

**PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH
GRAMMAR FOR THE
USE OF SCHOOLS**

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Principles of English Grammar for the Use of Schools by G. R. Carpenter

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PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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BY PROFESSOR G. R. CARPENTER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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ENGLISH GRAMMAR

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS

BY
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IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

THIS volume is intended for use in high-schools by pupils who have already passed through the elementary stages of language study. In preparing it I have tried to include only the essential facts and principles of Modern English inflection and syntax. I have rarely touched on the older forms of the language, though I have endeavored to present the theory or system of the modern language in accordance with the results of philological research, and in such a way that the pupil will have nothing to ~~un~~learn if, at some later time, he begins the interesting study of historical English grammar. I have included in the Appendix a few pages on derivation and composition (prefixes and suffixes) and on prosody. These topics do not necessarily belong to the elementary study of grammar, — or, indeed, in the case of prosody, to the study of grammar at any stage, — but many teachers may wish such information for their classes, and, by force of tradition, expect to find it in this place. The Appendix on Phonology is by Mr. E. H. Babbitt, of Columbia University, the secretary of the American Dialect Society.

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I recommend teachers to pass rapidly over Chapters I and II, returning to them at a later time for more detailed study. The pupil's real task begins with Chapter III. I beg leave also to add a word of advice with regard to the teaching of grammar. There are four results—it seems to me—that a young student should gain from his work. He must know, first, the logical method by which we classify words; second, the simple English systems of inflection; third, the main principles of English syntax. Fourth, he must understand thoroughly the structure of the English sentence. All these things a boy or girl can master, under proper direction, in a year or two. Unfortunately, many pupils never master them. They learn grammar by rote, parse almost by ear, "diagram" by a kind of acquired instinct, and never acquire a firm basis for the further study of their mother tongue. I earnestly advise teachers to make sure that their pupils are thoroughly grounded in the *essential principles* of Modern English grammar. Much of this work can be done in the elementary school, where the study of grammar is naturally "subordinate and auxiliary to the study of English literature," as the Committee of Fifteen has pointed out. But the study of grammar as a system must necessarily be deferred, in my opinion, until the high-school course.

To several friends and colleagues who have aided

me greatly in the preparation of this volume, and in particular to Professor A. V. W. Jackson and Dr. Caskie Harrison, I return my hearty thanks. In certain exercises I have drawn freely, as others have done before me, on the hoard of illustrations contained in Maetzner's famous *Englische Grammatik*. The brief treatment of prefixes and suffixes in the Appendix is based to some extent on Mr. Sweet's account of the subject in his excellent *New English Grammar*.

It only remains to say that I have avoided categorical statements affirming that certain usages occurring frequently in literary and colloquial English are "wrong." It seems to me exceedingly important that pupils should learn to study and judge the facts of language as they at present exist, in a candid and scientific fashion, tabooing only words and expressions that are actually vulgar, and recognizing the natural diversity of usage. It is characteristic of our language that we may, without fear of being misunderstood, use, in many instances, either of two different forms of expression. It is the business of grammar to note and classify these different forms. To choose between them is almost always a question of taste, and questions of taste belong rather to the "art" of rhetoric than to the "science" of grammar.

G. R. C.