

**BASKERVILL-SEWELL
ENGLISH COURSE. A
SCHOOL GRAMMAR OF
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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W. M. BASKERVILL & J. W. SEWELL

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PREFACE

ONLY those who, by teaching English grammar, come into close contact with the young pupil, can know the difficulty of securing a satisfactory text-book. The problem of making an elementary treatise that is scholarly as well as sufficiently simple is one not easy of solution.

The temptation to make a subject easy by mechanical devices or by short-cut methods is strong with the teacher; and the writer who supplies the text-book is strongly drawn to those expedients that will make the manual merely the most teachable. On the other hand, there is a temptation to the student of historical English to suppose the grammar school child not only eager for the intricacies of linguistic development, but able to comprehend them.

The truth, as it appears to the present authors, is that the child wishes indeed to attain his ends by the most direct methods possible, but that he also desires to understand that which he labors upon. If he is confronted with the ramifications of historical grammar, his young mind is led aside from the direct road to knowledge; if he is taught unscholarly subterfuges, he will find more difficulties than the text-books attempted to avoid.

The following pages are the result of a systematic effort to combine simplicity with correctness. The same systems of numbering and grouping that characterized our "English Grammar" are followed in this book. The same

simplicity and directness of statement also appear. In all cases the pupil, not the teacher, is addressed.

The illustrative sentences are taken from standard literature. While the various authors' names are not given, it is hoped that the high plane upon which the science of grammar is thus placed will have its educative effect upon the pupil.

The series of sentences at the close of each of the parts of speech may be used either for parsing or to supplement previous illustrative exercises. Exercises in syntax are included for the convenience of teachers who find such work desirable, but they can be readily omitted by those who disapprove of them.

The chapter on Analysis will form a useful review of facts presented in the logical development of parts of speech. As the treatment of the subject includes the addition of such notes as are needed for a full understanding of the nature of the sentence, it will afford a profitable study in itself.

Although the death of Dr. W. M. Baskervill, after the completion of the manuscript of this book, but before publication, deprived the surviving author of his advice in the final revision, the work was so far advanced and had received the benefit of Dr. Baskervill's keen and scholarly criticism to such an extent that it has not suffered by his decease.

J. W. SEWELL.

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INTRODUCTION

A **sentence** is the complete expression of a thought in words.

Language is made up of sentences, and in forming sentences a writer or a speaker must choose words according to their use and their meaning.

In the study of grammar we are to separate sentences into their parts, so as to study the nature of the words, their forms, and their uses. For example, in the sentence, "Children learn," one may see that the two words are not of the same nature, for *children* is the name of persons, and *learn* tells what they do. Again, grammar will ask why the form *children* is used instead of *child* or *child's* or *children's*, and why *learn* is used instead of *learns* or *learned*; and so on.

English grammar treats of the forms of English words, their uses, and their relations to one another in the sentence.

One way of studying the nature of the thousands of English words is to divide them into **parts of speech**. The parts of speech are the different classes of words used in the expression of thought.

In the sentence, "Children learn," it is plain that the two words belong to different classes; that is, they are different parts of speech.

In studying the parts of speech the purposes will be to find out: first, how to classify words according to their

use and meaning; second, what forms words may take to express relations to other parts of the sentence; third, when it is proper to use one form and when another.

Another way of studying sentences is by **analysis**, which means separating a sentence into its elements so as to show their relations to one another.

These two methods of studying the sentence cannot be kept strictly separate, for some knowledge of each is needed in order fully to understand the other; hence a short treatment of both should be given before making a more thorough study of either.

PARTS OF SPEECH—OUTLINE

In order to understand the parts of speech it will be necessary to study the uses of words in sentences; thus:—

NOUNS

(a) He was tumbled headlong into the dust; and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin passed by like a whirlwind.

The words *dust*, *Gunpowder*, *steed*, *goblin*, and *whirlwind* are names of things. In order to know again anything we have once known, we usually give it a name; and the name word is called a **noun**.

Exercise

Mention the nouns in these sentences:—

1. The house has two rooms.
2. The tiger followed the man.
3. Pupils put their books upon the desks.
4. The farmer sows seed in the ground.
- 4 5. The coach was crowded, both inside and out, with passengers,

who, by their talk, seemed principally bound to the mansions of relations or friends, to eat the Christmas dinner. It was loaded also with hampers of game, and baskets and boxes of delicacies; and hares hung dangling their long ears about the coachman's box, presents from distant friends for the impending feast.

PRONOUNS

(b) So intent were the servants upon their sports that we had to ring repeatedly before we could make ourselves heard.

Instead of saying, "So intent were the servants upon the servants' sports," the writer here makes the sentence shorter and smoother by putting the word *their* for *the servants'*. *Their* is called a **pronoun**, meaning for or instead of a name. Again, instead of the name of the writer and that of his friend, the words *we* and *ourselves* are used. They also are pronouns.

Exercise 1

In the following sentences each pronoun is in italics; tell what each one stands for:—

I was informed by Frank Bracebridge that the parson had been a chum of *his* father's at Oxford, and had received this living soon after *the latter* had come to *his* estate. . . . The parson had pored over some old volumes so intently that *they* seemed to have been reflected into *his* countenance, *which* might be compared to a title-page of black letter.

Exercise 2

Find the pronouns in these sentences, and tell what each one stands for:—

1. We were learning our lessons.
2. This girl has lost her purse.
3. All the trees have dropped their leaves.
4. You have not opened your book.