

**A GRAMMAR OF  
THE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE**

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A Grammar of the English Language by S. Ellison

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**S. ELLISON**

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A GRAMMAR  
OF THE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

FOR THE  
Use of Schools and Students :

WITH  
COPIOUS EXAMPLES AND EXERCISES.

By S. ELLISON.



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## P R E F A C E.

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IN teaching the elements of grammar, conciseness is a very important requisite; short rules, especially when accompanied, as they always ought to be, by a few explanatory words from the teacher, being most easily impressed upon the memory of a child. Duly sensible, therefore, of the value of brevity, the writer of the following pages has studied to be as concise as possible.

To assist the comprehension of their nature and use, Exercises follow each of the different parts of speech, which, with the models of parsing, will, it is hoped, be found well adapted to the purpose.

In the syntactical exercises, the usual practice of giving sentences containing solecisms for correction has been departed from. In lieu of these, suitable passages, carefully selected from the works of the most popular authors, are introduced for analysis and explanation, according to the rules of concord and government which precede them; by which the knowledge and progress of the pupil may be better tested than in pointing out obvious errors.

The writings of the most approved grammarians have been consulted; but, except in the instances in which a quotation is given, particular reference has been considered unnecessary.

*Liverpool, 25th April, 1854.*



# ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

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## INTRODUCTION.

LANGUAGE, from the Latin word *lingua*, a tongue, is the medium by which ideas are conveyed from one person to another; and it consists of certain written signs, or articulate sounds called words.

By means of written language ideas may be transmitted to distant places, and handed down from one generation to another; by spoken language people communicate their thoughts in person to each other.

*Grammar*, from the Greek word *gramma*, a letter, is the science which teaches the nature of words and their correct use, and arrangement into sentences, in conformity to approved and established rules; the languages of different nations being regulated according to the respective peculiarities of each.

English Grammar is generally divided into four parts—Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody.

## ORTHOGRAPHY.

*Orthography*, from the Greek words *orthos*, right, and *graphe*, a writing, teaches the nature and powers of letters, and the proper mode of combining them into syllables and words.

## LETTERS.

A *Letter* is a written mark or character, which represents a simple articulate sound.

The letters are twenty-six in number, and are known by the name of the *Alphabet*.

A letter which stands for a sound that can be expressed by itself is called a *Vowel*.

A letter representing a sound which cannot be distinctly uttered without the aid of a vowel is called a *Consonant*.

The vowels are *a, e, i, o, u*; and *w* and *y* when they do not begin a word or syllable. The remaining nineteen letters are consonants.

The union of two vowels to form one sound is called a *Diphthong*, or double sound.

When the sound of both the vowels is heard, it is a *proper* diphthong; as, *ou* in *mouse*.



When only one of the vowels is heard, it is an *improper* diphthong; as, *oa* in *coat*.

Three vowels united in one sound constitute a *Triphthong*; as, *eye*, *iew* in *view*.

#### SYLLABLES AND WORDS.

A syllable is either a single vowel, or one or more vowels combined with a consonant or consonants, and pronounced by one effort of the voice; as, *I*, *in*, *ink*, *blink*.

Words are the signs of ideas; they consist of either one syllable, or of two or more syllables connected together.

A word of *one* syllable is called a *Monosyllable*, as, *no*; a word of two syllables is a *Dissyllable*, as, *no-ble*; if it consists of three syllables, the word is a *Trissyllable*, as, *no-ble-ness*; and a word of more than three syllables is termed a *Polysyllable*, as, *no-bi-li-ty*, *ge-ne-ro-si-ty*.

The art of combining letters so as to form words is denominated *Spelling*.

Spelling ought to be regulated by pronunciation, and to a considerable extent this is the case; but it is subject to great irregularities, and no general rules can be given that are free from numerous exceptions; therefore accuracy in spelling can only be acquired by great practice: frequently writing from dictation, and copying passages from the best authors, are the most approved means of gaining proficiency in this art.

#### EXERCISE.

Point out the vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and triphthongs in the following words: *Am*, *plan*, *flash*, *cat*, *beset*, *stem*, *cream*, *room*, *gum*, *saucy*, *joy*, *play*, *vary*, *whirl*, *sew*, *shawl*, *thief*, *vault*, *niece*, *peach*, *house*, *tongue*, *yawn*, *beauty*, *broach*, *buoyant*, *oyster*, *saucer*, *chaos*, *carriage*, *laundry*, *nauseous*, *messieurs*, *onyx*, *nuisance*, *sausage*, *luscious*, *swerve*, *world*, *linguist*, *whistle*, *puerile*, *drowsy*.

Divide the following words into syllables: *Aching*, *lieges*, *myriad*, *gaiety*, *uncouth*, *epitaph*, *cigar*, *achieve*, *irony*, *extol*, *revolve*, *yearning*, *iron*, *soundless*, *gigantic*, *secretary*, *promontory*, *asylum*, *zoology*, *January*, *neighbourhood*, *Nankin*, *celery*, *loyal*, *ochre*, *applause*, *mistletoe*, *possess*, *etymology*, *orthography*, *eligible*, *aquatic*, *morass*, *mischievous*, *syllable*, *whimsical*, *venison*, *hierarch*, *meteor*, *scenery*, *laughable*, *corporeal*, *erroneous*, *cauliflower*, *camel*, *elephant*, *hippopotamus*, *sagacity*, *vegetable*, *dissyllable*, *hyena*, *dromedary*, *pelisse*, *jonquille*, *trousers*, *onion*, *ewer*, *honey*, *anecdote*, *mignonnette*, *miniature*.

#### ETYMOLOGY.

*Etymology*, from the Greek *etumon*, the root of a word, and *logos*, a discourse, teaches the classification of words, and the various changes of their forms by means of inflection and derivation.

#### CLASSIFICATION AND INFLECTION.

To classify words is to arrange them into groups or classes, according

to their different meanings, so that words which stand for the same kind of ideas shall be placed together, and distinguished by a general term.

The name of every object that can be seen, or felt, or thought of, is a *noun*; as, *girl, sun, duty*. Words which denote the *properties* or *qualities* possessed by nouns are termed *adjectives*; as, a *red frock, a long room*.

A word that can be used instead of a noun, to avoid repeating it, is a *pronoun*; as, "Charles lost *his* book when *he* was coming to school."

Such words as represent a person or thing as *being* in a certain state, *doing* any thing, or having any thing *done* to them, are *verbs*; as, "flowers *are* beautiful, Henry *learns*, Edward *was beaten*."

Every word which indicates the *time, manner, or place* of an action is an *adverb*; and words also that qualify adjectives; as, "Lucy reads *well*; an *excessively* wet day."

A word which *connects* other words, and shows the *relation* between them, is a *preposition*; "Anne spoke *to* Willie, who lives *at* Chester."

A word that connects ideas or sentences is a *conjunction*; as, "Ada *is* good *and* pretty; the boys are brothers, *but* they are not alike."

A word or exclamation that expresses some sudden feeling is called an *interjection*; as, "*Oh! oh!* you hurt me!"

#### EXERCISE.

Point out the nouns in the following sentences: "Accidents often happen in this great river, and storms are frequent. Their uniform is a white turban of a singularly flat shape, a white shirt and trousers, with a shawl wrapped round their waist. I saw my little girl at one of the cabin-windows, who showed great delight on seeing me. As the sun went down, many monstrous bats, bigger than the largest crows I have ever seen, and chiefly to be distinguished from them by their indented wings, unloosed their hold from the palm-trees, and sailed slowly around us."

Point out the adjectives. "The path was narrow, and obstructed by the long thick grass and tall briars by which it was overgrown. A very pretty little boy stood smiling at the door of the lonely cottage, near to which sat an old woman, whose aged appearance strikingly contrasted with the childish beauty of the boy."

Point out pronouns, verbs, adverbs. "I greatly regretted that I had no means of drawing a scene so beautiful and interesting."

"We followed them through the beautiful grove which overshadowed their dwelling."

"The way was longer than we expected, and it was growing dusk; we persevered, however, and arrived at a small building with three windows in front. A flight of steps led up to it, in which a man stood ready to receive us."

"It most unfortunately happened that, during the present year, and amid all the other misfortunes of drought and scarcity which this poor country has undergone, the Jumna changed its course, and the canal became dry! The engineer officer who superintends its works was at the time labouring under the remains of a jungle-fever; his sergeant was in the same condition, and consequently there was no one who, when the mischief was discovered, could go up to the hills to remedy it. The people had neglected the wells which formerly had, in some degree, supplied their

wants. The water which they drank was to be brought from a distance and sold at a considerable rate, and their gardens were quite ruined."

"The jackals were very noisy this night; and there was another noise in my cabin so exactly like the bubbling up of water through a narrow crevice, that I felt convinced that our vessel leaked,—a circumstance which would not have been wonderful, considering how she had been bumped about during the two last days. On inquiry, however, I was told that it was a sort of cricket, or Indian death-watch, which always emitted this sound."—HEBER.

Point out the prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. "Of all the birds to whom is given dominion over the air, the lark alone lets loose the power that is in his wings only for the expression of love and gratitude. Thou alone, O lark! hast wings given thee that thou mayest be perfectly happy—none other bird but thou can at once soar and sing—and heavenward thou seemest to be borne, not more by those twinkling pinions than by the ever-varying, ever-deepening melody effusing from thy heart."—WILSON.

" 'Bravo, bravo!' the king cried out;  
 'All honour to those who try,  
 The spider up there defied despair,  
 He conquered, and why shouldn't I?' "

ELIZA COOK.

"There came a burst of thunder sound—  
 The boy, oh! where was he!  
 Ask of the winds, that far around  
 With fragments strewed the sea!  
 With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,  
 That well had borne their part;  
 But the noblest thing that perished there  
 Was that young faithful heart!"

HEMANS.

## THE NOUN.

A *Noun*, from *nomen*, a name, is the name of any person, place, thing, or idea, that can be seen or spoken about; as, *Thomas, Liverpool, horse, stone, virtue*.

Nouns are divided into two great classes, *proper* and *common*. *Proper* nouns are the names of persons, places, ships, festivals, great events, titles of dignity, &c.; as, *Victoria, Scotland, Paris, Easter, Revolution, the Prince of Wales, the Pasha of Egypt*.

*Common*, or *appellative* nouns, from *appello*, to call, are the names applied in common to the several individuals constituting a class or genus of things; as, *monkey, herb, flower, taste*.

Nouns are further subdivided into *abstract*, *verbal* or *participial*, and *collective* nouns.

An *abstract* noun, from *abstrahor*, to draw away, is the name of any one quality or property inherent in an object, considered independently of the object itself, and it is generally derived from an adjective; as, *brilliancy, modesty, depth, solidity*. Thus, the *diamond* is a *brilliant* stone, that is, it