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Jessica Migliorelli

Grammar Reference for Learners of English

Introduction by
Astrid D'Andrea





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Introduction

by Astrid D'Andrea¹

Grammar can be defined as a set of systematic structural rules of any natural language that is composed of several features, such as syntax, morphology, semantics and phonology. Using grammar is an unavoidable aspect of our daily act of communicating, and it is thus important to become familiar with it, especially when learning a second or foreign language. For this reason, the aim of *Grammar Reference for Learners of English* is to aid students and non-native speakers in their study of English grammar notions so as to provide them with knowledge and confidence in the use of different parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses and syntactic structures to enable them to create grammatically well-formed sentences in English. Moreover, this textbook is designed to help students to acquire a full understanding of how differently built phrases may convey the same meaning and of how minor changes, either in form or in pronunciation, may convey different meanings and thus form different blocks of language learning and language use.

It has been shown that a correct use of English can be achieved by means of practice and controlled exercises. This aspect of learning English is particularly highlighted in *Grammar Reference for Learners of English*. Indeed, this textbook contains units on all the aspects of language that are needed in order to communicate effectively, along with footnotes pointing out certain peculiarities of the English language (e.g. capitalization of nationalities, days and months), a *Watch Out!* section, which illustrates the natural usage of grammar in context, and a few notes on pronunciation as well as the phonemic transcription of some words, both in the lessons and in the exercises.

¹ English language expert, who specializes in English language teaching and British literature and culture from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Moreover, through simple, practical explanations and exercises, this grammar reference allows learners to cogitate upon contemporary communicative habits, which are based on a precise view of these by the author as being a well-educated English speaker with extensive experience in English language teaching to adults and in the use of different methods capitalizing on the functioning of the human brain in the acquisition of a second language.

Therefore, this textbook brings into focus that grammar can be understood as a resource people make use of in order to produce a discourse that is grammatically appropriate at both the level of the sentence itself and of a more extended text. In fact, while vocabulary can be intended as the linguistic fragment that describes people, places, relationships, ideas, states, events and actions in an abstract and in a concrete way, grammar can be viewed as the resource everybody uses to combine words into unique sentences and texts according to shared conventions. This aspect of grammar is implicit for native speakers but less intuitive while learning English as a second or foreign language. By means of this grammar reference, the author wishes to help the student to realize how true-to-life English grammar works in contemporary authentic approaches and circumstances along with all its challenges for language learners.

Thus, this book will be useful to anyone who is not sure about how to answer common questions because of uncertainties related to tenses, prepositions, articles and other parts of speech/aspects of language or if you wish to discern how words change and/or combine with other words in order to convey different meanings. In addition, it will provide you with helpful tools in order to understand how English sentence structures are formed and how to employ the grammatical resources of English as being a part of those processes used in creating spoken and written texts.

How the Book Is Organized

There are sixty-two *Units* organized in nine *Parts*. The aim of the sixty-two units contained in this textbook is to provide brief, gradually advancing lessons on English grammar from level A1 up to C1 in accordance with the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* for languages. The notions taught in each unit are explained

in such a way that the difficulty of the language used and the exercises take into account the knowledge the student should have depending on what is or is not explained in the preceding units.

Each unit deals with a specific grammar point. At times two or more tenses are explained in one lesson so as to illustrate similarities or differences in their use. Other topics (e.g. the present perfect tense, phrasal verbs), instead, are covered in more than one unit. In each unit, there is the explanation of a grammar notion with relevant examples (except for the unit on idiomatic expressions), followed by exercises for practice along with the phonemic transcription of some words when fitting. The examples, which have been kept simple to aid the student in the learning process, are always linguistically contextualized so as to illustrate the intended use of the grammar notion/s being taught. Moreover, the previously mentioned *Watch Out!* boxes highlight common mistakes or aspects that may often create confusion in relation to grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation.

How You Can Use This Book

Grammar Reference for Learners of English can be intended both as a textbook for teachers to be used as an additional source material and as a self-study book for students of English who want to study, practise, understand and appreciate a real approach to English grammar in context.

Studying the textbook from the beginning to the end might be the best approach for beginners and pre-intermediate learners given the progressive increase in difficulty, both in the language used in the explanations and in the exercises. However, that may not always be the best approach to grammar, especially for intermediate or advanced learners, who may want to study the units in the order that best satisfies their linguistic needs. Furthermore, every learner has a different learning style and different objectives. Thus, depending on your needs, you may use *Grammar Reference for Learners of English* simply as a reference meant for a consolidation of your knowledge of grammar or you can use it to improve your language skills by means of the exercises provided. You may utilize the *Table of Contents* to find out which units deal with specific grammar aspects you wish to study or revise first.

Reading the explanations along with the examples, and then doing the exercises is of great importance in order to improve your understanding and use of English. Lastly, after doing each of the exercises provided, check your answers and do not be discouraged if they are not always correct, but review the explanations and move on to the following exercise or try to do the same exercise again. You can be sure that your patience and perseverance will be rewarded!

PART I

Indefinite Article *A/An*

We use the indefinite article ‘a’/‘an’ with singular nouns or noun phrases that do not refer to specific things/people.

Examples:

a file, a computer, a desk, a hotel
an employee, an author, an English¹ dictionary

We use ‘a’ before nouns/noun phrases that start with a consonant (e.g. ‘file’, ‘computer’, ‘desk’, ‘hotel’) and we use ‘an’ before nouns/noun phrases that start with a vowel (e.g. ‘employee’, ‘author’, ‘English dictionary’).

Watch Out!

With a silent ‘h’, we use ‘an’ (e.g. *it is an honour!, an hour and a half, an honest man, an heir to the throne*).

Before nouns/noun phrases that start with a consonant sound (e.g. /ju/, /jʌ/), we use ‘a’ (e.g. *a European country, a united group, a young boy*).

¹ In English, languages and nationalities are always capitalized (e.g. *I speak English; you speak Spanish; he is Canadian; they are German*).

Exercise

Write the correct indefinite article: 'a' or 'an'.

- 1) _____ password /'pɑ:swə:d/;
- 2) _____ scanner /'skænə/;
- 3) _____ hyperlink /'haɪpəlɪŋk/;
- 4) _____ American colleague /ə'merɪkən 'kɒli:g/;
- 5) _____ e-mail address /'i:meɪl ə'dres/;
- 6) _____ laser printer /'leɪzə 'prɪntə/;
- 7) _____ CD-ROM /si:di:'rɒm/;
- 8) _____ hour ago /'aʊə ə'gəʊ/;
- 9) _____ username /'ju:zəneɪm/;
- 10) _____ folder /'fəʊldə/;
- 11) _____ ergonomic chair /,ə:gə'nɒmɪk tʃeɪ/;
- 12) _____ keyboard /'ki:bɔ:d/;
- 13) _____ wireless device /'waɪələs dɪ'vaɪs/;
- 14) _____ shelf /ʃelf/;
- 15) _____ honourable reputation /'ɒnərəbəl rɛpjʊ'teɪʃən/;
- 16) _____ envelope /'envələʊp/;
- 17) _____ secretary /'sekɹɪtəri/;
- 18) _____ euro /'jʊərəʊ/;
- 19) _____ laptop /'læptɒp/.