present status, you enter into direct communication with many other people each day; and with each verbal exchange, either spoken or written, you are making lasting impressions. The impressions that you project depend to a great extent on your command of the language. Your proper use of grammar impresses others favorably, causing them to recognize you as someone (student, employee, friend, relative) who is educated. Misapplications of our language, of course, have the opposite effect.

### POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Some people consider the rules of grammar to be a gross pain in the neck—a common reaction to the unfamiliar. Those people who have taken the time and expended the effort to master the language, on the other hand, realize the importance of these “rules of the road.” They realize that such knowledge enables them to express their thoughts precisely and effectively, in both oral and written communications.

### SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

*Business English Today* is designed to familiarize you with these rules. Each concept is clearly explained and followed by related examples and self-tests. These brief tests (with accompanying answers) enable you to make certain that you understand the materials you have just read before continuing. Your instructor will assign either or both of the end-of-chapter exercises and will administer comprehensive examinations at the completion of each of the separate parts of the book. You may use the Record of Assignments that follows this introduction, for noting the due dates of each exercise as assigned and to record the scores earned on the exercises and the examinations.

### REAL-WORLD ORIENTATION

Drawing heavily on their extensive backgrounds in business and academia, the authors relate all examples, self-tests, exercises, and examinations to actual business settings—ranging from accounting and data processing to adjustments and inventory control, from personnel and purchasing to quality control and distribution. By the end of the course, you will have had as much exposure to commercial transactions as would normally be attained without actually having worked in these various segments of business.

## ENCOURAGING NOTE

The mastery of business English will not guarantee that you will become an outstanding speaker or writer, any more than learning the rules of arithmetic will assure success in higher mathematics. Knowledge of the rules of grammar is an essential element in communicating effectively, nevertheless, and almost anyone can attain this knowledge through diligence and hard work. The rewards to be realized are well worth the effort.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No one or two people may claim all the credit for the creation of books such as this one; all authors owe a debt of gratitude to their predecessors—the teachers and the authors from whom they themselves have learned. We wish to thank more directly Cheryl Mueller and Rita Sturm who read the manuscript in its various stages of completion and who offered constructive criticism and suggestions for the development of this final product.

We are also appreciative to Ethel Martin, a friend and colleague at Glendale Community College, for her numerous contributions and to our copyeditor, Rita DeVries, for her attentive editing.

# Record of Assignments

## PART I / BASIC ELEMENTS

	DUE DATE	SCORE
1A Parts of speech		
1B Parts of speech		
2A Sentence composition		
2B Sentence composition		
3A Clauses and phrases		
3B Clauses and phrases		
4A Sentence classifications		
4B Sentence classifications		

## PART II / NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

	DUE DATE	SCORE
5A Nouns: singular and plural		
5B Nouns: singular and plural		
6A Noun functions		
6B Noun functions		
7A Personal pronouns		
7B Personal pronouns		
8A Other pronouns		
8B Other pronouns		
9A Antecedents to pronouns		
9B Antecedents to pronouns		

## PART III / VERBS AND VERBALS

	DUE DATE	SCORE
10A Verbs, voice, and mood		
10B Verbs, voice, and mood		
11A Subject-verb agreement		
11B Subject-verb agreement		
12A Verb parts		
12B Verb parts		
13A Verb tenses		
13B Verb tenses		
14A Auxiliary verbs		
14B Auxiliary verbs		
15A Verbals		
15B Verbals		

## PART IV / MODIFIERS AND CONNECTORS

	DUE DATE	SCORE
16A Adjectives: functions, formation, placement, and punctuation		
16B Adjectives: functions, formation, placement, and punctuation		
17A Adjectives: degrees and determiners		
17B Adjectives: degrees and determiners		
18A Adverbs		
18B Adverbs		
19A Prepositions		
19B Prepositions		
20A Conjunctions		
20B Conjunctions		

## PART V / PUNCTUATION MARKS—I

	DUE DATE	SCORE
21A End-of-sentence marks		
21B End-of-sentence marks		
22A Commas		
22B Commas		
23A Semicolons		
23B Semicolons		
24A Colons, parentheses, and dashes		
24B Colons, parentheses, and dashes		

## PART VI / PUNCTUATION MARKS—II

	DUE DATE	SCORE
25A Hyphens, underscores, ellipses		
25B Hyphens, underscores, ellipses		
26A Apostrophes		
26B Apostrophes		
27A Quotation marks		
27B Quotation marks		

**PART VII / MECHANICS**

	DUE DATE	SCORE
28A Abbreviations		
28B Abbreviations		
29A Capitalization		
29B Capitalization		
30A Numbers and symbols		
30B Numbers and symbols		

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

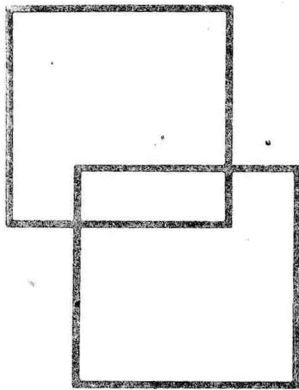
	DUE DATE	SCORE
34A Dictionary usage		
34B Dictionary usage		
35A Spelling guidelines		
35B Spelling guidelines		
36A Frequently confused words		
36B Frequently confused words		
37A Business terminology		
37B Business terminology		
Total score		

**PART VIII / WRITING TECHNIQUES AND FORMAT**

	DUE DATE	SCORE
31A Appropriate word choice		
31B Appropriate word choice		
32A Sentence and paragraph refinement		
32B Sentence and paragraph refinement		
33A Memos, letters, and envelopes		
33B Memos, letters, and envelopes		

**TEST SCORES**

Part I / Basic elements	
Part II / Nouns and pronouns	
Part III / Verbs and verbals	
Part IV / Modifiers and connectors	
Part V / Punctuation marks—I	
Part VI / Punctuation marks—II	
Part VII / Mechanics	
Part VIII / Writing techniques and format	
Supplemental section	
Total score	



# Contents

A Note to You, the Student! / *vii*

Record of Assignments / *ix*

## PART I BASIC ELEMENTS / 1

- 1 Parts of Speech / 3
- 2 Sentence Composition / 15
- 3 Clauses and Phrases / 27
- 4 Sentence Classifications / 39

## PART II NOUNS AND PRONOUNS / 51

- 5 Nouns: Singular and Plural / 53
- 6 Noun Functions / 69
- 7 Personal Pronouns / 81
- 8 Other Pronouns / 93
- 9 Antecedents to Pronouns / 107

## PART III VERBS AND VERBALS / 121

- 10 Verbs, Voice, and Mood / 123
- 11 Subject-Verb Agreement / 135

- 12 Verb Parts / 147
- 13 Verb Tenses / 161
- 14 Auxiliary Verbs / 173
- 15 Verbals / 183

#### PART IV

#### MODIFIERS AND CONNECTORS / 195

- 16 Adjectives: Functions, Formation, Placement, and Punctuation / 197
- 17 Adjectives: Degrees and Determiners / 211
- 18 Adverbs / 223
- 19 Prepositions / 239
- 20 Conjunctions / 253

#### PART V

#### PUNCTUATION MARKS—I / 269

- 21 End-of-Sentence Marks / 271
- 22 Commas / 283
- 23 Semicolons / 299
- 24 Colons, Parentheses, and Dashes / 307

#### PART VI

#### PUNCTUATION MARKS—II / 319

- 25 Hyphens, Underscores, Ellipses / 321
- 26 Apostrophes / 335
- 27 Quotation Marks / 345

#### PART VII

#### MECHANICS / 357

- 28 Abbreviations / 359
- 29 Capitalization / 373
- 30 Numbers and Symbols / 387

## **PART VIII**

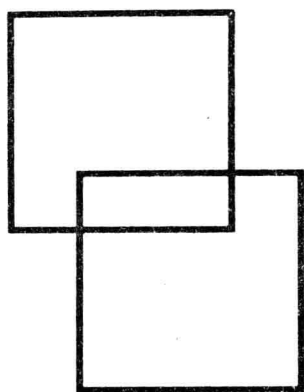
### **WRITING TECHNIQUES AND FORMAT / 399**

- 31    Appropriate Word Choice / 401
- 32    Sentence and Paragraph Refinement / 413
- 33    Memos, Letters, and Envelopes / 425

### **SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

- 34    Dictionary Usage / 447
- 35    Spelling Guidelines / 457
- 36    Frequently Confused Words / 471
- 37    Business Terminology / 487

### **INDEX / 499**



# part I

## BASIC ELEMENTS

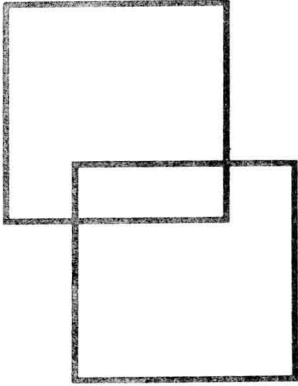
As the old saying goes, people sometimes cannot see the forest for the trees. In describing a forest to someone who has not actually seen one, we would certainly begin by defining a tree; but if we dwelt at length on the wide variety of trees that are in existence, we might not be successful in our attempt to describe a forest.

A similar situation arises in the instruction of business English: If we begin with an extensive study of words, students may learn a lot about words but fail to grasp important patterns that exist in the composition of sentences and paragraphs. To avoid this dilemma, Part I begins with a brief overview of words (the trees) and moves rapidly into an analysis of sentences (the forest), in preparation for the more thorough coverage of words that follows. More specifically, these first four chapters will enable you to

- Identify and define the eight parts of speech
- Recognize basic sentence patterns
- Distinguish between phrases and clauses in their various forms
- Classify sentences as simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex

Some students may view this section of the book as a quick and easy review of materials already encountered. For those people who do not possess such knowledge, these chapters could represent the most important segment.





# 1 Parts of Speech

All words in the English language may be placed in one or more of the following categories, which are referred to collectively as parts of speech:

Parts of Speech	
1. Nouns	5. Adverbs
2. Pronouns	6. Prepositions
3. Verbs	7. Conjunctions
4. Adjectives	8. Interjections

All entries in dictionaries are followed by italicized abbreviations such as *n* (noun), *adj* (adjective), and *v* (verb). Many words are listed more than once, showing that they may be placed in more than one of these eight categories.

The function of a word, more than any other consideration, determines whether it is a noun, a pronoun, or some other part of speech. The word *report*, for example, may be either a noun or a verb, depending upon its function.

**Noun:** They submitted a condensed report to the president.

**Verb:** The finance committee will report its findings.

As a noun, *report* is the name of an object—a series of statements (and figures perhaps) typed on several pages. As a verb, the same word denotes action—something that the committee did. Correspondingly, dictionaries have two listings for the word *report*, one as a noun and another as a verb.

Although each of the eight parts of speech are discussed fully in later chapters, a fundamental knowledge of their individual roles is necessary at this point, before dealing with sentence structure. Because sentences are composed of eight basic parts, we must be able to classify words, understand their multiple functions, and use them correctly.

## NOUNS

Nouns are words that name and identify:

People—John, group, committee

Places—city, field, town, Chicago

Animals—bear, bull, terrier

Abstractions—enthusiasm, personality, knowledge

Feelings—fear, friendship, tenseness

Activities—meeting, interview, discussion

Things—vehicle, building, computer

To illustrate further, all nouns in the following sentences are underscored:

Nouns: Programmers provide step-by-step instructions to computers.

Nouns: A wage is an hourly rate, and a salary is a monthly or yearly rate.

### SELF-TEST 1A Nouns

Identify the nouns in each sentence, and then compare your responses with the answers that follow.

1. All segments of a business are essential to financial success.

.....  
All segments of a business are essential to financial success.

2. The personnel manager issued a three-page bulletin.

.....  
The personnel manager issued a three-page bulletin.

3. The new employee misfiled several letters.

.....  
The new employee misfiled several letters.

## PRONOUNS

To avoid unnecessary repetition, we use pronouns, such as she, him, it, we, and they, as substitutes for nouns.

Without a pronoun: Most employees resisted the idea of quality circles at first; now employees participate enthusiastically.

With a pronoun: Most employees resisted the idea of quality circles at first; now they participate enthusiastically.

Repetition is eliminated by replacing the second *employees* with the pronoun *they*, which the reader readily recognizes as a substitute word.

When repetition is avoided by substituting a pronoun for a noun, the remaining noun is referred to as the **antecedent** to the pronoun.

**Without pronouns:** Some of our customers purchase over \$25,000 worth of merchandise annually. These customers receive quantity discounts.

**With a pronoun:** Our customers who purchase over \$25,000 worth of merchandise annually receive quantity discounts.

In the second sentence (with a pronoun), *customers* is the antecedent for the pronoun *who*.

We also use the pronouns *who*, *whom*, *what*, *which*, and *whose* to ask questions.

Who will be attending the conference this year?

What was their initial reaction to the proposal?

Pronouns that ask questions refer to unknown people or things.

Similarly, a special group of pronouns enables us to refer to unspecified people, places, and things.

Everyone at the meeting was in agreement.

Some were placed in refrigerated storage.

In these examples, the pronouns *everyone* and *some* serve as substitute words for unnamed people and things. These various types of pronouns and their functions are presented in detail in Chapters 7 through 9.

#### SELF-TEST 1B Pronouns

Identify the pronouns in each sentence before checking the answers at right.

1. We depend on word-of-mouth publicity for increased sales.	We
2. Because most business managers are rewarded for short-term accomplishments, they tend to neglect long-range planning.	they
3. Nobody would agree to elimination of the cost-of-living allowance.	Nobody
4. What did he say when you made the suggestion?	What, he, you

#### VERBS

By definition, every sentence must contain a verb, and verbs may be used to express action, feelings, or state of condition. They may also be used to show what is being done to the subjects of sentences.

**Action:** We received your order this morning.

**Action:** The credit manager approved their application.

*We* (the subject) did what? Received the order. *The credit manager* (the subject) took what action? Approved the application.

**Feelings:** The production manager regretted the delay.

**Feelings:** The personnel director enjoyed her newly acquired position.

The *production manager* (the subject) felt what? Regret. The *personnel director* (the subject) experienced what kind of feeling? Enjoyment.

**State of condition:** Fringe benefits have become very costly to employers.

**State of condition:** A bond is a type of corporate IOU.

We use the verbs *is*, *are*, *was*, and *were* to express states of condition.

**Affecting subject:** The stock split was made retroactive to June 1.

**Affecting subject:** The report was submitted to all middle managers.

What has been done to the *stock split* (the subject)? It was made retroactive. What was done to the *report* (the subject)? It was submitted. In both sentences, the subject is the receiver of the action of the verb.

Verbs may also be used to ask questions.

**Statement:** Our company has received the McDonald order.

**Question:** Has our company received the McDonald order?

**Statement:** The convention will be held next month.

**Question:** Will the convention be held next month?

Not only may we use such "question words" as *who*, *where*, and *when* to pose questions, but we may also ask questions by placing parts of verb phrases at the beginning of sentences.

A sentence may have more than one verb, as illustrated in the following example:

**Multiple verbs:** This machine collates, stacks, and staples the pages.

**Multiple verbs:** The report must be approved and initialed by the president.

Notice in the second sentence that it is not necessary to repeat *must be* before the second verb. Verbs are discussed at length in Part III.

#### SELF-TEST 1C Verbs

Before checking the answers at right, identify the verbs in each sentence and determine whether they are being used to express (1) action, (2) feeling, (3) state of condition, or (4) action on the subject.

1. Business assets are categorized as either current or fixed assets.	are categorized (4)
2. Was Homero Gonzales at the meeting today?	Was (3)
3. The committee recommended an across-the-board price increase.	recommended (1)
4. The customer appreciated the adjustment.	appreciated (2)
5. Management is asking all union members to make wage and work-rule concessions.	is asking (1)

#### ADJECTIVES

The role of adjectives is to modify nouns and pronouns by describing, classifying, or limiting them. They help us provide a clearer and more accurate mental picture of whatever it is we are discussing—in either oral or written communications.

Many large businesses have adopted self-insurance programs.

The example refers to many businesses and large businesses, with both *many* and *large* describing the word *businesses*. Similarly, the adjective *self-insurance* (which is one word) modifies the noun *programs*.

Commercial banks provide a common source of business funds.

In this second example, the adjective *commercial* specifies the type of bank being discussed. *Common* modifies *source*, and *business* describes *funds*. Articles (*a*, *an*, and *the*) are also considered to be a form of adjective, the *a* being used here to modify the noun *source*.

Adjectives may follow verbs that express a state of being.

This machine is expensive.

The adjective *expensive* follows the state-of-condition verb *is* and modifies the noun *machines*. The word *this*, which also modifies *machines*, is referred to as a “demonstrative adjective” because it is used to point or refer to a specific item (the machines).

#### SELF-TEST 1D Adjectives

Identify all adjectives and the nouns or pronouns that they modify.

1. These loading machines should be adjusted regularly.

These loading machines should be adjusted regularly.

2. Seven new employees began our training program last month.

Seven new employees began our training program last month.

3. A legal contract must be based on a voluntary agreement.

A legal contract must be based on a voluntary agreement.

#### ADVERBS

Like adjectives, adverbs modify the meanings of other words. Unlike adjectives, which affect nouns and pronouns, adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

Modifying a verb: The new secretary is performing well.

The adverb *well* describes the verb *is performing*.

Modifying an adjective: The new secretary is very efficient.

*Efficient* is an adjective because it describes the noun *secretary*. The adverb *very*, in turn, modifies the adjective *efficient*.

Modifying an adverb: The new secretary types very well.

The adverb *well* describes the verb *types*. *Very* is still an adverb, as in the preceding example, but its function here is to modify the adverb *well* rather than the verb.