

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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English Grammar by Chestine Gowdy

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CHESTINE GOWDY

**ENGLISH
GRAMMAR**

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BY

CHESTINE GOWDY

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PREFACE.

THE English language is preëminently analytical. Our words, unlike those of classical languages, have few modifications, exactly the same form being used in many constructions and even as different parts of speech. It follows that, in order to understand the use of an English word, we must see it in a sentence. The beginner in Latin must spend much time in the study of inflections, but the study of English grammar should, I believe, begin with the proposition.

It is the aim of Part I of this book to present a simple and logical development of the sentence. The student begins with the parts essential to all sentences, and adds element after element until he has studied all ordinary English construction. The parts of speech are defined as they are needed in the building up of the sentence, but only so much of a classification is made as is based upon use. The summary that follows Part I is intended to show that the essential facts of English analysis can be told in few words.

Although the logical element in English grammar is of first importance, good usage, if nothing more, demands that what is left of the inflectional element be not entirely ignored. Part II of this book deals with the more formal parts of grammar, — inflection and classification. Being based on Part I, it cannot precede it.

I have often referred to older constructions to elucidate obscure or illogical modern constructions and to arouse an

interest in our language as a living growth. Much of the historical part, as well as the discussion of constructions upon which grammarians disagree, has been put into an appendix. Each teacher must use this appendix as his judgment dictates. Good classes may be sent directly to some parts of it, other parts will interest the teacher primarily, while still others will suggest exercises to supplement the work indicated in the body of the book.

Part II is followed by a discussion of words that involve special difficulties. These pages will be useful for reference in the analysis of literature, but pupils should be encouraged to form opinions for themselves in regard to difficult constructions, referring to the treatment in the book for the confirmation or the correction of their decisions.

This book is not prepared as one of a series of language books. My feeling is that a treatise on technical grammar should stand by itself. The purpose of language books and rhetorics is to give practical help in the art of speaking and writing correctly and effectively. Grammar, on the contrary, is a science. It is preëminently a disciplinary study. To be sure, its rules furnish a test to one who is able to apply them in choosing between inflected forms. But, after all, the ability to construct sentences which do not violate the rules of grammar, important though it is, is a small part of the equipment of a good writer or speaker. An interest in the world about him and in the problems of his daily life, some technical knowledge of style and some acquired feeling for it, — these things the pupil must get from literature. Hence, it is with reading, not with grammar, that language books should be correlated. Language work may and should continue from the beginning of school life to the end; the work in grammar should be mastered in a comparatively short time.

Because of the analytical character of our language, the study of its grammar requires less memorizing, but keener discrimination than does the study of Latin. It cannot be carried on intelligently much before the eighth grade. The work outlined in this book is intended to furnish material for a course of a year and a half in grammar. It may be begun in the last half of the seventh grade and continued through the eighth grade; or, what is in many respects desirable, it may be begun in the eighth grade and completed during the first half-year in the high school. If, during this year and a half, grammar is considered as solid a subject as arithmetic and if just as definite preparation is demanded for it, better results will follow than are usually obtained by the four years of more or less desultory work often devoted to the subject.

In addition to this course of a year and a half, another half-year may be spent advantageously upon the subject by more advanced classes, especially if the study of grammar has been begun in the seventh grade. A rapid review of the principles of sentence structure and their application to difficult passages from literature, together with close work upon the nice points involved in verbs and verb phrases, is suggested as suitable work for such a course.

In acknowledging help that I have received in the preparation of this book, I must mention, first of all, Professor Willis M. West, now of the University of Minnesota. As principal of the school in which I first taught grammar, he not only gave me my point of view, but was always ready to give me effective help in meeting special difficulties. Since beginning the actual work of writing the book I have consulted with him frequently, and he has carefully read the entire manuscript. There are few pages that do not bear some trace of his thought.

Miss Elizabeth S. Beach, who has been my co-worker in

the summer school for teachers at the University of Minnesota for the last three years, has devoted much time to the selection of sentences from literature for the exercises, and in many other ways has given me constant help and encouragement.

I am indebted to several other people engaged in school work in Minnesota and elsewhere, who have generously given time to the reading of the manuscript and have offered suggestions and criticisms. Many of their suggestions I have gratefully accepted. Others have had the negative value of causing me to make myself more sure of my position before venturing to disagree.

Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. have kindly permitted the use of Emerson's *The Rhodora*, Longfellow's *The Bell of Atri*, Lowell's *To the Dandelion*, several single stanzas from other poems, and passages from Emerson's essay on *Self Reliance*; and Messrs. Ginn & Co., the use of several extracts from Montgomery's *American History*.

C. G.

MINNEAPOLIS,
May, 1901.

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