

FIFTH EDITION

UNDERSTANDING  
ENGLISH  
GRAMMAR



MARTHA KOLLN    ROBERT FUNK

# Understanding English Grammar

FIFTH EDITION



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# Preface

The content of *Understanding English Grammar* has changed since the first edition in 1982, with new topics added and old topics revised. The underlying purpose, however, remains constant: to help students understand the systematic nature of language and to appreciate their own language expertise.

This fifth edition of *Understanding English Grammar* also retains the eclectic method of previous editions, drawing upon all of the grammatical theories, both old and new. The basic framework of the book is that of the structural linguists, with their descriptive sentence patterns and classification of words based on English (rather than on the Latin-based eight parts of speech). We also draw on the insights of the transformational linguists, especially in the chapters covering expanded verbs and transformed sentences. Throughout the book traditional diagrams will help the students visualize sentence structure.

Because so many of our readers are preparing to be teachers, we have looked for ways to connect their present learning to their own future classrooms. Chapter 1 now includes a brief history of grammar pedagogy; it also explains more fully some of the language and usage issues that teachers encounter. In Chapter 3 a new section describes the verb system of African American English. And Chapter 14 closes with a new section on punctuation, connecting punctuation conventions to the sentence slots.

Knowing that schools still teach traditional grammar, we explain more fully how the structural approach we are using here differs from it. Some of these differences are highlighted in the new “Chapter Preview” sections. Another new feature is the chapter-ending “Classroom Applications,” describing activities for use not only in your college classes but also in those future classrooms of your education students. Other changes in this edition include a major revision to the chapter on nominals (Chapter 4), mainly the removal of appositives, a change that shortens and simplifies this

chapter. Chapter 7, which describes the adjectival system, has been reorganized, with the discussion of relative clauses now preceding that of the participles; the section on appositives closes the chapter.

The most important innovation for this fifth edition can be seen on the title page, where Robert Funk's name appears as co-author. Professor Funk, who has used every edition of *Understanding English Grammar* in his own classes, brings a wealth of experience and insight from his twenty years of teaching both high school and college English. He is the co-author of nine books on the writing process, grammar, and literature.

Teachers who are familiar with the previous editions of *Understanding English Grammar* will find the same organization in this new one: We begin with an overview of grammar in Part I, followed by the study of sentence patterns in Part II; Part III describes the expansion of sentences by means of modification and coordination; Part IV covers morphemes and word classes. Instructors who prefer the more traditional approach of studying words before sentence patterns will find it easy to begin the course with Part IV. The occasional references to the sentence patterns in those chapters should not be a problem for the students. Part V covers rhetorical grammar, the application of grammar knowledge to writing.

There are exercises throughout the chapters to reinforce the principles of grammar as they are introduced. Answers to the exercises, which are provided in a section at the end, give the book a strong self-instructional quality. The exercises entitled "Investigating Language" will stimulate class discussion, calling on students to tap their innate language ability.

Each chapter ends with a list of key terms, a section of practice sentences (for which answers are not provided), and a series of questions for discussion that go beyond the concepts covered in the text. In addition to the main text, there are appendixes covering phonology and an introduction to transformational grammar. The students will also find the glossary of terms extremely helpful.

Supplementing the fifth edition of the text is an *Instructor's Manual*, which includes analyses of the practice sentences, suggested answers for the discussion questions, and some suggestions for using the book. The *Instructor's Manual* is available from your Allyn and Bacon representative.

Another supplement to the text is a workbook, *Exercises for Understanding English Grammar*, with exercises that go beyond those found in the text, many of which call for the students to compose sentences. To keep the self-instructional quality that teachers appreciate, answers for half of the items are included, where answers are appropriate. In addition, there are chapter-ending "test exercises" without answers, which can be used for testing and review.

The study of grammar is not just for English majors or for future teachers: It is for people in business and industry, in science and engineering,

in law and politics. Every user of the language, in fact, will benefit from the consciousness-raising that results from the study of grammar. The more that speakers and writers and readers know consciously about their language, the more power they have over it and the better they can make it serve their needs. It is very gratifying to know that many thousands of students in schools throughout the country have experienced their consciousness-raising with *Understanding English Grammar*.

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