

**ENGLISH COMPOSITION  
(CERTIFICATE EDITION),  
FROM THE ENGLISH  
COURSE, PP. 149-465**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649135981

English composition (certificate edition), from the English course, pp. 149-465 by W. H. Low & John Briggs

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**W. H. LOW & JOHN BRIGGS**

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# ENGLISH COMPOSITION

(Certificate Edition)

*FROM THE ENGLISH COURSE BY*

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*Second Edition (Fifth Impression)*



136547  
3/7/15

LONDON: W. B. CLIVE

University Tutorial Press Ltd.

HIGH ST., NEW OXFORD ST., W.C.

1913



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# ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

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## RULES OF SYNTAX MOST COMMONLY BROKEN IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

The following are among the points of syntax with regard to which mistakes are most frequently made:

(1) Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication require the noun completing the predication to be in the nominative case.

He became *king*.  
He is a *man*.

(2) The relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in number and person, but in case it follows the construction of its own clause.

Thou art he *who has* commanded us.  
This is one of the best books that *have* appeared.  
My brother, *whom* I had not seen for years, came home yesterday.

(3) All transitive verbs and prepositions require their object noun or pronoun to be in the objective case.

*Whom* is it written by?  
Tell me *whom* you saw.

(4) The adjectives *this* and *that* agree in number with the nouns which they limit.

I do not like *that* kind of game.  
People of *this* sort are rare.

(5) The comparative must be used when two things or groups of things are compared, the superlative when more than two are compared. Before a noun qualified by *other*, or before the pronoun *others*, the comparative (not the superlative) must be used.

He is the *taller* of the two.  
Mary is the *eldest* of the three.  
Nelson is more famous than any *other* sailor of his time.

(6) The verb agrees in number with its subject. If the subject be a composite one, in which the parts are connected by conjunctive pronouns, the verb is put in the plural. If they are connected by disjunctive pronouns the verb agrees only with the subject nearest to it, both in person and number. A noun qualified by a phrase beginning with "with," or "as well as," takes the verb in the same number as it would have if unaccompanied.

The King and Queen *were* present.

Neither you nor I *was* present.

Neither my brothers nor I *am* going.

Neither John nor his brothers *were* present.

The King, with the Lords and Commons, *forms* the legislature.

(7) Certain verbs, nouns, and adjectives require certain prepositions after them.

I differ *from* you.

I agree *with* you.

There is no danger *of* falling.

You need look for no help *from* that source.

This bears some remote analogy *to* that.

This construction is formed on the analogy *of* that.

Delaine consists *of* a mixture of cotton and wool.

The art of the orator consists *in* having something to say and knowing how to say it.

(8) By the rule of "sequence of tenses" a past tense in the principal clause is followed by a past tense in a subordinate clause, a present or future tense by any tense whatever. If the dependent clause contains a proposition which is true generally, the verb *may* be in the present, in any sequence. In sentences where the subordinate clause denotes purpose, if the verb in the principal clause is present or future, the verb in the dependent clause must be present, if the verb in the principal clause is past, the verb in the dependent clause must be past.

I *found* out that he *was* there.

I *am* sure that he *was* there.

He *will* come when I *am* gone.

We are *told* that many hands *make* light work.

I *go* that he *may* come.

I *shall* go so that he *may* stop.

I *went* so that he *might* stop.

(9) The participle must not be used absolutely in a sentence, without reference to some definite word as the subject of the verbal action implied in its use.

Arriving late, we found the gates shut,	not	Arriving late, the gates were shut.
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(10) Pronouns must not be used before the nouns to which they refer, and the same pronoun must not be used to refer to different persons or sets of persons in the same sentence.

The people objected to Caesar's rule because he as- sumed the dictatorship,	not	The people objected to his rule, because Caesar assumed the dictatorship.
---	-----	---

And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they (i.e. the Syrians) were all dead corpses,	not	And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.
---	-----	---

(11) The relative pronoun must always have some definite antecedent, expressed or understood.

His foot slipped and this caused him to fall, or his foot slipped, an action which caused him to fall,	not	His foot slipped, which caused him to fall.
---	-----	--

(12) *That* is the defining and not the continuative relative.

The University of London, which is now established at South Kensington, has a two- fold system of examination,	not	The University of London, that, etc.
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(13) The distributive adjectives and pronouns require any following verb, noun, or pronoun, to be in the singular number.

Each officer in the army and navy is given a commission,	not	Each officer in the army and navy are given a commission.
Every one of them was going to his home,	not	Every one of them were going to their homes.

(14) *Either* as a distributive pronoun must be used only to denote one of *two* alternatives, *each* may be used of two