


BASIC GRAMMAR AND USAGE

F I F T H E D I T I O N



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BASIC GRAMMAR AND USAGE

FIFTH EDITION

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Preface to the Fifth Edition

In writing the fifth edition of *Basic Grammar and Usage*, we have retained the basic format of earlier editions while making improvements and adding new elements. First, all of the exercises in this edition are new, and as in previous editions, most are in the narrative form which has been so popular with the students and instructors who have used previous editions of our book. Also, several sets of exercises were developed around the themes of popular culture and popular culture interpretation. We believe that these exercises will engage students' interests as well as model critical thinking and interpretative processes.

To encourage students to apply their grammar and usage knowledge more directly to their writing, we have also included a set of new materials to help students edit their work. These include *essays* to be edited (at the end of Units 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6); a *chart* for students to track the kinds of errors they make in their compositions; and *suggestions* for proofreading. The composition editing chart on the inside back cover includes lesson numbers corresponding to each error.

Each lesson contains three end-of-the-chapter exercises in addition to brief exercises within the text. The "A" exercises emphasize the material presented in that particular lesson. The "B" exercises include a review of previous lessons in

the same unit. The “C” exercises ask students to construct sentences of their own. A comprehensive unit review exercise appears at the end of each unit. Answers to the “A” exercises appear at the back of the book so students can check their own work. Answers to the “B” and “C” exercises are in the Instructor’s Manual.

The Instructor’s Manual accompanying *Basic Grammar and Usage* contains a brief diagnostic test for each unit so that the instructor can quickly determine which units each student may need to cover more extensively. A matching achievement test, identical in format to the diagnostic test, can be given at the end of the unit to show exactly how much the student has learned. Longer unit tests are included for instructors who want a more comprehensive exam. All of these tests are printed on easily reproducible eight and one-half by eleven inch pages.

We are grateful to the following colleagues who have provided valuable feedback to help us prepare for this edition: Toni Robinson, Mohave Community College; Edwin Stieve, Nova Southeastern University; and Christian Davis, Bethel College. In addition, we are grateful to the people at Harcourt Brace College Publishers who have helped in the production of this edition: Carol Wada, acquisitions editor; Linda McMillan, production manager; Travis Tyre, project editor; and Sue Hart, art director.

Penelope Choy thanks her husband, Gene Rothman; Dorothy Clark wishes to thank her children, Julia and Benjamin Clark; Kevin O’Neill; and colleagues at Loyola Marymount University (and especially Maria Jackson) for their patience and support during the preparation of the fifth edition.

Our deepest thanks also go to the instructors who have encouraged and supported this book, many of whom have used *Basic Grammar and Usage* since its first appearance in 1978. And to those who first encountered this book as students and are now using it in their own classrooms, we are pleased to serve a second generation of instructors.

Penelope Choy

Dorothy Goldbart Clark

Preface to the First Edition

Basic Grammar and Usage was originally written for students in a special admissions program at the University of California, Los Angeles. As part of their participation in the program, the students were enrolled in a composition and grammar course designed to prepare them for the university's freshman English courses. When the program began in 1971, none of the grammar textbooks then on the market seemed suitable for the students, whose previous exposure to grammar had been cursory or, in some cases, nonexistent. As the director of the program's English classes, I decided to write a book of my own that would cover the most important areas of grammar and usage in a way that would be easily understood by my students.

The original version of *Basic Grammar and Usage* received an enthusiastic response from the students and was used successfully throughout the three-year duration of the program. After the program ended in 1974, many of the instructors asked permission to reproduce the book for use in their new teaching positions. By the time copies of *Basic Grammar and Usage* reached Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1975, the text had already been used by more than 1,500 students in nearly a dozen schools.

Basic Grammar and Usage presents material in small segments so that students can master a particular topic one step at a time. The lessons within each unit are cumulative. For example, students doing the pronoun exercises for Lesson 19 will find that those exercises include a review of the constructions treated in Lessons 16 to 18. This approach reinforces the students' grasp of the material and helps them develop the skills they need for the writing of compositions. To make them more interesting to students, the exercises in four of the six units are presented as short narratives rather than as lists of unrelated sentences. Each lesson concludes with two exercises, which may be either used in class or assigned as homework. In addition, each unit ends with a composition that the students must proofread for errors and then correct to demonstrate mastery of the material.

Students who have never before studied grammar systematically will find that working through the text from beginning to end provides an insight into the basic patterns of English grammar. As one student commented on an end-of-course evaluation, "The most important thing I learned from *Basic Grammar and Usage* is that if you learn what an independent clause is, half of your grammar problems are over." On the other hand, students who do not need a total review of grammar can concentrate on the specific areas in which they have weaknesses. To help the instructor evaluate both types of student, the Instructor's Manual accompanying the text includes a diagnostic test and a post-test divided into sections corresponding to the units in the book. There are also separate achievement tests for each unit, as well as answer keys to the exercises presented in the text.

Although *Basic Grammar and Usage* is designed for students whose native language is English, it has been used successfully by students learning English as a second language. In addition to being a classroom text, *Basic Grammar and Usage* can be used in writing labs and for individual tutoring.

Many people have shared in the preparation of *Basic Grammar and Usage*. I wish in particular to thank the instructors and administrators of UCLA's Academic Advancement Program, where this book originated. In revising the text for publication, I have been greatly helped by the suggestions of Regina Sackmary of Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York and by Elizabeth Gavin, formerly of California State University, Long Beach, who reviewed the manuscript for me. Sue Houchins of the Black Studies Center of the Claremont Colleges contributed many ideas and reference materials for the exercises. An author could not ask for more supportive people to work with than the staff of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Raoul Savoie, who first brought the UCLA version of the text to the attention of his company. I also wish to thank Lauren Procton, who was responsible for the editing, and Eben W. Ludlow, who has provided guidance and encouragement throughout all the stages of this book's development.

Penelope Choy

To the Student: Using This Book to Edit Your Compositions

Basic Grammar and Usage is designed to help you master the most important rules of grammar, usage, and grammatical structures. However, learning grammar and usage is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. Learning grammar and usage should ultimately enable you to write better compositions—compositions with clearly written and easily understood sentences that are free of distracting errors that draw your reader’s attention away from the important points you are trying to make.

When you write a composition, the first draft of your paper may not be free of grammar and usage errors. But you can learn to edit your papers; that is, to remove mistakes before you complete the final draft. The first step in this process is for you to know the kinds of mistakes you most often make. Your instructor may give you a pretest to point out areas of grammar and usage that you need to study. You should also keep track of the mistakes you make in your compositions. Then, as you study the lessons, *Basic Grammar and Usage* will explain how to avoid these errors. You can then look for these particular mistakes on the rough drafts of your essays.

The chart displayed on the inside back cover will help you keep track of the kinds of mistakes you make. Your instructor can also supply you with a full-page chart from the *Basic Grammar and Usage* Instructor's Manual. Notice that there are columns in which you may enter the number and kind of mistakes you make on your papers. There is also a list of corresponding lessons in *Basic Grammar and Usage* in which each mistake is discussed.

Editing your papers will be easier if you prepare your manuscript for proofreading in advance. Whether you are using a typewriter or a word processor, you should triple-space between lines to provide plenty of room to make corrections. If you are writing by hand, write on every other line, and do not write on the back of the page. If you use a word processing software program, it will help to use a large font for your rough draft, to make it easier to read. With a word processor, it is easy to look at one section of a paper at a time. If you are writing by hand, consider writing each paragraph on separate sheets of paper. This way, correcting one paragraph of your essay at a time will not only seem less overwhelming, but it will be easier to completely rewrite a paragraph should you decide it is needed. You will also not have to recopy other parts of the essay.

The authors of *Basic Grammar and Usage* collected the following suggestions (from other English instructors and their best students) to demonstrate how best to edit a paper for grammar and usage errors:

1. Do not try to edit your paper immediately after you finish writing it. Let some time pass so that you do not overlook mistakes because of your familiarity with the paper.
2. Look for one type of error at a time. Try not to proofread for everything at once. For example, if you know that you often write comma splices, check first for that mistake before looking for others.
3. Begin by looking for the mistakes you and/or your instructor consider to be the most serious.
4. Consider reading the paper aloud or recording it into a tape player and listening to it. Read slowly and carefully. If you have any trouble reading the sentences or words, it is a sign that they may be awkwardly written or that they may contain major grammatical errors needing to be corrected.
5. Try reading the paper backwards, from the last sentence to the first. This will help overcome a common problem of overlooking mistakes because you will tend to concentrate on the flow of ideas rather than on the mechanics of the grammar and usage. When you read from the back to the front, the sentences will no longer have a familiar continuity. This will make it easier for you to look at each sentence individually and spot mistakes each sentence may contain.

6. On your last reading, move a ruler down the page as you read from beginning to end. This will help you read more slowly and concentrate better on each sentence.
7. Plan on reading your paper several times: one time for each major kind of error and one time for each major revision of your draft.
8. Plan on spending the time necessary for editing your paper properly. This will include time for taking a break between the time you finish the paper and the time you begin editing it, time for proofreading more than once, and time for a final reading of your last draft.

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FIFTH EDITION

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Composition Editing Chart Inside Back Cover

UNIT ONE

IDENTIFYING SUBJECTS AND VERBS

1

Sentences with One Subject and One Verb

The most important grammatical skill you can learn is how to identify subjects and verbs. Just as solving arithmetic problems requires you to know the multiplication tables perfectly, solving grammatical problems requires you to identify subjects and verbs with perfect accuracy. This is not as difficult as it sounds. With practice, recognizing subjects and verbs will become as automatic as knowing that $2 + 2 = 4$.

Although in conversation people often speak in short word groups that may not be complete sentences, in written English people usually use complete sentences.

A complete sentence contains at least one subject and one verb.

A sentence can be thought of as a statement describing an *actor* performing a particular *action*. For example, in the sentence “The dog ran,” the *actor* or person performing the action is the dog. What *action* did the dog perform? He *ran*. This *actor-action* pattern can be found in most sentences. Can you identify the actor and the action in each of the following sentences?

The teacher laughed.

The crowd applauded.

The *actor* in a sentence is called the **subject**. The *action* word in a sentence is called the **verb**. Together, the subject and verb form the core of the sentence. Notice that even if extra words are added to the two sentences above, the subject-verb core in each sentence remains the same.

The teacher laughed at the student's joke.

After the performance, the crowd applauded enthusiastically.

You can see that in order to identify subjects and verbs, you must be able to separate these core words from the rest of the words in the sentence.

Here are some suggestions to help you identify verbs.

1. The *action* words in sentences are verbs. For example,

The team *played* well.

This store *sells* rare books.

The doctor *recommended* vitamins.

Underline the verb in each of the following sentences.

The bank lends money to small businesses.

Gina speaks Italian.

The flood destroyed many homes.

2. All forms of the verb "to be" are verbs: *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, and *been*. For example,

Susan *is* unhappy.

The actor *was* nervous.

Verbs also include words that can be used as substitutes for forms of *be*, such as *seem*, *feel*, *become*, and *appear*. These verbs are called **linking or auxiliary verbs**.

Susan *seems* unhappy.

The actor *appeared* nervous.

Underline the verb in each of the following sentences.

The children became excited during the birthday party.

The professor seemed fatigued today.

The actors felt happy about their performance.

- 3.** Verbs are the only words that change their spelling to show tense. **Tense** is the time—present, past, or future—at which the verb’s action occurs. For example, the sentence “We *walk* each morning” has a present-tense verb. The sentence “We *walked* each morning” has a past-tense verb. Underline the verb in each of the following sentences.

Grandfather moves today.

My brother moved to Chicago last month.

Sandra dances very well.

Maria danced with a ballet company.

I wash my hair every morning.

The nurse washed her hands.

Identifying verbs will be easier for you if you remember that the following kinds of words are *not* verbs.

- 4.** An **infinitive**—the combination of the word *to* plus a verb, such as *to walk* or *to study*—is not considered part of the verb in a sentence. Read the following sentences.

He plans to swim later.

She wants to enter graduate school.

The main verbs in these two sentences are *plans* and *wants*. The infinitives *to swim* and *to enter* are not included. Underline the main verb in each of the following sentences.

Benjy decided to play his new video games.

The conductor promised to check our luggage.

- 5.** **Adverbs**—words that describe a verb—are *not* part of the verb. Many commonly used adverbs end in *-ly*. The adverbs in the following sentences are italicized. Underline the verb in each sentence.

The guitarist played *badly*.
Phillipe rushed *quickly* to our rescue.
The mother *patiently* helped her children.

The words *not*, *never*, and *very* are also adverbs. Like other adverbs, these words are *not* part of the verb. Underline the verb in each of the following sentences. Do *not* include adverbs.

The dancers are not here yet.
He never studies late.
The director spoke very carefully.
He is not a good mechanic.
José never remembers to close the door.

Now that you can identify verbs, here are some suggestions to help you to identify subjects.

1. The subject of a sentence is most often a noun. A **noun** is the name of a person, place, or thing, such as *Julia*, *Houston*, or *pens*. A noun may also be the name of an abstract idea, such as *sadness* or *failure*. Underline the subject in each of the following sentences *once* and the verb *twice*. Remember that the verb is the *action*, and the subject is the *actor*.

Kevin reads many books each month.
The store closes at midnight.
Atlanta hosted the 1996 Olympics.
Love conquers all.

2. The subject of a sentence may also be a **subject pronoun**. A **pronoun** is a word used in place of a noun, such as *she* (= *Julia*), *it* (= *Houston*), or *they* (= *pens*). The following words are subject pronouns:

I, you, he, she, it, we, they

Underline the subject in each of the following sentences *once* and the verb *twice*.

He was elected president of the United States.
Each spring they travel to Yosemite.
I always drink strong coffee.