

**PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH  
COMPOSITION THROUGH ANALYSIS  
AND SYNTHESIS: A TEXT FOR THE  
SENIOR CLASSES OF ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS AND FOR PUPIL-TEACHERS**

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Principles of English Composition Through Analysis and Synthesis: A Text for the Senior Classes of Elementary Schools and for Pupil-Teachers by P. Goyen

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THROUGH  
ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

A TEXT-BOOK FOR  
THE SENIOR CLASSES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
AND FOR PUPIL-TEACHERS

BY  
P. GOYEN  
INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

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## PREFACE

As a means of teaching composition and the principles that govern sentence structure, analysis of sentences has completely broken down and become, outside the teaching profession, entirely discredited. Pupils parse and parse, analyse and analyse, for years of their school life, and in the end are ignorant of what constitutes a good sentence and wholly without ability to write one. The cause of this unsatisfactory result is not, I think, difficult to discover.

The parsing of single words, however well done, can be made to bear only on the syntax of single words—quite a trifle in sentence structure. Analysis, however, includes single words, phrases, and clauses—the whole mechanism of the sentence however complex, and, of course, ought to bear on the syntax of the whole mechanism; but unfortunately it has been made by the books to concern itself only with breaking down and classifying. Its sole aim has been to dismember the sentence and to place the *dissecta membra* under their appropriate headings. This is all very well from the point of view that decomposition and classification are the sole end of grammar; but ought they to be so regarded? Is not synthesis as important as analysis? Is it not necessary that the young student should be trained not only to decompose and classify, but also to *compose*, that is, to arrange words, phrases, and clauses in their most effective setting? Analysis is purely destructive; it destroys beauty of thought and beauty of

form; synthesis restores both; it is the complement of analysis. This fact has been ignored by the text-books, and therefore analysis has become discredited. Analysis is useful chiefly for purposes of synthesis. From analysis the student learns to discern the parts and the function of the parts of the sentence; from synthesis and the rules of placement he learns to build up the sentence by placing the parts in their most effective setting.

In this little book analysis is treated only as a means to an end—the synthesis of sentences and the principles of sentence structure. No distinction is made between ‘indirect object’ and ‘extension’; for whatever helps the predicate to express its meaning is an adjunct to the predicate, and it is not of the least consequence whether we call it an ‘object’ or an ‘extension.’ The important thing is to recognise its function and to know its place in the sentence.

It will be allowed by all competent judges that the foundation of composition lies in the sentence, that no one can compose well who cannot write a good sentence, and that no one can *consciously* write a good sentence who does not understand the principles that govern sentence structure. To the exposition and exemplification of these principles a large part of this book is devoted; accordingly a prominent place is assigned to synthesis, to the placement of qualifying adjuncts—a most difficult part of composition—and to the devices usually adopted to bring emphatic words into positions of emphasis and related words into proximity.

I have endeavoured so to present this part of the subject as to induce in the young student a critical attitude of mind—critical, that is, as to his choice of modes of expression and as to the merits or the defects of this or of that mode. In his excellent *Companion* to his *Higher English Grammar*, Professor Bain says: ‘In teaching English the most effective course seems to me to be this: having selected an exemplary passage, first to assign its peculiar excellence and its deficiency, and next to point

out what things contribute to the one and what to the other, and what are indifferent to both. *The pupils are thus accustomed to weigh every expression that comes before them, and this I take to be the beginning of the art of composition.* The spirit of this passage and of Bain's teaching is the governing spirit of this little manual, which, however, does not pretend to go beyond the elements of composition. It deals with the structure of sentences of many forms and of several degrees of complexity, but not with the paragraph and the connectives that give movement to the paragraph and the larger divisions of the paragraph. For a full and masterly treatment of the whole subject the teacher is referred to Bain's books on English.

In connection with the pronoun and the complex sentence of two clauses I have introduced the subject of equivalent modes of expression. This part of composition is of great interest and importance, and is deserving of much fuller treatment than it has received in this book. For a very full and able treatment of it the teacher is referred to Mr. A. F. Murison's *First Work in English*, published, like Professor Bain's books, by Messrs. Longmans and Co.

The exemplary passages, and the passages for analysis and synthesis, are, with a few unimportant exceptions, selected by myself from our most idiomatic prose writers. They are, with one or two exceptions, selected from prose writings, for the obvious reason that prose composition can be taught only from prose models. The language of the examples and exercises, though not more difficult than that of the reading-books of the classes for which this book is intended, is yet sufficiently difficult to make the pupils respect it. It is my experience that many of the prose examples in most text-books of analysis are so unlike the sentences of the reading-books, so simple (not to say childish) that boys and girls of average ability despise them. They do not see what good can come from a study of them.

The analysed sentences furnish the pupils with a large