

FIRST YEAR ENGLISH

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First Year English by Rose Buhlig

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ROSE BUHLIG

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BY
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PREFACE

THIS book includes Parts I and II of the author's Business English, in the preface of which is the following:

The author of this book and the writer of this preface have never met. Their respective fields of labor are a thousand miles apart. Yet such is the force of ideas that many of their thoughts and sympathies are common.

The author's aim throughout has been to teach the art of using words in such a way as to make people think and act. To do this she has applied the principles of literary composition to the highly complex and ever increasing problems of our business life. She realizes that business is vital, and that the problems of commerce are not to be met and handled with dead forms and stereotyped expressions of legal blanks.

To use our language effectively it is necessary to have an understanding of its elements. Thus the author has very wisely devoted much space to word-study and English grammar. This is a field commonly neglected in books on the subject. The people engaged in business are, on the whole, woefully weak in the grammar of our language. It is believed that the treatment herein will be a great aid in correcting this deficiency. If we have ideas, we must express them in words, and our words should be so chosen and arranged as not to offend, but to please and interest. This result can be secured by a systematic study of Part I.

Part II deals with oral and written composition. Here the author has arranged her subjects in such a way as to give the whole a cumulative effect. The method through-

out is inductive, and sufficient examples are always given to warrant the conclusions drawn. This book regards the spoken word as important as the written word.

It is confidently hoped that both teachers and pupils will find in this work material which will help them to prepare themselves to meet the many problems and demands of our modern life.

DANIEL B. DUNCAN

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PART I—WORD STUDY AND GRAMMAR

CHAPTER I

INTERESTING WORDS

BUSINESS English is the expression of our commercial life in English. It is not synonymous with letter writing. To be sure, business letters are important, but they form only a part of one of the two large divisions into which the subject naturally falls.

First, there is *oral expression*, important because so many of our business transactions are conducted personally. Thousands of salesmen daily move from place to place over the entire country, earning their salaries by talking convincingly of the goods that they have to sell. A still greater number of clerks, salesmen, managers, and officials orally transact business in our shops, stores, offices, and banks. Complaints are adjusted; difficulties are disentangled; and affairs of magnitude are consummated in personal interviews, the matter under discussion often being thought too important to be entrusted to correspondence. In every business oral English is essential.

Second, there is *written expression*. This takes account of the writing of advertisements, circulars, booklets, and prospectuses, as well as of letters. And in the preparation of these oral English is fundamental. It precedes and practically includes the written expression. For example, we say colloquially that a good advertisement "talks." We mean that the writer has so fully realized the buyer's point of view that the words of the advertisement seem to speak directly to the reader, arousing his interest or perhaps answer-

ing his objection. Oral English is fundamental, too, in the writing of letters, for most letters are dictated and not written. The correspondent dictates them to his stenographer or to a recording machine in the same tone, probably, that he would use if the customer were sitting before him.

But in taking this point of view, we should not minimize the importance of written business English. In a way, it is more difficult to write well than it is to talk well. In talking we are not troubled with the problems of correct spelling, proper punctuation, and good paragraphing. We may even repeat somewhat, if only we are persuasive. But in writing we are confronted with the necessity of putting the best thoughts into the clearest, most concise language, at the same time obeying all the rules of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The business man must be sure of these details in order to know that his letters and advertising matter are correct. The stenographer, especially, must be thoroughly familiar with them, so that she may correctly transcribe what has been dictated.

Business English is much the same as any other English. It consists in expression by means of words, sentences, and paragraphs. Moreover, they are much the same kind of words, sentences, and paragraphs that appear in any book that is written in what is commonly called the literary style. In a business letter the words are largely those of every day use, and but few are technical. It is the manner in which the words are put together, the idea back of the sentence, that makes the only difference.

We shall begin the study of business English with a study of words, for in all expression, whether oral or written, a knowledge of words, of their meaning and suggestive power, is fundamental. On the choice of words depends not only the correctness but also the effectiveness of expression — the courtesy of a letter, the appeal of an advertisement, the persuasiveness of a salesman's talk. A mastery of words cannot