

SENTENCES AND THEIR ELEMENTS

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Sentences and their elements by Samuel C. Earle & Howard J. Savage & Frank E. Seavey

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SENTENCES
AND
THEIR ELEMENTS

BY
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TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN THE ENGINEERING SCHOOL
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PREFACE

IN the main this book aims to give, as briefly as possible, the facts which the student in college needs as a foundation for his study of language. Many enter without this elementary knowledge and are, as a result, seriously crippled in their classes in foreign languages as well as in their use of English. The text-books used in preparatory schools give dogmatically "rules of good use," but the student in college, who should think as well as remember and obey, needs a somewhat different treatment. The grammars and rhetorics used in college generally assume more effective knowledge of the elementary facts of language than the great majority in the classes actually possess. For this reason the following chapters deal with things which should have been learned in the grammar grades or in the first years in the high school, but according to a method which seems better adapted to the student who is more mature and who is studying other languages as well as his native tongue.*

Some suggestions as to "good use" are also given, but since that subject is well treated in many standard text-books, it will be considered here only when it throws important light on the fundamental facts of language.

The method of sentence study which has been adopted here may be seen from the following outline: —

A. Preliminary considerations: Language.

I. General uses of language.

II. The implements of written and spoken expression.

III. Limitations in the use of these implements which should be recognized. (CHAPTER I.)

* References are made in this book chiefly to French and German; now and then also to Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Latin, Spanish, and Italian.

B. Analysis of sentences.

I. Sentences as wholes.

1. General character of sentences.
2. The structure of simple and complicated sentences. (CHAPTER II.)

II. Sentence elements.

1. Words in their relations to other words.
 - (a) The parts of speech as determined by their use in sentences. (CHAPTER III.)
 - (b) Variations in form of words to express their relations in sentences. (CHAPTER IV.)
 - (c) Determination of the forms of words to be used in sentences. (CHAPTER V.)
 - (d) The order and grouping of words in sentences (including the use of marks of punctuation). (CHAPTER VI.)
2. Words considered individually.
 - (a) Choice of words.
 - (b) Pronunciation.
 - (c) Spelling.
 - (d) Use of capital letters. (CHAPTER VII.)

C. Synthesis of sentences.

I. Length.

II. Emphasis.

III. Other problems. (CHAPTER VIII.)

The materials given here may be used in different ways to answer different purposes. Any one who wishes to study the subject systematically would do well to take the book up chapter by chapter as presented. If all that is desired is to review the subject, that may be done by using the "topical synopses," which indicate definitely section by section what is treated in each chapter. In each section, where there is occasion, the gist of the matter is suggested by bold-faced type; the essential explanatory matter is printed in ordinary type; and, in some cases,

further materials are given in fine print. If it is desired to use the book merely for reference, the alphabetical index at the back will be found serviceable for that purpose.

To make the study of the book effective, it should be accompanied by much sentence analysis, and that should be based largely on the written work of the students. In fact the book should be used as far as possible as *a means of removing difficulties which have been actually found in the use of language*, rather than as a special and independent study. For this reason, only enough illustrations have been given to make the explanations clear; but if the student will make note of all the important cases which offer him difficulty and write in examples taken from his own reading and writing, he will gather the materials for the most valuable language study. A real understanding of the fundamental facts of language can be gained only through serious study. It is the purpose here, not to open a short cut to knowledge, but to assist the teacher and guide the student in making a thorough study of sentences and their elements.

A treatment such as this must inevitably be at every step the result of compromises between historical and linguistic accuracy and breadth of view on the one hand, and brevity and simplicity of statement on the other. Whether or not such compromises have been wisely made must be determined by the practical use of the book, and the authors will be glad to receive further suggestions.

Note to the Second Edition. — In revising, it has been possible to adopt valuable suggestions made by various teachers of English and of modern languages who have used the first edition. Experience has shown that the subject as here presented may be taken up in many ways, and may be abbreviated or expanded according to the needs of different classes and the resources of individual teachers. Attention is again called to the advantage of having each student note in the appropriate sections illustrations from his writing or reading of all points which offer him special difficulty.

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