

**AN ENGLISH GRAMMAR,
CONFORMED TO PRESENT USAGE;
WITH AN OBJECTIVE METHOD OF
TEACHING THE ELEMENTS OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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An English Grammar, Conformed to Present Usage; With an Objective Method of Teaching the Elements of the English Language by Alfred Holbrook

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ALFRED HOLBROOK

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*Objective Method of Teaching the Elements of the
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ALFRED HOLBROOK.

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TEACHERS, PLEASE READ

BY

P R E F A C E .

APOLOGY, WHICH YOU MAY OMIT.

1. To meet the long-continued solicitations of my pupils, as well as to effect greater economy in my classes, I have undertaken to write this Grammar. It has been done under every possible inconvenience and constant interruption. Doubtless many omissions and some discrepancies will be found by the critical teacher. I hope to remedy these as they come to my notice.

ONLY A REPORT OF PRESENT USAGE.

2. In order to make as small a book as possible, I have only desired to report **PRESENT USAGE**; rejecting philological discussion, and not attempting to dictate what usage ought to be, as most grammarians vainly assume to do. This assumption appears to me as absurd as for a fashion journal to dictate what fashions ought to be instead of reporting what they are. Usage in language is only the fashion of expression.

FULL CONTENTS AND AMPLE INDEX.

In order to make this text-book available as a reference book, I have given a thorough analysis of its contents, in which every point discussed is logically arranged with reference to the page on which the discussion may be found.

A copious Index also is added, which will be found of greatest service in individual study, as well as in class drill. No grammar save Fowler's and Brown's Grammar of Grammars has an index. These volumes are too cumbersome and expensive to meet the constant need of ordinary school drill.

OBJECTIVE METHOD OF TEACHING THE ELEMENTARY SOUNDS.

3. I solicit a fair trial of this method of drill in the elementary sounds. A very brief course of exercises in **ORTHOGRAPHIC PARSING** can not fail to impress the nature and scope of these elements ineradicably. Part I of the Grammar, by the kindly permission of A. S. Barnes & Co., of New York, is transferred from my "Normal Methods" published by that house.

AN EXHAUSTIVE SYSTEM OF SYNTACTICAL PARSINGS.

4. A connected and complete system of verbal parsings, including etymological and syntactical analysis, is given in the Appendix. I have preferred to leave the discussions in the body of the book unbroken, also to bring these parsings together in logical order for convenience of reference, in preliminary class drill and in the written preparation of lessons by the pupil.

THE ANALYSIS OF WORDS BEFORE THE ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES.

5. I prefer to drill my classes in the *analysis* or *paring* of words before they enter on the analysis of sentences. I have practiced both methods sufficiently perhaps—having taught over 150 different classes, and surely not less than 12,000 different pupils. The following reasons may aid others in deciding which course to adopt:

(1.) The verbal analysis or parsing is more objective, and accords more closely to the objective method of teaching the physical sciences in dealing, first, with individual objects and their obvious properties, afterward with their relations.

(2.) Pupils can more easily and safely be thrown on themselves, to study with interest and success during their study hour, independent of the constant supervision of the teacher. The evils of the object-lesson feature of oral instruction are thus avoided, and the habit of self-propelling earnest study is soon established in an entire class.

(3.) The more immediate utility of parsing words, in the correction of ordinary errors in speech can be used as a worthy incentive to inquisitive research for grammatical principles, when aided by Contents and Index.

DRILL IN FALSE SYNTAX MADE EFFECTIVE.

6. Instead of arranging examples of false syntax as invariable, under a given rule or principle, I have found it more effective in exciting sharp discrimination to mingle violations with conformities, in exemplifying the application of any rule, always requiring the authority for any position taken by the pupil in disposition of any word.

DRILL IN SENTENTIAL ANALYSIS.

7. In Part V, I have given a succinct and yet an exhaustive discussion of the analysis of the English Sentence, with the method of drill. I claim that every possible combination of thought is provided for as expressed in the English Language.

The system of diagramming is my own, and is equal to any and every emergency. Its simplicity, its significance, and logical adaptation to every possible combination in sentential structure will, I trust, commend it to every unprejudiced teacher. It is already used in thousands of schools, and when once introduced has never, so far as I know, been displaced.

EXHAUSTIVE SCHEDULES OF CONSTRUCTIONS.

8. I invite a rigid scrutiny in the examination of the various lists of constructions, especially of nouns and pronouns. If the pupil is familiarised with all the constructions within the limit of established usage, he can never be at fault for the solution of any grammatical problem, nor can he ever be at loss as to the propriety of any expression he may be inclined to use.

SATISFACTORY DISPOSITION OF INFINITIVES AND PARTICIPLES.

9. I present the disposition of the infinite modes as simple, consistent, and satisfactory. The view here given of the nature and use of infinitives and participles I have been accustomed to present in the class-room for the past thirty years. It has been partially adopted by several grammarians, and every succeeding grammar published seems to approximate to this generalization.

EXAMPLES FOR DRILL IN PARSING AND ANALYSIS.

10. These have been selected with much care and arranged in groups for special drill in three departments of construction, viz.: Construction of Nouns and Pronouns; construction of Verb, finite and infinite; general Constructions for Analysis. These in their respective departments involve every idiomatic difficulty in the language.

THE OBJECTIVE METHOD OF TEACHING.

11. The objective method of teaching is so fully developed in my Training Lessons, that I have thought it better to refer teachers to that volume rather than to increase the bulk of this volume. The arrangement of this book is specially designed for the objective treatment of this subject.

RHETORICAL PRACTICE.

12. In Appendix II, I have given a Schedule of one hundred points in error for rhetorical criticism in class drills. For the first efforts in composition a few of these are selected by which the pupils correct their own errors. The number of the error is designated on the composition by the teacher, and the pupil thus apprised consults the Schedule, and any other authority necessary, and thus corrects his own work.

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