

ENGLISH

GRAMMAR

AND

STRUCTURE

N. A. BERKOFF

*A Handbook for students
studying English as a
second language*

\$1.50

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PREFACE

This book has been evolved in the course of teaching English as a second language to University students who have to develop their ability to read English text-books for their professional studies.

The aim of the book is to enable University students whose mother tongue is not English to practise some of the more important English structures, so as to help them in their reading and writing.

Those who find the analytical approach of Chapter I somewhat heavy going are advised to start with Chapter II. In any case the experienced teacher will know when not to follow the order of the chapters too rigidly.

A book like this is necessarily influenced by others who have worked in the field of English grammar and structure. Among those whose work has been a source of ideas and stimulation to me are C. C. Fries, in particular his "The Structure of English" (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1952); James Sledd "A Short Introduction to English Grammar" (Scott, Foresman & Co, Chicago, 1959); Harold Whitehall "Structural Essentials of English" (Harcourt Brace, 1954). I should like to acknowledge that the general idea of Sentence Patterns in Chapter II is partially derived from two books by Paul Roberts, "Understanding English" (Harper Brothers, New York, 1958) and "Patterns of English" (Harcourt Brace, 1956), and I have also adopted his term "Sentence Connector"; and the idea of Verb Patterns in Chapter IX is partially derived from "A Guide to Patterns and Usages in English" by A. S. Hornby (Oxford University Press, London, 1954), from whom I have also taken the term "Non-Conclusive Verb". All these I should like to thank very warmly.

I also wish to thank two of my colleagues of the English Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mr. J.

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Jerusalem, Israel

N. A. B.

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CHAPTER I

WORD CLASSES

English words can be divided into two main groups, Form Classes and Structure Classes.

FORM CLASSES

The words in this group are usually marked by characteristics of form-endings or changes in the form of the word, e.g. *book, books; go, went; tall, taller*.

The words in this group (apart from Pronouns) constitute an Open Class, i.e. their membership cannot be catalogued and new words are continually being added as the language develops.

We have five Form Classes:

Nouns	(N)
Pronouns	(Pro)
Verbs	(V)
Adjectives	(Adj)
Adverbs	(Adv)

STRUCTURE CLASSES

The words in this group do not change their form, their function is to expand or combine form classes and sentence patterns, and to indicate the structural relationship between members of the form class.

These words form a Closed Class, i.e. their number is finite and new ones are rarely added.

Determiners	(D)
Auxiliaries	(A)
Modifiers	(M)

Conjunctions	(C)
Sentence Connectors	(SC)
Question Words	(Q)
Prepositions	(P)
Subordinators	(S)

Note. The above list is not exhaustive, but sufficient for our needs.

THE NOUN (N)

Nouns are words like *table, apple, grass, honesty, car, furniture*. There are thousands of these words, and the thing that they have in common is that they occur in similar positions in sentences, i.e. they all pattern alike.

A common pattern is:

The garden is beautiful
 The grass is beautiful
 Her furniture is beautiful
 His honesty is beautiful

We can also say:

The gardens are beautiful
 Their tables are beautiful

And:

Gardens are beautiful

And:

Honesty is beautiful
 Grass is beautiful

Any word, therefore, which will fill in the blank in one of the following frames is a noun. (It may sometimes be a pronoun, but for pronouns see below.)

The —— is beautiful/good
 —— is beautiful/good
 The ——s are beautiful/good
 ——s are beautiful/good.

We can summarise this by saying that any word that will fill in the blank in the following frame is a noun:

(The) ——(s) is/are beautiful/good.

Groups of Nouns

Nouns that represent items that can be counted we will call “countables”; those that represent items that cannot be counted we will call “non-countables”.

Nouns can be divided into three groups:

1. Countables, such as *table, piano, knife, dictionary*, etc.
2. Non-countables, such as *bread, music, money, thunder, honesty*, etc. Non-countables include:

			MATERIALS TOO SMALL TO BE COUNTED	NATURAL PHENOMENA	ABSTRACT IDEAS
GASES	FLUIDS	MATERIALS			
air	water	gold	dirt	heat	bravery
smoke	oil	marble	dust	darkness	courage
hydrogen	blood	wood	rice	sunshine	happiness
oxygen	milk	rubber	sand	weather	luck
	ink	iron		lightning	peace

Note. Pay special attention to the following nouns, which are non-countables in English, but may be countable in your language:

advice	knowledge	news
luggage	information	furniture

3. Proper Nouns—names of people and places such as David, Napoleon, Jerusalem; and the following words:

anybody	somebody	everybody	nobody
anyone	someone	everyone	no one

The Plural

Non-countables and proper nouns are not usually used in the plural except in certain special cases. You are advised not to use them in the plural at this stage.

Countables form the plural by adding *s*: *book, books; dog, dogs*. Those ending in *s, sh, ch, x*, form the plural by adding *es*: *glass, glass s; dish, dishes; patch, patch s; box, boxes*. Those ending in *o* usually form the plural by adding *es*: *potato, potatoes; volcano, volcano s*; but there are a few exceptions like: *pianos, dynamos, photos, solos*.

The most common irregular plurals are: *man, men; woman, women; child, children; tooth, teeth; mouse, mice; foot, feet*.

A few countables remain unchanged in the plural form—*sheep, deer, fish* (*fishes* is sometimes used).

A few nouns are used only in their plural form—*scissors, trousers, clothes*. *Fruit* is usually used in the singular form.

DETERMINERS (D)

Determiners are words that pattern with nouns, though it is possible to use a noun without a determiner. Determiners pattern like *the*.

The commonest determiners are:

1	2	3	4	5	6
a	these	this	some	much	the
an	those	that	any		no
one	many	either	more		both
each	few	neither	most		half
every	several		little		my
			such		our
			enough		your
			all		his
					her
					its
					their
					either . . . or
					neither . . . nor
					John's etc.

The determiners in column 1 are used with countables in the singular form; in column 2 with countables in the plural form;

in column 3 with countables in the singular form and non-countables; in column 4 with countables in the plural form and with non-countables; in column 5 with non-countables; and in column 6 with all nouns.

Note. *a* and *every* can be used with a noun in the plural form if the noun is preceded by *few* or a cardinal number—*a few things; every two days*.

Determiners do not usually pattern with proper nouns except names of rivers—the Mississippi, the Thames; names of districts—the Sahara, the Negev; names of lakes—the Lake of Geneva (but Lake Geneva); names of certain countries—the Netherlands, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; names of oceans and sea—the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean; names of mountain ranges—the Alps, the Himalayas (but Mount Snowdon, Mount Everest); names of ships—the *Queen Mary*, the *Victory*.

Countables usually require a determiner except when they are used in a general sense in the plural, e.g.

Tables are not used by primitive races.

BUT

The tables in the Museum were made in the sixteenth century.

Non-countables are normally used without a determiner, but require one when used in a specific, particular sense, e.g.

Furniture is very expensive these days.

BUT

The furniture I bought yesterday was a great bargain.

Pre-determiners

All, both, such, half come before other determiners:

Both my parents.

All the money in the world.

Half the audience came late.

Such a pity you missed the game.

EXERCISE 1

Fill in the blanks with a noun:

1. The —— is interesting.
2. The ——s are interesting.
3. —— is interesting.
4. —— are interesting.
5. I want ——.
6. I want some ——.
7. I want some ——s.
8. I want his ——.

What do you notice about the nouns you have to use in Nos. 3, 5 and 6?

EXERCISE 2

State which of the following nouns have a plural; which have no plural; which have no singular. In some cases the singular and the plural have different meanings. If possible make two sentences with each word—one with a determiner and one without.

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. nature | 2. history | 3. science | 4. air |
| 5. economics | 6. clothes | 7. cloth | 8. advice |
| 9. behaviour | 10. truth | 11. weather | 12. happiness |
| 13. hair | 14. bread | 15. tools | 16. instrument |
| 17. water | 18. power | 19. poetry | 20. poem |
| 21. tea | 22. news | 23. newspaper | 24. information |
| 25. peoples | 26. manner | 27. progress | 28. negligence |
| 29. neglect | 30. iron | 31. riches | 32. customs |
| 33. sleep | 34. medicine | 35. camera | 36. knowledge |
| 37. physics | 38. music | 39. product | 40. wheat |