

Business English

Roger W. Dow



BUSINESS ENGLISH

ROGER W. DOW
Associate Director of Curriculum
Heald Colleges

John Wiley & Sons
New York Chichester Brisbane Toronto

*This book was printed and bound by Halliday Lithograph Corporation.
The copyeditor was Vivian Kahane.
Linda Sadovnick supervised production.
Text and cover designed by Edward A. Butler.*

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data:

Dow, Roger W.
Business English.

Includes indexes.

1. English language—Business English. I. Title.

PE1115.D6 808'.042'024651 78-18253
ISBN 0-471-36661-7

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

PREFACE

This book provides a program of study in English grammar and punctuation for a basic course in business English at the post-high school level.

SPECIAL FEATURES

1. An introductory section reviews principles previously learned by some students; it presents enough depth so that new students can establish basic understandings.
2. The presentation of punctuation and grammar is based on current practices found in the best written and best edited writing being done today. Every situation to be encountered in the practice exercises is covered in the text, along with illustrations that have the same pattern as the exercise.
3. Punctuation is presented early in the book so it can be reviewed daily.
4. Punctuation and grammar are presented in separate sections; each section can be taught without dependence on the other.
5. Each unit provides a review of selected principles from prior units.
6. Typical business writing is used in the illustrative sentences in the text and in the practice material. Many sentences are adapted from business correspondence, current business English texts, yearly reports of corporations, and articles that appear in current business periodicals such as *Business Week* and *Fortune*.

The text is divided into 44 teaching units, each organized in the following pattern.

1. Introduction.
2. Text.
3. Summary.
4. Study guides.
5. Practice exercises.

TO THE STUDENT

Today, more than ever, personal success in business depends on the individual's capacity to perform. The employee who can get the job done well and who can learn from new assignments will move ahead.

Competence in communication comes closer than anything else to being the universal requirement for successfully entering, performing, and advancing in whatever career or profession one may choose. In every organization employees are expected to be able to read and follow directions. Some of the employees must transcribe dictation, write letters, reports, minutes of meetings, and handle

hundreds of other tasks through writing. Notice the requirements for English skills in these advertisements for jobs.

SECRETARY, Fin. dist. Oil & gas Co. seeks secty. w/good skills, excl. spelling, english. File organization/maint., typing, transcription. Learn to operate word processing equip. Must be at ease w/numbers. Sal. from \$750 per mo. Submit resume for interview. Overview, Inc. Suite 3300, 1 Post St. 6 F. Ca. 94104

SECRETARY for TRAINING PGM. Consulting firm conducting program to train local government staff needs person to assist planning & managing hotel attendee course arrangements. Typing & communications skills necessary. Requires ability to work in often unstructured situation. Cite related experience. Write this ad No. 87406

SECRETARY, EXPER.
Must have excellent English, typing 85 wpm. Contract, leasing, corporate law or similar business exp. Dictaphone, some S/H. Exc. benefits. 573-1200 EOE

Business English will help you to prepare for a position in business. You will need knowledge, illustrations, and practice. To obtain knowledge of the principles of English usage, read your text; study the illustrations that show how the principles work in actual practice; then apply the principles as you do the practice exercises.

Students in English classes often ask questions such as: Why is it “correct” to write it that way? Who decided? Is there a law? By what right does the author of an English book tell me how to speak and write? Authors present the guidelines for usage that are currently being observed by the most competent and careful speakers and writers. I use the term “correct” to mean “language practices of those persons whose usage, in the opinion of language specialists, merits respect.”

Some questions of usage cannot be settled in terms of “right” or “wrong.” Competent users of English differ in their usage; some practices used in the past are now disappearing; and some situations defy satisfactory analysis. As a result, precise rulings on many practices cannot be made.

Nevertheless, certain standards do exist. One must respect the principles of usage that make it possible to speak or write so that one will not be misunderstood. If everyone were to speak and write exactly as he or she pleased, many of the activities within society that demand clear, precise, and uniform expression—legal systems and contracts, for instance—would not be possible.

Roger W. Dow

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REVIEW AND PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY OF PUNCTUATION

- Unit 1 Using the Dictionary
- Unit 2 Dividing Words
- Unit 3 Recognizing Parts of Speech
- Unit 4 Recognizing Phrases
- Unit 5 Recognizing Clauses
- Unit 6 Recognizing the Sentence
- Unit 7 Diagraming the Sentence

OBJECTIVE OF SECTION 1 Section 1 prepares you for the study of punctuation in Sections 2 and 3. Emphasis will be placed on recognizing parts of speech, sentences, clauses, and phrases.

At this point we shall not be concerned with many details of grammar that will be studied later; instead, we shall concentrate on recognizing words as parts of speech and on sentences and their parts.

ONE

UNIT ONE

USING THE DICTIONARY

The dictionary is the most valuable tool you can use in developing your communication skills. By acquiring the habit of checking the dictionary for the correct spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of words that you do not know or about which you are in doubt, you will add to your reading, speaking, and writing vocabularies.

The average person neglects much of the information in the dictionary. Your objective in this unit is to become thoroughly familiar with your own dictionary.

SELECTING A GOOD DICTIONARY

Language constantly changes. New words are added, and old words acquire new meanings. Consequently, you need a current edition of a dictionary. One printed more than ten years ago is out of date in many respects.

Beware of placing too much dependence on pocket editions of dictionaries, since much information has been eliminated.

Unabridged dictionaries run to several thousand pages, and the publishers try to include all the words in the language. From time to time you may need to consult one of the unabridged dictionaries. Most of the time, however, you can find the information you need in a good collegiate edition. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* has been used as a guide throughout this book.

LEARNING TO USE AND INTERPRET A DICTIONARY

You cannot use your dictionary with full effectiveness until you are acquainted with its plan and method of presentation. Examine your dictionary carefully. Read the articles headed "Pronunciation Symbols," "Explanatory Notes," and "Abbreviations in This Work." Your dictionary may not have sections with those exact titles, but most dictionaries contain equivalent material.

The skilled persons who make dictionaries are called lexicographers; they do not themselves decide what words mean or how they should be spelled and pronounced. Dictionaries record and usually interpret what is known as *standard English*, that is, the speech and writing practices of those whom language specialists respect. For this reason, the dictionary is probably the best source of information on the status of English words and phrases.

MASTERING THE VARIETY OF INFORMATION GIVEN FOR WORD ENTRIES

For any word listed in the dictionary, the first five items in the following list are given. For many words some of the next five kinds of information are provided.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Spelling. | 6. Level(s) of meaning. |
| 2. Syllabication. | 7. Derivation (origin). |
| 3. Pronunciation. | 8. Synonyms. |
| 4. Part(s) of speech. | 9. Antonyms. |
| 5. Meaning(s). | 10. Other information. |

1. SPELLING.

Many words in our language have more than one spelling. Dictionaries indicate preferred forms in a variety of ways. Usually, the preferred spelling of a word is listed first. Other spellings given are used, but they are not considered as generally acceptable as the first listing.

In the illustration shown below, notice the two spellings for *abridgment*. The connecting word *or* indicates that both spellings are used about equally. However, the first listing follows the standard spelling rule that tells us to omit *e* after *dg* when adding the ending *-ment*. Another indication of preferred spelling is that used by the dictionary itself in illustrations.

Spelling		Pronunciation
Syllabication		
abridgment or abridge-ment \ə-ˈbrij-ment\ <i>n</i> 1 : the action of abridging : the state of being abridged 2 : a shortened form of a work retaining the general sense and unity of the original		
<i>syn</i> ABRIDGMENT, ABSTRACT, SYNOPSIS, CONSPECTUS, EPITOME <i>shared meaning element</i> : a shorter version of a larger work or treatment <i>ant</i> expansion		

The dictionary shows the correct usage of many common expressions, some of which are written as solid words, some as two separate words, and some with hyphens. If an unabridged dictionary does not list an expression, treat the expression as two separate words.

2. SYLLABICATION.

Words are divided into parts called syllables. Main entries in the dictionary are divided into syllables by the use of dots.

3. PRONUNCIATION.

Following each main entry is the phonetic spelling of the word, together with markings, called diacritical marks, that indicate how the word should be pronounced. To understand the diacritical markings, refer to the chart usually located inside the front cover of the dictionary, called "Pronunciation Symbols." In *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, an accent mark is shown as an apostrophe preceding the syllable to be accented. In the illustration of *abridgment* shown above, note the apostrophe before the syllable *brij*.

4. PARTS OF SPEECH AND INFLECTED FORMS.

In each entry the part of speech is indicated by a small italicized abbreviation (*n*, *p*, *vb*, *adj*, *adv*, *prep*, *conj*). Many words may be used as more than one part of speech. For example, in the illustration below, *haul* is listed first as a verb (*vb*) and second as a noun (*n*).

Parts of speech

¹ **haul** \ 'hól\ *vb* [ME *halen* to pull, fr. OF *haler*, of Gmc origin; akin to MD *halen* to pull; akin to OE *geholian* to obtain] *vt* 1 : to change the course of (a ship) esp. so as to sail closer to the wind 2 **a** : to exert traction on : DRAW <~ a wagon> **b** : to obtain or move by or as if by hauling <was ~ *ed* to parties night after night by his wife> **c** : to transport in a vehicle : CART 3 : to bring before an authority for interrogation or judgment : HALE <~ traffic violators into court> ~, *vi* 1 : to exert traction : PULL 2 : to furnish transportation 3 *of the wind* : SHIFT *syn* see PULL

² **haul** *n* 1 **a** : the act or process of hauling : PULL **b** : a device for hauling 2 **a** : the result of an effort to collect : TAKE <the burglar's ~> **b** : the fish taken in a single draft of a net 3 **a** : transportation by hauling **b** : the distance or route over which a load is transported <a long ~> **c** : a quantity transported : LOAD

Verbs are divided into two groups: transitive (*vt*), those that require an object to complete their meaning (The truck hauls a trailer); and intransitive (*vi*), those that are complete without an object (The telephone rang).

The expression *inflected forms* refers to changes that occur in words as we use them in different ways. Among those given in the dictionary are plurals, principal parts of verbs, comparison of adjectives and adverbs, and capitalization.

a. PLURALS The dictionary shows some plurals. Nouns, the words that name people, places, and things, may be either singular or plural. However, exceptions exist. These exceptions are referred to as irregular plurals, and they are shown in the dictionary. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* also lists plurals of words ending in *y* that changes to *i* when adding *es* to form the plural. (See the illustration of the word *lily* below.)

Plurals

¹ **lily** \ 'lil-e\ *n, pl lil-ies* [ME *lilie*, fr. OE, fr. L *lilium*] 1 : any of a genus (*Lilium* of the family Liliaceae, the lily family) of erect perennial leafy-stemmed bulbous herbs that are native to the northern hemisphere and are widely cultivated for their showy flowers; *broadly* : any of various plants of the lily family or of the related amaryllis or iris families 2 : any of various plants with showy flowers: as **a** : a scarlet anemone (*Anemone coronaria*) that grows wild in Palestine **b** : WATER LILY **c** : CALLA 3 : FLEUR-DE-LIS 2

² **lily** *adj* : resembling a lily in fairness, purity, or fragility <my lady's ~ hand —John Keats>

b. PRINCIPAL PARTS OF VERBS Verbs, the action words in our language, have many forms. The changes that take place in the forms of verbs when we express different time relationships are called their principal parts; for example, *walk, walked, walked*. This example shows the regular way to change the verb *walk* to show past time (by adding *-ed*) and the change that we call the past participle (also by adding *-ed*). When the verb changes in any other way than by adding *-ed*, we call it irregular (*go, went, gone*). The dictionary gives principal parts of all irregular verbs and of some regular verbs. In the illustration below of the verb *abrogate*, the past tense and the past participle (both adding *-ed*) and the present participle (ending *-ing*) are shown, even though the verb is regular.

Principal Parts

ab-ro-gate \ 'ab-rə-'gāt \ *vt* **-gat·ed; -gat·ing** [L *abrogatus*, pp. of *abrogare*, fr. *ab-* + *rogare* to ask, propose a law—more at RIGHT] **1** : to abolish by authoritative action : ANNUL **2** : to do away with *syn* see NULLIFY *ant* establish, fix (*as a right or custom*) — **ab-ro-ga-tion** \ 'ab-rə-'gā-shən \ *n*

c. COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE FORMS OF ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS Adjectives and adverbs are used to describe. When describing one thing, the simple form of the word is used (a *tall* building). When describing two things, a form called the comparative is used (John is *taller* than William). When describing or comparing three or more, the form known as *superlative* is used (The Bank of America Building is the *tallest* building in the city). Notice that in the comparative *-er* has been added and in the superlative *-est* has been added. These are the regular changes that occur in most of these types of words. However, in a few adjectives and adverbs, the changes occur differently; for example, *little, less, least*. Notice that the whole word is changed. This type of change is referred to as *irregular*. The dictionary shows all irregular forms in the comparative and superlative of adjectives and adverbs. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* also lists adjectives or adverbs ending in *y* that changes to *i* when adding *-er* and *-est* (see the illustration below of the adverb *easy*).

Comparative		and		superlative
2 easy <i>adv</i> eas·i·er; -est 1 : EASILY <promises come ~> 2 : without undue speed or excitement : SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY <take it ~>				

d. CAPITALIZATION Words usually capitalized are shown with an initial capital letter in the dictionary (see the illustration of the word *Easter* below). Some words are labeled *often cap*, which indicates that the word is as acceptable capitalized as not.

Capitalization

Eas-ter \ 'ē-stər \ *n* [ME *estre*, fr. OE *ēastre*; akin to OHG *ōstarun* (pl.) Easter; both fr. the prehistoric WGmc name of a pagan spring festival akin to OE *ēast* east] : a feast that commemorates Christ's resurrection and is observed with variations of date due to different calendars on the first Sunday after the full moon on or next after March 21 or one week later if the full moon falls on Sunday

5. MEANINGS.

Words may have one or more meanings. Dictionaries differ in the order in which meanings are listed. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* lists definitions by their historical development. For example, after the word *amuse* (see illustration below), the first definition is labeled *archaic*: "to divert the attention so as to deceive." The word *archaic* tells us that this meaning once was commonly used but that it is found only occasionally today. This meaning is followed by definitions that are in current use: "to entertain or occupy in a light, playful, or pleasant manner" and "to appeal to the sense of humor of."

Meanings

amuse \ə-'myüz\ *vb* **amused**; **amusing** [MF *amuser*, fr. OF, fr. *a-* (fr. L *ad-*) + *muser* to muse] *vt* **1 a** *archaic* : to divert the attention so as to deceive : **BEMUSE** **b** *obs* : to occupy the attention of : **ABSORB** **c** *obs* : **DISTRACT**, **BEWILDER** **2 a** : to entertain or occupy in a light, playful, or pleasant manner <~ the child with a story> **b** : to appeal to the sense of humor of <the joke doesn't ~ me> ~ *vi. obs* : **MUSE** — **amusedly** \-'myü-zəd-lē\ *adv* — **amuser** *n*

syn **AMUSE**, **DIVERT**, **ENTERTAIN** *shared meaning element* : to pass or cause to pass one's time pleasantly **ant** bore

6. LEVEL(S) OF MEANING.

Finding a word listed in a dictionary does not guarantee that it is in good use. Your dictionary enables you to weigh the appropriateness of a word by giving "usage labels" to many words. Any word not given such a label is acceptable in formal and informal English. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* uses three types of usage labels: temporal, regional, and stylistic.

a. TEMPORAL (REFERS TO TIME)

(1) *Obs.* for "obsolete" means that no evidence is found of its use since 1755. (See **b** and **c** under the illustration of *amuse*.)

(2) *Archaic* means that a word once in common use is found today only occasionally. (See **1a** under *amuse*.)

b. REGIONAL (REFERS TO PLACE)

(1) A geographic label indicates that the word is limited in use to a specific region of the United States or to one of the other countries of the English-speaking world. (Check the entry for *goober* in your dictionary.)

(2) *Dial.* for "dialect" indicates several regional varieties of American English or of American and British English. (See the entry for *chemist*.)

c. STYLISTIC (REFERS TO LEVEL OF USAGE)

(1) *Slang* indicates words that are appropriate only in extreme informality, such as personal conversation. (See entry for *rap* in your dictionary.)

(2) *Nonstand.* for "nonstandard" is used for a few words that are disapproved by many but that are occasionally used. (See entry for *irregardless*.)

(3) *Substand.* for "substandard" is used for those words that are unacceptable for general use or in business writing. (See entry for *ain't*.)

7. ORIGIN: DERIVATION OR ETYMOLOGY.

In college dictionaries the origin of the word is shown in brackets. For example, the entry after *expel* (see illustration below) tells us that *expel* comes to us from the Middle English word *expellen* that came from the Latin *expellere*, which is made up of the prefix *ex-* plus *pellere*, meaning "to drive." Middle English refers to the language used in England from approximately 1150 to 1475. In reading the derivation of words as given in the dictionary, the meaning of abbreviations may be found in the list of abbreviations used in the dictionary located in the front of the book.

Derivation

ex·pel \ik-'spel\ *vi* **ex·pelled**; **ex·pel·ling** [ME *expellen*, fr. L *expellere*, fr. *ex-* + *pellere* to drive—more at FELT] **1** : to force out from or as if from a receptacle <the well *expelled* great quantities of gas> **2** : to drive away; *esp.* : DEPORT **3** : to cut off from membership <*expelled* from college> *syn* see EJECT *ant* admit—**ex·pel·la·ble** \-'spel'ə-bəl\ *adj* —**ex·pel·ler** *n*

8. SYNONYMS.

Synonyms are words having similar meanings. Lists and discussions of synonyms in dictionaries often help to clarify the meaning of closely related words. By studying the definitions of words with similar meanings, you will find that you are able to choose your words more exactly and to convey more shades of meaning. (See illustration of *confidence* below.)

9. ANTONYMS.

Antonyms are words having opposite meanings. Lists of antonyms can help you to find a word that is the direct opposite of another in meaning. (See illustration of *confidence* below.)

¹ **con·fi·dence** \'kän-fəd-ən(t)s, -fə-'den(t)s\ *n* **1** : FAITH, TRUST <their ~ in God's mercy> **2** : a feeling or consciousness of one's powers or of reliance on one's circumstances <he had perfect ~ in his ability to succeed> <met the risk with brash ~> **3** : the quality or state of being certain : CERTITUDE <they had every ~ of success> **4 a** : a relation of trust or intimacy <took his friend into his ~> **b** : reliance on another's discretion <their story was told in strictest ~> **c** : legislative support <vote of ~> **5** : a communication made in confidence : SECRET

syn CONFIDENCE, ASSURANCE, SELF-POSSESSION, APLOMB *shared meaning element* : a state of mind or a manner marked by easy coolness and freedom from uncertainty, diffidence, or embarrassment. CONFIDENCE stresses faith in oneself and one's powers without any suggestion of conceit or arrogance <had the *confidence* that comes only from long experience> ASSURANCE carries a stronger implication of certainty and may suggest arrogance or lack of objectivity in assessing one's own powers <had a conceited *assurance* of his own worth> SELF-POSSESSION implies an ease or coolness under stress that reflects perfect self-control and command of one's powers <he answered the insolent question with complete *self-possession*> APLOMB applies to the bearing or behavior under difficulties of a person with marked assurance or self-possession but usually carries none of the unpleasant connotations often felt in *assurance* <meet a challenge with *aplomb*> *ant* diffidence

² **confidence** *adj* : of or relating to swindling by false promises

Synonyms

Antonyms

10. OTHER INFORMATION.

Some additional types of information may be included as parts of a word entry or may be in a separate section in your dictionary, for example:

Abbreviations.

Biographical names.

Cross references to words listed elsewhere.

Examples of word use in phrases and sentences.

Foreign words and phrases (usually labeled as such or given a special symbol).

Geographical names.

Meanings of idiomatic phrases (expressions that carry meanings of their own but that are not the exact combination of the meanings of the individual words; for example, "How are you?" meaning, "What is the state of your health or feeling?").

Prefixes, suffixes, and other word parts.

Graphic or pictorial illustrations.

Familiarize yourself with the sections of your dictionary that are separate from the main alphabetic list of words, both in the front and the back of the book.

The illustrations of word listings shown in this unit are used by permission from *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, copyright © 1976 by G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers of the Merriam-Webster Dictionaries.

SUMMARY

<p>Selecting a good dictionary</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current editions 2. Pocket editions 3. Unabridged dictionaries 4. Collegiate editions
<p>Learning to use and interpret a dictionary</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become familiar with all the information available 2. The dictionary reflects practice; its authors do not decide correctness.
<p>Mastering the variety of information given for word entries</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spelling 2. Syllabication 3. Pronunciation 4. Parts of speech and inflected forms <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plurals b. Principal parts c. Comparative and superlative forms 5. Meanings 6. Levels of meaning 7. Derivation 8. Synonyms 9. Antonyms 10. Other information

STUDY GUIDE

Verify the spelling and capitalization of the following words.

- Ex. persian lamb Persian lamb
1. indespensible _____
2. over charge _____
3. seperate _____
4. molotov cocktail _____
5. likety split _____

Give the indicated information for each of the following words:

- | | <u>Past Tense</u> | <u>Perfect Participle</u> | <u>Present Participle</u> |
|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ex. do | <u>did</u> | <u>done</u> | <u>doing</u> |
| 1. infer | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. go | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- | | <u>Plural</u> |
|-------------|---------------|
| Ex. alumnus | <u>alumni</u> |
| 1. axis | _____ |
| 2. cameo | _____ |

- | | <u>Comparative</u> | <u>Superlative</u> |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ex. good | <u>better</u> | <u>best</u> |
| 1. little | _____ | _____ |
| 2. pure | _____ | _____ |

Parts of Speech

- Ex. like verb, noun, adjective, preposition, conjunction
1. ax _____
2. median _____

Synonyms

- Ex. judicious prudent, sage, sane, sensible, wise
1. addition _____
2. elastic _____

Usage Labels

Ex. clip joint slang _____

1. bummer _____

2. goober _____

Etymology

Ex. lobster Middle English from Old English loppestre, from loppe spider.

1. banshee _____

2. bronco _____