

**HUGHES'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE.
THE DIFFICULTIES OF ENGLISH
GRAMMAR AND ANALYSIS
SIMPLIFIED; WITH A BRIEF SKETCH
OF THE HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE**

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Hughes's Educational Course. The Difficulties of English Grammar and Analysis Simplified;
With a Brief Sketch of the History of the Language by W. J. Dickinson

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W. J. DICKINSON

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THE DIFFICULTIES
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ENGLISH
GRAMMAR AND ANALYSIS
SIMPLIFIED;

With a Brief Sketch of the History of the Language.

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P R E F A C E .

IN the present work an attempt has been made to bring within a small compass, and to explain, some of the difficulties of our language, in order that young students may be relieved of the necessity of consulting text-book after text-book on Grammar, before they meet with that information which enables them to clear up some point which they have not fully understood. Many of the difficulties in question are presented in the Examination Questions, which will be found at the end of the book. These questions have been selected from the Pupil-teachers, Queen's Scholarship, Certificate, College of Preceptors (diploma), Oxford and Cambridge (senior), and the London Matriculation Examination Papers. The arrangement of the work coincides with the arrangement of the questions, which are, in reality, answered *seriatim* in the text. A brief sketch of the History of the Language is appended.

The book is designed specially for the use of pupil-teachers and students preparing for the Government Certificate Examination.

Much valuable information and many hints have been obtained from the "Historical Outlines of English Accidence," by Dr. Morris; the "Elements of the English Language," by Dr. Adams; and the "English Grammar," by C. P. Mason, Esq.; to which the Author is greatly indebted.

W. J. D.

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GRAMMAR AND ANALYSIS.

THE NOUN.

I.—Remarks on the Classes of Nouns.

§(1) (a) *Proper, Common, and Abstract Nouns.*

A *Proper Noun* is a Noun which distinguishes one particular individual from the rest of the individuals of the same kind or class, as,—*James, London.*

A *Common Noun* is a Noun which is applied to all the individuals of a kind or class, as,—*boy, man, dog.*

An *Abstract Noun* is the name of anything which can only be conceived of in the mind as having a separate independent existence, as,—*humility, virtue, wickedness.*

NOTE.—*James* is a Proper Noun because all individuals have not this name; but *boy* is a Common Noun because all boys are called by that name,—the name is common to them all. Several persons have the name of "*James*," it is true, and there is a *London* in America as well as in England, but still these are *proper names* or *Proper Nouns* because the former is not common to *all* men, nor the latter to *all* towns.

The word *proper* comes from the Latin *proprius*, one's own; so that a Proper Noun is, in reality, a name which is exclusively the *property* of a particular individual.

Abstract Nouns are generally the names of qualities. Now these qualities belong to individuals or things. But when we wish to consider them apart from the individuals or things to which they belong, and *draw them away*, as it were, from these, regarding them as having a separate independent existence, and make use of names by which to designate them, these names are called *Abstract Nouns*. *Abstract Nouns* are, in reality, a class of *Common Nouns*.

§(2) (b) *Collective Nouns and Nouns of Multitude.*

A *Collective Noun* is the name of a number of individuals viewed as one object, as,—

"These persons are called, when spoken of in a body, the *ministry*."

A *Noun of Multitude* is the name of a number of individuals each of which is viewed as a separate unit, as,—

"The clergy were called together by order of the bishop."

NOTE.—A *Collective Noun* takes a Verb in the *singular* number; a *Noun of Multitude* a Verb in the *plural* number. This distinction between a *Collective Noun* and a *Noun of Multitude* is not generally recognised. All Nouns denoting a collection of individuals, whether viewed as a whole or as separate objects, are, as a rule, called *Collective Nouns*. But the distinction above drawn will be found to be convenient, inasmuch as it lessens the difficulty of determining the number of the verb to which these Nouns are nominative.

Regarding all these Nouns as *Collectives*, the rule with reference to the verb is, "that it is *singular* or *plural* according as the predominant idea in the mind is the *unity* of the multitude or the *multitude* of the units." The same Noun may be used as a *Collective Noun* and as a *Noun of Multitude*; for instance,—

"The multitude was dispersed" (*Collective*).

"The multitude were of different dispositions" (*Multitude*).

§ (3) (c) *Verbal Nouns* or *Gerunds*.

A *Verbal Noun*, or, as it is frequently called, a *Gerund*, is a word which is partly a Verb and partly a Noun, as,—

"Reading is a most agreeable occupation."

Beginners have often much difficulty in distinguishing between a *Verbal Noun* and a participle, but if they will bear in mind that a *Verbal Noun* is always either in the nominative case, subject of a Verb, or in the objective case, governed by a *Transitive Verb* or a *Preposition*, this difficulty will disappear.

Verbal Nouns may be in the *nominative case*, and at the same time govern a *Noun* or *Pronoun* in the *objective case*; or they may be in the *objective case*, and at the same time govern a *Noun* or *Pronoun* in the *objective case*, as,—

(1) "Hunting the hare is good sport."

(2) "I am fond of hunting hares."

In (1) *Hunting* is *nominative case*, subject of the Verb *is*.

hare - is *objective case*, governed by the *Verbal Noun*
hunting.

In (2) *hunting* is *objective case*, governed by the *Preposition of*.

hares - is *objective case*, governed by the *Verbal Noun*
hunting.