

Guide to Patterns and Usage in English



S Hornby

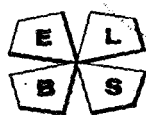
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Second Edition

GUIDE TO PATTERNS AND USAGE IN ENGLISH

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A S HORNBY



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Preface to the Second Edition

My object in writing this book was to provide help and guidance for advanced students of English as a foreign or second language. The traditional grammar book provides information on accident and syntax. It sets out and describes the various parts of speech. It is often concerned with the historical development of the language. Such older grammars provide much information *about* the language but do not help the student to *use* the language. Analysis and parsing may be good intellectual exercises but are not otherwise of much value.

Analysis is helpful at a later stage but the learner is—or should be—more concerned with sentence-building. For this he needs to become acquainted with the patterns of English sentences. He needs to know how words collocate, to know where certain classes of words, and which of these words, have their normal places in sentences. He needs to know (for example, for adverbs and adverb phrases) what alternative positions there are.

During the 1930s much attention was paid to the selection of vocabulary items for use in courses for those learning English as a foreign language. Comparatively little attention was paid to the patterns of structures of the language. The situation has changed during the last thirty years, and today the emphasis has shifted from vocabulary control to structures and patterns.

A knowledge of how to put words together in the right order is as important as a knowledge of their meanings. The most important patterns are those of the verbs. Unless the learner becomes familiar with these he will be unable to use his vocabulary. He may suppose that because he has heard and seen *I intend/hope/want/propose to come*, he may say and write **I suggest to come*; that because he has heard and seen *Please tell me the meaning of this sentence*, he may say and write **Please explain me this sentence*. Because *He began talking about the weather* means about the same as *He began to talk about the weather*, he may suppose, wrongly, that *He stopped talking about the crops* means the same as *He stopped to talk about the crops*. Because *I like to travel* is accepted, he may think, wrongly again, that **He dislikes to travel* is as acceptable as *He dislikes travelling*.

Note: The use of the asterisk * indicates that the phrase or sentence following is an example of *unacceptable* usage.

It is important, too, that the learner, when he uses a noun or adjective, should be familiar with the patterns in which it is used. When he uses such adjectives as *kind* and *thoughtful*, he should be familiar with their use after introductory *it* or exclamatory *how*.

It was kind/thoughtful of you to meet me at the station.

How kind/thoughtful (it was) of you to meet me at the station!

For the adjective *anxious* he needs to be familiar with its use with prepositions (e.g. *anxious for* news, *anxious about* someone's health), and, when *anxious* means 'eager', its use with an infinitive (e.g. *anxious to start*).

There is an Index of Subjects and an Index of Words. The Index of Words includes only a selection of those which are dealt with in this book. It cannot take the place of the dictionary. The learner will do well, while he is learning, to enter on record cards or in a loose-leaf notebook any examples of patterns of common words likely to be useful to him. For the verb *succeed* he might note such examples as *They succeeded in climbing Mt Everest* (VP3A). For the noun *intention* he might note the example *He has no intention of going* (NP2). With this he might place the examples *It was not his intention to go*. If he has also an example of the verb *intend*, as in *He doesn't intend to go* (VP7A), he has full references when he needs to use *intention* and *intend*. A good dictionary provides information on patterns, but the making of one's own collection is an excellent way of fixing usages in the memory.

The learner who wishes to speak and write English is rightly concerned with grammatical correctness. He should also be concerned with being idiomatic, with using the kind of English that will not strike the listener or reader as being artificial, or formal when an informal style is appropriate. Part Five of this book approaches this problem from a new angle. Instead of dealing with such auxiliary and modal verbs as *be*, *have*, *can/could*, *will/would*, *shall/should*, *may/might*, *must*, *ought* one by one and describing their functions, the situation is taken as the starting-point. The concept of obligation can be expressed by the use of such words as *necessity/necessary*, *compel/compulsion/compulsory*, *oblige/obligation/obligatory*. (See the examples, 5.51-60.) Except in formal style a native speaker of English is unlikely to use these words. He will prefer constructions with *have to/have got to*, *must*, *ought to*, or *should*. These words are often more difficult for the foreign learner of English than the more formal words. Some of them are irregular or defective verbs. The beginner is tempted to use the more formal verbs because their patterns are easier than the patterns for words used in informal or colloquial style. By grouping together the various ways in which such concepts as obligation and necessity, permission, possibility, achievement, hopes and wishes are expressed, with numerous examples, the learner is enabled to become familiar with the ways used most frequently to express these concepts.

The approach to the problems of time and tense (Part Two) has been made from the same angle. The tenses are set out, and then, instead of an account of how each tense is used, *time*, not *tense*, has been taken as the starting-point. Here is an aspect of time, here is a

situation. Which tense or tenses may be used here? Or what tense equivalents (e.g. *going to* for future time) are available and perhaps preferable?

It is a sound principle not to present the learner with specimens of incorrect English and then require him to point out and correct the errors. Such a procedure in the form of exercises is harmful. In this book there are occasional specimens of incorrect usage, but these are errors which are known, from the experience of language teachers, to be frequent. Such specimens, when they occur in this book, are preceded by an asterisk, as in **Please explain me this sentence*, above. The asterisk is occasionally used to indicate not a grammatically incorrect sentence but a sentence which is not quite idiomatic, one for which there is a preferable alternative. Thus, the sentence **A map is on this wall* is not wrong. But the sentence *There's a map on this wall* is preferable. If the learner is warned in this way, he will be less likely to compose the sentence **Four windows are in this room*, which is unacceptable.

In parts of the book, where word order may vary with stress, and where strong and weak forms of certain words occur, phonetic and tonetic symbols have been used. These are given and explained on pages xii-xv.

A S Hornby
1975

Acknowledgements

My chief debt is still to the European grammarians, who look at English from the outside and are better able than the native speaker of English to see those aspects of grammar which are important to those who learn and study English as a foreign language. The works I found most useful have been:

- E Kruisinga, *A Handbook of Present Day English* (out of print).
H Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English* (Part i: *The Sentence*) (out of print).
O Jespersen, *Essentials of English Grammar* (Allen and Unwin, 1933); *A Modern English Grammar* (7 volumes, Allen and Unwin); *Analytic Syntax* (Holt-Blond, 1968).
G Scheurweghs, *Present Day English Syntax* (Longman, 1972).
R W Zandvoort, *A Handbook of English Grammar* (Longman, 1972).

I am indebted to the works of several other grammarians:

- H Sweet, *New English Grammar* (Part i) (Oxford University Press, 1903).
H E Palmer and F G Blandford, *A Grammar of Spoken English* (revised and rewritten by Roger Kingdon) (Heffer, 1969).
C T Onions, *Modern English Syntax* (edited by B D H Miller) (Routledge, 1971).
W S Allen, *Living English Structure* (Longman, 1974).

The comprehensive survey of English grammar by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik, *A Grammar of Contemporary English* was published in 1972, when the revision of my own short book was almost completed. It will be a mine of useful information for future writers on this subject.

Mr Leslie Aczel, of Budapest, made suggestions to me on the verb patterns as set out in the first edition. The revised patterns of this second edition, and their new arrangement, owe much to his comments on them, and I am grateful to him for the interest he took in their regrading.

I have continued to find much useful information in the pages of *English Studies* (Amsterdam) and the British Council's periodical *English Language Teaching*.

My work on Sentence Patterns began when I was associated with H E Palmer in the work of the Institute for Research in English Teaching at the Department of Education in Tokyo during the 1930s. We were not always in agreement and my own verb patterns differ in some respect from those set out in his *Grammar of English Words*. Although we did not always see eye to eye, my work owes much to his initiative and enthusiasm.

Abbreviations

AF	anomalous finite
AP	adjective pattern
DO	direct object
EPA	end-position adverbial
FPA	front-position adverbial
IO	indirect object
MPA	mid-position adverbial
NP	noun pattern
S	subject
VP	verb pattern
<i>vi</i>	intransitive verb
<i>vt</i>	transitive verb
*	what follows is unacceptable usage

Introduction: the Spoken Language

Until about the middle of this century grammarians concerned themselves chiefly with language as it appeared in print, and comparatively little with the spoken language. They concerned themselves more with the literary form of the language than with colloquial usages. Many grammar books still illustrate syntax almost exclusively with quotations from printed sources. H E Palmer's *A Grammar of Spoken English* (1st edition, 1924) was a notable exception. In this pioneer work all examples were in phonetic transcription.

It is now accepted that the spoken forms of a language must rank equally with the formal and literary forms. This means that the sounds of the language, and its stress patterns, rhythm and intonation must receive attention. In this book, as in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, the examples are rarely taken from printed material. The great majority are typical of spoken English, though examples typical of formal English are often given for contrast.

There are numerous authoritative books on these subjects and a short list is given on page xv. There are several forms of phonetic and tonetic transcriptions in use today. The symbols used in the occasional transcriptions in this book are explained below.

Sounds: Key to the Phonetic Symbols

As this *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* is designed for use with the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, third edition, the symbols used by J Windsor Lewis for that edition are also used in this book. There is an account of this form of transcription on the inside covers of the Dictionary.

Vowels and Diphthongs

1	/i/	as in <i>see</i>	/si/	11	/ɜ/	as in <i>fur</i>	/fɜ(r)/
2	/ɪ/	as in <i>sit</i>	/sɪt/	12	/ə/	as in <i>ago</i>	/ə'gəʊ/
3	/e/	as in <i>ten</i>	/ten/	13	/eɪ/	as in <i>page</i>	/peɪdʒ/
4	/æ/	as in <i>hat</i>	/hæt/	14	/əʊ/	as in <i>home</i>	/həʊm/
5	/ɑ/	as in <i>arm</i>	/ɑm/	15	/aɪ/	as in <i>five</i>	/faɪv/
6	/ɒ/	as in <i>got</i>	/gɒt/	16	/aʊ/	as in <i>now</i>	/naʊ/
7	/ɔ/	as in <i>saw</i>	/sɔ/	17	/ɔɪ/	as in <i>join</i>	/dʒɔɪn/
8	/ʊ/	as in <i>put</i>	/pʊt/	18	/ɪə/	as in <i>near</i>	/nɪə(r)/
9	/u/	as in <i>too</i>	/tu/	19	/eə/	as in <i>hair</i>	/heə(r)/
10	/ʌ/	as in <i>cup</i>	/kʌp/	20	/ʊə/	as in <i>pure</i>	/pʊə(r)/

Introduction: the Spoken Language

Consonants

1 /p/ as in <i>pen</i> /pen/	13 /s/ as in <i>saw</i> /sɔ/
2 /b/ as in <i>bed</i> /bed/	14 /z/ as in <i>zoo</i> /zu/
3 /t/ as in <i>tea</i> /ti/	15 /ʃ/ as in <i>she</i> /ʃi/
4 /d/ as in <i>did</i> /dɪd/	16 /ʒ/ as in <i>vision</i> /ˈvɪʒn/
5 /k/ as in <i>cat</i> /kæt/	17 /h/ as in <i>how</i> /haʊ/
6 /g/ as in <i>get</i> /get/	18 /m/ as in <i>man</i> /mæn/
7 /tʃ/ as in <i>chin</i> /tʃɪn/	19 /n/ as in <i>now</i> /naʊ/
8 /dʒ/ as in <i>June</i> /dʒuːn/	20 /ŋ/ as in <i>sing</i> /sɪŋ/
9 /f/ as in <i>fall</i> /fɔ/	21 /l/ as in <i>leg</i> /leg/
10 /v/ as in <i>voice</i> /vɔɪs/	22 /r/ as in <i>red</i> /red/
11 /θ/ as in <i>thin</i> /θɪn/	23 /j/ as in <i>yes</i> /jes/
12 /ð/ as in <i>then</i> /ðen/	24 /w/ as in <i>wet</i> /wet/

Certain consonants, notably /n/ and /l/, may at times have a syllabic value. In such cases the symbols are printed /ŋ/, /l/ etc where ambiguity might otherwise exist, eg *governor* /ˈgʌvənə(r)/ and *middling* /ˈmɪdʌlɪŋ/.

/ . . (r)/: this means that the /r/ is pronounced only when the next word begins with a vowel sound and follows without pause, as in *far away*, /fɑr əˈweɪ/.

Stress and Pitch

Stress is the force given to a word or syllable in speech. Pitch is the relative height or depth of the level of the voice. Pitch may be sustained (at a high or low level) or it may rise or fall. Stress and pitch are closely associated.

In the word *examine* the stress is on the second syllable. The first and third syllables are unstressed. In the word *examination* there is a strong (or principal) stress on the fourth syllable, and a weak (or subordinate) stress on the second syllable. The other syllables are unstressed. On the syllable with principal stress there is typically a change in pitch, either a rise or a fall.

In many textbooks and dictionaries short vertical strokes have been used to indicate stress, /' / for principal stress and /, / for subordinate stress. Thus the word *examine* may be transcribed /ɪgˈzæmɪn/ and *examination* as /ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃn/, the marks implying no direct reference to pitch values.

In recent textbooks and dictionaries this system has been replaced by one which indicates pitch as well as stress. In this system the short vertical stroke /' / instead of indicating stress alone, indicates a high level tone. Stress accompanied by a high falling pitch is indicated by a short slant line /ˈ /. Besides this sign for a tone falling from a high to a low pitch, further information about the basic intonation patterns of sentences can be given by use of the signs /ˋ / for a pitch falling from medium to low, /, / for one rising from low to medium and /ˊ / for one rising from medium to high. Two such pitch movements may occur in immediate succession on a single

(even monosyllabic) word in English, notably high-to-low fall and low-to-medium rise /[^]/, ./. When a syllable coming later than another one is also marked as a high-level tone, the latter is slightly lower than the former. If a sentence begins at the normal fairly low level pitch used for unstressed words at the beginning of an utterance they are not marked. Other unmarked words and syllables follow the pitch indicated by the previous marked one. When more than one independent intonation phrase occurs within a sentence, the end of a complete intonation unit is indicated by a vertical bar ||/. Unmarked words or syllables at the beginning of the new phrase are to be interpreted as they would be at the beginning of a new sentence. (Those more familiar with a numerical notation for intonation marking may note that eg the Trager-Smith system equivalents to the five tone marks used in this book are (i) /[^]/ = /3-1/ (ii) /[^]/ = /3-3/ (iii) /[^]/ = 2-3/ (iv) /_^/ = /2-1/ (v) /_^/ = /1-2/. Thus /[^]/ = /3-1-2/.)

Examples of Connected Speech

Jane can speak 'French.

This is typical of ordinary statements. There is a fairly low level pitch on *Jane* etc and a high-falling tone on *French*. *Can* is unstressed with pronunciation /kən/.

'*Can Jane speak 'French?*

A high or low rising tone, as on *French*, is typical of questions asking for a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. The high-level tone on *can* indicates a stress on this word, with the pronunciation /kæn/.

/'kæn dʒeɪn spi:k 'frentʃ/

Can 'Jane speak ,French?

This is similar, but with a high-level tone on *Jane*, so that *Jane* is given prominence and *can* has the weak form /kən/.

/kən 'dʒeɪn spi:k ,frentʃ/

There are also combinations of more than one pitch movement in a single tone, eg falling-rising as /[^]/, rising-falling as /_^/, etc. These may extend over one or more syllables. They are used to give special significance, often to imply something which is to be understood. For information on their uses, the books in the Reading List should be referred to. A few simple examples follow.

I 'can't help you `now.

The falling-rising tone on *now* implies that the speaker may be able to help later.

I `can't help you ,now.

The fall and the rise occur on separate words, giving fairly equal attention to both important words whereas in the previous sentence a much greater share of the attention was concentrated on *now*.

Introduction: the Spoken Language

This dictionary `costs ,more.

This carries an implication such as ' . . . but it's much better value'. In the sort of context in which this sentence would occur, the word *more*, although carrying a rising pitch, may be regarded as merely sharing a single falling-rising tone with the word *costs* which has almost all the attention. It can be shown with both marks before the only important word, *costs*, to represent exactly the same pronunciation. Thus:

This dictionary `costs more.

This is a less self-evident notation but conveys that in such a context the speaker attaches no more importance to the word *more* than he would to the second syllable of the word *dearer* if he had expressed exactly the same idea with the wording:

This dictionary's `dearer.

Reading List

Pronunciation and Intonation

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| A C Gimson | <i>An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English</i> (Edward Arnold, 1962) |
| M A K Halliday | <i>A Course in Spoken English: Intonation</i> (Oxford University Press, 1970) |
| R Kingdon | <i>The Groundwork of English Stress</i> (Longman, 1958) |
| R Kingdon | <i>The Groundwork of English Intonation</i> (Longman, 1958) |
| J D O'Connor | <i>Better English Pronunciation</i> (Cambridge University Press, 1967) |
| J D O'Connor and
G F Arnold | <i>Intonation of Colloquial English</i> (Longman, 1961) |
| H E Palmer and
F G Blandford | <i>A Grammar of Spoken English</i> , third edition revised and re-written by Roger Kingdon (Heffer, 1969) |
| J Windsor Lewis | <i>A Guide to English Pronunciation</i> (Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1969) |

Pronouncing Dictionaries

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| D Jones | <i>English Pronouncing Dictionary</i> , revised by A C Gimson (Dent, 1967) |
| J Windsor Lewis | <i>A Concise Pronouncing Dictionary of British and American English</i> (Oxford University Press, 1972) |

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PART ONE

Verbs and Verb Patterns

Definitions

- 1.1 There is no useful or adequate definition of the term **VERB**. It is useful, however, to distinguish between finite and non-finite forms of verbs. The non-finites are the infinitive (present and perfect, with or without *to*), the present and past participles, and the gerund (or verbal noun). The finites are those forms other than the non-finites. Thus, the non-finites of *be* are: *(to) be, (to) have been, being* and *been*, and the finites are *am, is, are, was, were*. The non-finites of *see* are: *(to) see, (to) have seen, seeing* and *seen*, and the finites are *see, sees* and *saw*.

When an infinitive is used with *to* (as in *I want to go, I ought to have gone*) it is called the *to*-infinitive. When used without *to* (as in *I must go, I should have gone*) it is called the bare infinitive.

The present participle and the gerund are identical in form. In *The boys are swimming*, there is the present participle. In *The boys like swimming*, there is the gerund.

- 1.2 The term **AUXILIARY** is used for a number of verbs which have a variety of functions. The finites of *do* are used as operating verbs for the formation of the interrogative and negative. The finites of *be* are used to form the progressive (or continuous) tenses and the passive voice.

The finites *will|would, shall|should, can|could, may|might, must, ought, need, dare* and *used* (with *to*), are called auxiliaries, often distinguished by being called *modal* auxiliaries.

Auxiliary Verbs

Non-finite forms			Finite forms	
Infinitive	Present Participle	Past Participle	Present Tense	Past Tense
<i>be</i>	<i>being</i>	<i>been</i>	<i>am, is, are</i>	<i>was, were</i>
<i>have</i>	<i>having</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>have, has</i>	<i>had</i>
<i>do</i>	<i>doing</i>	<i>done</i>	<i>do, does</i>	<i>did</i>
			<i>shall</i>	<i>should</i>
			<i>will</i>	<i>would</i>
			<i>can</i>	<i>could</i>
			<i>may</i>	<i>might</i>
			<i>must</i>	
			<i>ought</i>	
			<i>need</i>	
			<i>dare</i>	
				<i>used</i>

Verbs and Verb Patterns

- 1.3 The term ANOMALOUS FINITE (abbreviated AF) is used of the 24 finites of these auxiliary verbs.
- 1.4 The term DEFECTIVE VERB is used of those verbs of which some parts are missing. Thus *must* has no infinitive and no participles. *Will, shall, can, may* and *ought* are defective verbs.
- 1.5 The term IRREGULAR VERB is used of those verbs which do not have the suffix *-ed* for the past tense/participle, e.g. *go/went/gone; begin/began/begun; take/took/taken; mean/meant/meant; put/put/put*.
- 1.6 The term ANOMALOUS is useful as a label for the 24 finites in the table above as a class. The most obvious feature of these finites is that they can be joined to the contracted form of *not*, e.g. *isn't, weren't, haven't, don't, didn't, can't, shouldn't, oughtn't*. The term ANOMALOUS is restricted to those finites which combine with *not* in this way. Thus, *have* is anomalous in *I haven't finished* and *I haven't time to do it now*. But *have* is not anomalous in *I have breakfast at half past seven*. (Here *have* is an ordinary, or non-anomalous, finite, and the negative is *I don't have breakfast at half past seven*, not **I haven't breakfast at half past seven*. See 1.21 below.)
The 24 AF are not always auxiliary. The finites of *be* are linking verbs, not auxiliary, in:

Miss Green is a teacher.
The men are busy.

The finites of *have* are not auxiliary in:

Have you any money?
Jane has two brothers.
They had a good holiday.

Functions of the Anomalous Finites

- 1.7 These finites have many functions. They can be placed in two classes.
- First, they are important as structural words, used to operate the negative and interrogative. They are used to avoid repetition, e.g. in short answers and in disjunctive (or 'tag') questions. The positions of certain classes of adverbs are decided by the occurrence or non-occurrence of anomalous finites in sentences.
- Secondly, some of them are used to form moods for which English has no inflected forms. When used in this way they may be termed MODAL VERBS OR MODAL AUXILIARIES (*modal* being the adjective corresponding to *mode* or *mood*).
- The uses of the modal auxiliaries are dealt with in Part Five of this book, and can be found by using the Index.

The Formation of the Negative

- 1.8 A finite verb is made negative by the use of *not*. In modern English only the 24 AF are made negative by simply adding *not* after the finite.

He is busy → *He is not/He's not/He isn't busy.*

I can come. → *I cannot/can't come.*

You ought to do that → *You ought not/oughtn't to do that.*

Non-AF require the helping verb *do*.

He wants it. → (He does want it.) → *He doesn't want it.*

He wanted it. → (He did want it.) → *He didn't want it.*

They went there. → (They did go there.) → *They didn't go there.*

In spoken English and informal written English (e.g. social correspondence), the contracted negative forms are used: *isn't*, *aren't*, *didn't*, *can't*, *wouldn't*.

The use of *not* with non-AF was usual in older English (e.g. Shakespeare, the Authorized Version of the Bible): *Tempt not a desperate man.* (In modern English *Don't tempt a desperate man.*)

The Formation of the Interrogative

- 1.9 The interrogative is formed by inversion of the subject and the finite, which must be one of the 24 AF.

They are ready. → *Are they ready?*

He can swim. → *Can he swim?*

The auxiliary *do* is used if the finite is non-anomalous:

They went away. → (They did go away.) → *Did they go away?*

He likes it. → (He does like it.) → *Does he like it?*

There are other forms of questions (e.g. with *What*, *Who*, etc., or using intonation). See Part 5.

Went you . . . ? *How came you to . . . ?* and other instances of a subject preceded by a non-AF are archaic or literary survivals.

The Interrogative- Negative

- 1.10 This is formed by placing *not* after the subject in formal written style, or by the use of the contracted negative forms in spoken English and often in informal written style.

Does he want it? → *Does he not want it?* (or) *Doesn't he want it?*

Did they go? → *Did they not go?* (or) *Didn't they go?*