Practical English Usage

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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-

matical terminology, I have generally preferred to use traditional terms that are well known and easy to understand. Some of these terms (e g *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 (e g 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 (e g *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)/,
ɪ	sit /sɪt/, in /ɪn/		consistent /kən'sɪstənt/
e	set /set/, any /'enɪ/	eɪ	take /teɪk/, wait /weɪt/
æ	sat /sæt/, match /mætʃ/	aɪ	mine /maɪn/, light /laɪt/
ɑ:	march /mɑ:tʃ/, after /'ɑ:ftə(r)/	ɔɪ	oil /ɔɪl/, boy /bɔɪ/
ɒ	pot /pɒt/, gone /gɒn/	əʊ	no /nəʊ/, open /'əʊpən/
ɔ:	port /pɔ:t/, law /lɔ:/	aʊ	house /haʊs/, now /naʊ/
ʊ	good /gʊd/, could /kʊd/	ɪə	hear /hɪə(r)/, deer /dɪə(r)/
u:	food /fu:d/, group /gru:p/	eə	where /weə(r)/, air /eə(r)/
ʌ	much /mʌtʃ/, front /frʌnt/	ʊə	tour /tʊə(r)/,
3:	turn /t3:n/, word /w3:d/		endure /ɪn'djʊə(r)/

Consonants

p	pull /pʊl/, cup /kʌp/	tʃ	cheap /tʃi:p/, catch /kætʃ/
b	bull /bʊl/, rob /rɒb/	dʒ	jail /dʒeɪl/, bridge /brɪdʒ/
f	ferry /'ferɪ/, life /laɪf/,	k	king /kɪŋ/, case /keɪs/,
	cough /kɒf/		take /teɪk/, back /bæk/
v	very /'verɪ/, 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 /'kærɪ/,
z	zoo /zu:/, days /deɪz/		fire /'faɪə(r)/
ʃ	show /ʃəʊ/, wish /wɪʃ/	w	well /wel/
ʒ	pleasure /'pleʒə(r)/,	j	young /jʌŋ/
	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 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. ⎫
, represents weak or *secondary* stress ⎭ as in goodbye /ˌgʊd'baɪ/.

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*.

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 *a/an.* 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 *a/an, 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 *a/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*.

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*

nouns, or *proper names*; they are usually used without articles.

noun clause a clause which acts as the subject or object of a sentence. *Lucy told me **why she was worried.***

noun phrase a group of words (e g article + adjective + noun) which acts as the subject, object or complement of a sentence. *the last bus.*

number the way in which differences between singular and plural are shown grammatically. The differences between *house* and *houses*, *mouse* and *mice*, *this* and *these* are differences of number.

object a noun or pronoun that normally comes after the verb, in an active sentence. The *direct object* refers to a person or thing affected by the action of the verb. In the sentence *Take the dog for a walk*, *the dog* is the direct object. The *indirect object* usually refers to a person who receives the direct object. In the sentence *Ann gave me a watch*, the indirect object is *me*, and the direct object is *a watch*.

participle see *present participle* and *past participle*.

participle clause a clause-like structure which contains a participle, not a finite verb form. ***Discouraged by his failure**, he resigned from his job. **Having a couple of hours to spare**, I went to see a film.*

passive a passive verb form is made with *be* + past participle (e g *is broken, was told, will be helped* – not *breaks, told, will help*, which are *active* verb forms). The subject of a passive verb is usually the person or thing that is affected by the action of the verb. Compare: ***They sent Lucas** to prison for five years* (active); ***Lucas was sent** to prison for five years* (passive).

past participle a verb form like *broken, gone, stopped*, which can be used to form perfect tenses and passives, or as an adjective. (The meaning is not necessarily past, in spite of the name).

past perfect tense a verb form made with *had* + past participle. *I **had forgotten**. The children **had arrived**. I **had been working**. It **had been raining**.* The first two examples are *past perfect simple*; the last two (with *had been* + *...-ing*) are *past perfect progressive*.

past progressive tense a verb form made with *was/were* + *...-ing*. *I **was going**. They **were stopping**.*

past simple tense a past verb form made without an auxiliary verb. *I **stopped**. You **heard**. We **saw**.*

perfect a verb form made with the auxiliary *have* + past participle. *I **have forgotten**; she **had failed**; **having arrived**; to **have finished**.*

perfect conditional *should/would have* + past participle. *I **should/would have agreed**. He **would have known**.*

perfect infinitive *to have* + past participle. *to **have arrived**; to have gone.*

perfective In some grammars, a form like *I have arrived* or *he has been working* is not called a *perfect tense* (because the verb form is used not just to refer to time, but also to express an idea such as completion or result). These grammars prefer the term *perfective aspect*.

person the way in which, in grammar, we show the difference between the person speaking (*first person*), the person spoken to (*second*

person), and the people or things spoken about (*third person*). The differences between *am*, *are* and *is* are differences of person.

personal pronouns the words *I*, *me*, *you*, *he*, *him* etc.

phrase two or more words that function together as a group. *the silly old woman; would have been repaired; in the country.*

phrasal verb a verb that is made up of two parts: a 'base' verb followed by an adverb particle. *fill up; run over; take in.*

plural grammatical form used to refer to more than one person, thing etc. *we; buses; children; are; many; these.* See also *singular.*

possessive a form used to show possession and similar ideas. *John's; our; mine.*

possessive pronoun The words *my*, *your*, *her* etc and the words *mine*, *yours*, *hers* etc can all be called *possessive pronouns* (using the word *pronoun* in two slightly different senses). *My*, *your*, *her* etc are sometimes called *possessive adjectives.*

postmodifier a word which comes after the word which it modifies, e g *invited* in *The people **invited** all came late.* See also *premodifier.*

predicate what is said about the subject of a sentence – that is to say, all of a sentence except the subject.

predicative adjectives placed after a verb like *be*, *seem*, *look* are in *predicative position. She looks **happy**. The house is **enormous**.* See also *attributive.*

prefix In the words *anti-American*, *anticommunist*, *co-operate*, *co-ownership*, the elements *anti-* and *co-* are *prefixes.* See also *affix*, *suffix.*

premodifier a word that comes before the noun it modifies, e g *invited* in *an **invited** audience.* See also *postmodifier.*

preparatory subject, preparatory object When the subject of a sentence is an infinitive or a clause, we usually put it towards the end of the sentence and use the pronoun *it* as a *preparatory subject* (also called *anticipatory* or *introductory subject*), e g **It's** *important to get enough sleep. There* can also be used as a kind of preparatory subject (usually in the structure *there is*); and *it* can be used as a *preparatory object* in certain structures, e g *He made **it** clear that he disagreed.*

preposition a word like *on*, *off*, *of*, *into*, normally followed by a noun or pronoun.

prepositional verb a verb that has two parts: a 'base' verb and a preposition. *insist on; care for.*

present participle the verb-form ending in *-ing* (especially when it is used to make verb tenses, or in adjectival or adverbial expressions). *She was **running**. **Opening** his newspaper, he started to read. I hate the noise of **crying** babies.* (The meaning is not necessarily present, in spite of the name.)

present perfect tense a verb form made with *have* or *has* + past participle. *I **have forgotten**. The children **have arrived**. **I've been working** all day. **It's been raining**.* The first two examples are *present perfect simple*; the last two (with *have been* + *...-ing*) are *present*

perfect progressive.

present progressive tense a verb form made with *am/are/is* + ...-*ing*. *I'm going*. *She **is staying** for two weeks.*

present simple tense a present verb form made without an auxiliary verb. *He **goes** there often. I **know**. I **like** chocolate.*

preterite the same as *past tense*.

pro-form a word with a general meaning, which can be used to stand for any word of a certain kind when the context makes it clear what is meant. *Do* is a pro-form for verbs; *you, it, one* are pro-forms for names and nouns; *there* and *then* are pro-forms for adverbial expressions of place and time.

progressive (or continuous) A verb form made with *be* + ...-*ing* (e g *to **be going**; we **were wondering***) is called *progressive* or *continuous*.

progressive infinitive a form like *to **be going***; *to **be waiting***.

pronoun a word like *it, yourself, their*, which is used instead of a more precise noun or noun phrase (like *the cat, Peter's self, the family's*). The word *pronoun* can also be used for a determiner when this 'includes' the meaning of a following noun which has been left out. *'Which bottle would you like?' – 'I'll take both.'* (*Both* stands for *both bottles*, and we can say that it is used as a pronoun.)

proper noun a noun (normally with no article) which is the name of a particular person, place, organization, etc. *Andrew; Brazil; Marks and Spencer.*

qualify see *modification*.

quantifier a word or expression like *many, few, little, several, plenty, a lot*, which is used in a noun phrase to show how many or how much we are talking about.

question tag an expression like *isn't it?* or *don't you?* (consisting of auxiliary verb + pronoun subject) put on to the end of a sentence. *It's a nice day, **isn't it?***

reciprocal pronouns *each other, one another.*

reflexive pronouns *myself, yourself, himself* etc (used as objects). *I cut **myself** shaving this morning.* See also *emphatic pronoun*.

regular following the normal rules. *Hoped* is a regular past tense; *cats* is a regular plural. See also *irregular*.

reinforcement tag a tag which repeats (and so reinforces, or strengthens) the meaning of the subject and verb. *You're a real idiot, **you are**.*

relative clause a clause introduced by a relative pronoun, like *who* or *which*. See also *identifying relative clause*; *non-identifying relative clause*.

relative pronoun one of the pronouns *who, whom, whose, which* and *that* (and sometimes *what, when, where* and *why*). They are used to repeat the meaning of a previous noun (the antecedent); at the same time, they connect the relative clause to the rest of the sentence (so they act as conjunctions and pronouns at the same time). *Is this the child **that** was causing all that trouble?*

reply question a question (similar in structure to a question tag) used to reply to a statement (for instance, to express interest). *'I've been*