

# **A HIGHER ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

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A Higher English Grammar by Alexander Bain

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**ALEXANDER BAIN**

**A HIGHER ENGLISH  
GRAMMAR**



A  
HIGHER  
ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

BY  
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## PREFACE.

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THE present work has been composed with more particular reference to the class of English Composition (attached to the Chair of Logic) in the University of Aberdeen.

While availing myself of the best works on the English Language, I have kept steadily in view the following plan.

Under Etymology, the three departments: 1st, Classification of Words or the Parts of Speech; 2nd, Inflection; 3rd, Derivation, have been separately discussed. This method I think better adapted for conveying grammatical information than the older one, of exhausting successively each of the Parts of Speech in all its relations.

The practice of explaining the precise meanings of the frequently recurring words of the language, such as pronouns, articles, distributive adjectives, prepositions, and conjunctions, has here been systematically followed out. Words of this description are not numerous. Belonging alike to all subjects and all styles, they are the very hinges of composition. The explanation of them, so long as it is confined to a small compass, is a proper office of the grammarian, although therein he may seem to intrude a little on the province of the lexicographer.

A similar plan is carried out in the second part of *Etymology*,—*Inflection*. Thus, the meanings of the different moods and tenses of the verb are explained as accurately as the writer's knowledge would enable him. Almost all the newer grammars recognize the expediency of this course.

So with regard to *Derivation*, the meanings of the significant prefixes and suffixes are stated. Under this head, such an account has been given of the sources of the English vocabulary, as in a great measure to dispense with an *Etymological dictionary*.

One advantage of the plan now described is the simplifying of *Syntax*, which, when freed from all matters relating to the meanings of words and of inflections, may fall entirely under the three heads of *Concord*, *Government*, and *Order or Arrangement of Words*; this last part being what in our language most requires the careful attention of the pupil.

For the sake of the accurate definition of the *Parts of Speech*, as well as for *General Syntax*, the recently introduced system of the *Analysis of Sentences* is fully explained. On this subject the method given by Mr. C. P. Mason has been principally followed.

A short account of the *English Alphabet* is prefixed, but *Orthography* at large is not entered on in this work. The subjects of *Prosody*, *Figures of Speech*, and *Style*, are also reserved, it being purposed to include them in a separate manual of *Rhetoric*.

In the discussion of the idioms and constructions of the language, this grammar contains one novelty of importance, namely, the explanation of the precise uses of the relatives, 'That,' 'Who,' and 'Which.' The distinction between 'that' on the one hand, and 'who' and 'which' on the other, was clearly perceived by our



idiomatic writers up to the beginning of the last century; but owing to an unfortunate misapprehension as to the peculiarly English idiom of throwing a preposition to the end of a clause, the relative 'that' is now very little employed in book composition, 'who' and 'which' being made to serve in its stead. For my first knowledge of the real distinction I was indebted, more than twenty years ago, to a communication from Dr. Thomas Clark, then of Marischal College.

In the preparation of this grammar my acknowledgments are more especially due to Mr. C. P. Mason (*English Grammar*), Dr. Angus (*Handbook of the English Tongue*), Mr. Ernest Adams (*Elements of the English Language*), Dr. Latham's works, Dr. Charles W. Connon (*English Grammar*), Dr. Crombie (*Etymology and Syntax of the English Language*), Dr. Morell (*English Grammar*), Mr. O. Allen Ferris (*English Etymology*), Mr. T. Kerchever Arnold (*English Grammar*), Mr. A. J. D. D'Orsey (*English Grammar*, Chambers's Course), Mr. Brandon Turner (*English Grammar*), Mr. Matthew Harrison (*The English Language*), and Mr. Henry H. Breen (*Modern English Literature*). I am also much indebted to an outline of English Grammar, in *Chambers's Information for the People*, written by Mr. Andrew Findlater, Editor of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.



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