

# MAKING UP SENTENCES

an introduction to grammar and good writing,  
with a wide range of exercises

**John Howes**

Learningguild

Third edition

2021

How valuable it is to be a good **writer** — in itself, in tertiary education and postgraduate research, and in business, professions and public service.

**How to become one?** This book ***Making up Sentences (MS)*** takes its reader, in six systematic chapters, from 'Jim swims' (a "matching pair" — this one 3S, i.e. third person singular) to intricate clause/phrase analysis and the last sentence of Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. **MS** is an introduction to grammar **and** good writing.

It can be begun at the age of eleven, or any later age.

Use it along with the extensive website **learningguild.org.au** maintained by the international educational and social movement Learningguild, and especially the Sets of Documents there.

**Dr John Howes** is the President. He's a philosopher and grammarian, and one of Victoria's Rhodes Scholars. For nearly forty years he's helped both native and non-native speakers towards greater mastery of English, mostly individually and often through the explanations and exercises in earlier editions of this book.

In previous years he lectured in classics at the University of Queensland and in philosophy at Melbourne, and was the Professor of Philosophy at Cape Town.

In the magazine *Learningguild Letter* (1.2008 and 1.2016), read of a tradition that goes back to the medieval *trivium*, combining grammar, logic and rhetoric, and still needed in updated form today — and of John's lifelong enjoyment of running.

He and his wife Margaret have three sons and a daughter, and ten grandchildren.



Appreciations, from professors in Oxford, Princeton/Melbourne and Boston, of John's work in testing and fostering powers of reasoning and of English expression are at the beginning of Set B of the Documents.

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## Preface

In this third edition, there are still seven parts to the preface. First, I summarize the kind of study of grammar and rhetoric offered here and then explain how it has come about that in the past fifty years such study has become so uncommon in English-speaking countries and how serious has been the resultant deprivation. Secondly, I describe the very wide range of people, younger and older, for whom this book (which we may call *MS*) is intended, and the benefits readers can expect to gain from it if they follow the advice given in Part 3. In summary, that advice is: study the six chapters in order and closely, do the exercises with care, receive annotation (written comment), if practicable, from a competent person, make corrections or answer questions where he or she requests that, and keep revising. Fourthly I describe some of my own background and experience, to express gratitude and to show how *MS* has come to be as it is. In the fifth part I explain that my approach to English grammar is largely traditional but also critical of some aspects of the tradition, and summarize my criticisms. In the sixth, I defend this traditional-but-critical approach in relation to the secondary stage of education in the use of English (in which stage, so far as grammar is concerned, most so-called tertiary students today are at some early level), in relation to some authors who have largely rejected the tradition. Detailed attention to much of this Preface may reasonably be postponed by students (except for Part 3!) until all six chapters have been studied. I believe it will interest teachers and advanced students. In the seventh and final part I gratefully acknowledge stimulation and help received from Americans and Australians.

### 1

What is “the kind of study of grammar and rhetoric offered here”? It begins with “the parts of speech”: nine of them, as set out in the titles of Chapters One and Two. The student learns that very often a word can be used as more than one part of speech, and he or she becomes able to **parse** sentences, i.e., to classify as a noun, article, pronoun, verb, etc., each word, or (as is often the case, especially in the use of many verbs) pair or set of words, as they are used in a particular sentence. Groups of words called phrases and groups called clauses are identified and classified in Ch.2’s paragraphs 1.8 and 2.2&4. The student of Chapters Three and Four can master many categories for verbs and pronouns. I use the term ‘grammatical analysis’ to cover both the activities that I call word-analysis and clause/phrase analysis. A high level of both is illustrated in Section 2 of Chapter Six, in kinds of work that should begin early in the secondary stage. First, however, the student is invited, in Chapter Five, to construct sentences of particular patterns and/or on particular models, and to correct a wide range of sets of sentences that he or she can recognize to be defective. If, as it should, the study of English includes rhetoric, as in Chapter Six’s third section, but also at earlier points, one studies features that make a passage of English attractive, perhaps moving. A preliminary example is given on p.16: a long but clear, vivid and sympathetic sentence (containing seventeen adjectives!) from a great author.

In 1996 R.W.Burchfield, a New Zealander (1923-2004) who from 1971 to 1984 was Chief Editor of the Oxford English dictionaries, brought out a magnificent book he had written (for more on it, see the end of Appendix C), rightly called *The New Fowler’s Modern English Usage*. In his entry for *grammar*, Burchfield has this admirable sentence:

Ideally every English-speaking person should begin to distinguish the several parts of speech at an early age, and continue to study the various aspects of the subject in a graduated manner throughout his or her time at school.

“Ideally”: in fact at present very few English-speaking children or teenagers, and few adults, have or have had such an education: it has been rare for about fifty years. Parents, relatives and young people themselves should be concerned about that, partly for the reasons I give in Part 2. My hope, of course, is that this book will help to change the situation.

**How is it** that such study of English has become rare in the primary and secondary education of English-speaking students? There are at least five causes. First, as was evident in some of A.W.R.Vroland’s Year VII book, the study of grammar, i.e., of the principles that guide the making up of good sentences, tended to be cluttered with too much detail and too lengthy exercises for the average pupil. Secondly, and unsurprisingly because of the discontent felt with such tedious work, the quite different approach taken by David Holbrook and others in the late 1960s, inviting the English teacher to be the fosterer of imagination and creativity (as indeed should all teachers be), in contrast with explaining grammar, correcting some errors and requiring the correction of others, has had very great appeal and influence. Thirdly, there have been disagreements about the proper content of English grammar, so that teachers have formed the impression that there is no approach which commands widespread support and has shown itself to be really fruitful. Fourthly, most English teachers younger than sixty have themselves (unless they have studied another language with care) had little or no school experience of learning grammar systematically. Fifthly, even the tradition of having for English a respected book, or integrated series of books (such as, from the 1960s, the five of *English for Australian Schools*, by R.Ridout and K.G.McGregor, based on Ridout’s more vivid five called *English Today*), which a student could get to know well **over five years** from the age of eleven, has largely been lost, and students are left far more than they used to be to the preferences, idiosyncrasies and limitations of the teacher they have in a particular year.

There is a wise Latin proverb, applicable to marriage, examinations, the teaching of grammar, and all human activities: *abusus non tollit usum*, “misuse does not rule out use”. No matter how much misuse of X you find, you do not show thereby that X has no proper and perhaps indispensable use. If educationists were guided by that proverb, they would tend to ask how something might be done better rather than to suppose it need not be done at all, and education would be much less likely to swing from one unbalanced practice to another.

I think of some people I have known well, whom I have helped as undergraduate or postgraduate students, some at Melbourne, the university in which I had earlier studied and for ten years taught, and initially of ones who have had all their primary and secondary education in Australia. Their writing, I found, was initially characterized by grammatical errors, unclarity and general unattractiveness. They needed to have the most basic matters explained to them. For example, I had to explain why, in such a sentence as ‘A knowledge of such matters give men confidence’ (the first example of error in sentence-construction given by Foster and Bryant: see Appendix B), *give* must be corrected to *gives* (as well as, in most contexts, *men* to *people*). But my explanation (given at 2.2 in Chapter Three) must depend on the student’s learning what those authors could assume to be already familiar to their readers: the distinction between ‘third person singular’ and ‘third person plural’ as applied to verb-forms (see 7.11-14 in Chapter One). **Until these students learned such basic things, they lacked the categories in terms of which to recognize, correct and avoid serious errors.**

Moreover, without those categories they and many others with greater general competence in using their language are unable to derive much benefit from relatively high-level guides to really good English, such as the excellent Penguin book *Plain Words* (2015), to which I shall usually refer by writing ‘Gowers’ (see Appendix C). On pp. 243-5 there is explanation

of why the commas should not be there in the sentence “Pilots, whose minds are dull, do not usually live long.” The distinction is drawn between two kinds of what are called relative clauses, one that I also draw at 2.5 in Chapter Four and 3.10 in Chapter Five. But the students I have in mind do not know what a clause is, let alone a relative clause. To all this may be added the utterly absurd (and uneconomical) fact, wearily familiar to many teachers of other languages to English-speaking students, that most of those students have first to be taught these and other elements of the grammar of their own language before they can make sure-footed progress with another.

The secondary English syllabus of the past fifty years has often been **one-sided**, in that it has attended so much to one indispensable aim, that of eliciting an imaginative sympathy in students’ reading of and responses to novels, plays and poems, that it has neglected the other indispensable aim, that of explaining structures of English sentences in ways that are as relevant to scientific (or sports or travel) writing as they are, say, to Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*. Dr Ian Hansen, a much-appreciated teacher of prospective teachers of English, goes wrong when in an otherwise excellent book named *The Water and the Wave* he writes (p.35) of “a predominantly affective subject like English”. It needs to be, in approximately **equal measure**, both cognitive (calling for the cumulative study of grammar, punctuation, spelling and choice of words) and affective (concerned with desires and emotions portrayed in literature etc. and aroused in us).

As a result of the one-sidedness, many students (especially boys, many of whom are slower than many girls to become confident in talking or writing about interpersonal matters) have become alienated from “English” and disliked it, and very few students have learnt much about structures and the categories needed to describe them. This book is intended to provide what has been left out, but, as can be seen from the passages quoted, not at the cost of neglecting the vivid description of persons.

Many of those who teach English to EFL students are affected by the five factors I mentioned on p.2. In particular, the teaching seldom gives sufficient emphasis to the continuing close study of a systematic book, with the addition of marks and/or underlining for explanations and/or examples that the student finds specially helpful to him or her. Raymond Murphy, the author of the best-known books for the elementary and intermediate levels, *Essential Grammar in Use* and *English Grammar in Use*, says to the student working alone, to quote his words in the intermediate book’s fourth edition, “Do not study all the units in order from beginning to end” (p.viii). But I have found that, by working through all or many of the sets of units, in their order, the student gains an understanding of crucial similarities and differences. One girl, who had come to Australia from China at the age of eight, needed Murphy in Year 11 to show her how far English was from having, as she had supposed, just three tenses, past, present and future, and to give her plenty of practice in using and comparing the different verb-forms set out in Units 1-28 of the elementary book. Often a student who possesses a copy of Murphy has not, it seems, been expected to do other than refer to it. Students of mine have made great progress from the combination of working through Murphy’s explanations and exercises in their order **and**, crucially, adding two sentences of their own for each unit, using the grammar there set out, and receiving my written corrections and/or requests for self-correction.

## 2

What is “the very wide range of people” (p.iii) for whom the book is suitable and intended? It is for anyone, at any age, who does not yet know very much about how to describe English grammar, but, even if with some difficulty and some need of assistance, can understand the first three sections of Chapter One and have some success with the opening exercise. Any such person, whether commonly called a secondary or tertiary student or not, will be able to benefit from the whole book if he or she works through it in the way I set out in Part 3.

One of my pupils – I use the word in the sense traditional at Oxford and Cambridge, with their emphasis on one-with-one tuition – was a man in his seventies who worked through all this book’s exercises, and took the half-yearly Learningguild examination (see the paragraph beginning “From 1987” below) about ten times. Another man, in his twenties, did the same. Both attained the upper B level. The former had very little secondary education; the latter learnt very little in his about sentence-construction, and, after his initial postgraduate work at the University of Melbourne, I was asked to assist him. Each extended his understanding of how sentences are made up and his ability to avoid error. The former told me that he no longer lacked confidence about his English, as he had for years. The latter completed his Master’s degree and has been able to write competently about his research into transport.

The book can certainly be begun by some junior secondary students, even at the age of eleven, but then usually in small regular doses (usually no more than one section a week), normally with some personal guidance, more examples, and plenty of that repetition, through reading, marking, hearing and applying, on which an education that “sticks” normally depends. Students who can satisfy the above test could begin it at any later stage. A boy or girl who had cumulatively become familiar with the whole book by the age of sixteen or seventeen would have an excellent foundation for further secondary and for tertiary education, and especially for the writing of letters, essays, reports and theses, and the learning of other languages. The greatest intellectual weakness of recent secondary education in English-speaking countries is that most students commencing what is supposed to be tertiary education have no such foundation. However, serious education at any level depends so much on what the student carefully and critically attends to and revises, **often on his or her own initiative**, that what is done in secondary or tertiary classes (which inevitably fail to be at the right level of difficulty for some of their members) is, while of great importance and potentially valuable and even sometimes inspiring, not necessarily crucial. It must be added that there are many people who could enjoy and benefit from this book who attend no school, college or university.

From 1987 to 2017 there was a six-monthly and repeatable examination for the Learningguild Certificate in Reasoning and Expression, testing for competence, skill and excellence at **the true secondary/tertiary border**. Copies of five recent pairs of exam paper and report are at B in the Sets of Documents on the website [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au). For those preparing for that examination, for which there was no set text, *MS* served as a suitable guide to English expression, and the booklet *Reasoning* (Set C) to that activity. Like the pairs just mentioned, *MS* is suitable for a very wide range of people, including most undergraduates and postgraduates. Those who, wrongly and often injuriously, were admitted to their courses or programmes when their English was and perhaps still is at the elementary or low intermediate level may need to begin with Murphy’s elementary book (see the previous page), and to proceed slowly and with more examples through the first two chapters of *MS*.

What benefits should the close study of *MS* bring? Let us first put the matter in terms of remediation, which is needed by many students who are nominally at the tertiary stage of education and many graduates of the past 40 years: they have not reached that true secondary/tertiary border in reasoning and English expression, and so do not reason or write with much precision, acumen, confidence or enjoyment, and find it difficult to learn another language. In *MS* I have sought to provide a remedy in respect of English expression, and my booklet *Reasoning* provides one in the area of reasoning or, in a broad sense of the word, logic. In the Middle Ages the set of three paths, *tres viae*, called the *trivium* and comprising grammar and logic and rhetoric, was rightly required of those boys in Europe who wanted to be admitted to an early university such as Oxford or Paris.

However, I prefer to present the book as not only for such students, but also as it might excitingly appear to an intelligent and eager teenager, or to an adult fond of enquiry but with little schooling or little that was English-medium. It will enable such a person to cover, in English, the categories of grammar and good writing that ought to be regarded as belonging to the secondary stage, to do exercises most of which test one's understanding of the section or sections they follow, and thereby **to write better letters, essays and/or reports, and to have a greater appreciation of the riches of English.**

## 3

**How should this book be used?** In this section I shall draw some illustrations from the first chapter, and thereby make it more likely that good answers will be given to the early exercises. I now address myself directly to the student who wants to derive the maximum benefit from *MS*. You may well be surprised by the detail of this Part. Experience shows the value of adhering to the method described. (A teacher of a person studying the book, and therefore doing its exercises, would be wise to secure early acceptance of this enjoyable discipline.)

You will see that the first chapter, like all the others, is set out in numbered sections and paragraphs. (In 1.2 on p.1, the way in which I usually refer in one paragraph to some other or others is explained and illustrated.) You should become increasingly familiar with the consecutive **section-headings**, memorizing them as each chapter is studied and revising them from the chapters and the **Table of Contents**. Within each section, read and consider each of the numbered **paragraphs** one by one, and decide whether or not you have thoroughly understood it. If you believe (or know) that you have, put a tick at the end, in the right-hand margin. If you have not, try to identify the sentence(s), or sentence-part(s), which you don't yet understand, underline them and/or put opposite them in the same margin a question mark in a circle. After reading another paragraph or more, go back and see if you can now understand; if so, put a triumphant tick across that circle! If you still do not understand something, ask some competent person to explain it to you. This kind of close and honest study may be new to you: you will find it enlightening and rewarding. In most sections there is a considerable amount of explanation in a concise form: many readers will find that they need to study them in the way just set out if they are really to take them in. Highlight, or underline, or mark in some other way words or sentences or paragraphs which you think you should especially seek to remember.

Repeated **revision** is important in any kind of serious study. This book covers in only six chapters a very wide range of categories and principles, most of which used to be introduced to students gradually in the course of about nine years, usually between the ages of nine and seventeen.

**Make sure, before you go on to a subsequent chapter, that you have first mastered what has gone before.** That requirement is made more specific in Appendix D for the first two chapters, with particular reference to “matching pairs” (1:7.14) and to the whole of the section on conjunctions (2:4), which is in fact also about coordinate clauses and the three types of subordinate clause.

You may be surprised to see so many **reference-numbers** in *MS*. They are there because it is important to build up an acquaintance (visual and, if you wish, aural and even oral) with key sections or paragraphs of the text, and to know where and in what context they are to be found. Look up the references, when they are to earlier parts of the book, until you are sure that you know and understand what is in them. Particularly important for the book as a whole are (as well as the terms for the parts of speech) ‘locution’ and ‘subject-locution’, ‘personed verb’, ‘backbone verb’, ‘phrase’ and ‘clause’, for all of which there are references in the first paragraph of Part 5 below.

At the end of most sections is an **exercise**. In the first four chapters, it is intended specifically to test your understanding of the preceding section, or a set of such sections, and your ability to recognize and apply with precision whatever in that section or set is relevant to particular parts of the exercise. Experience leads me to emphasize the following sentence. **In most cases, students will need to go back into the section(s) and ask “In which paragraph(s) is the answer to this, or the clue(s) I need for the answer?”** Sometimes words used in the text need to be quoted, as at the first part of d in the first exercise, or can usefully be quoted. In that case, use double inverted commas (1:3.2) and give a reference to the paragraph concerned. In the second part of d, the question why the word ‘locution’, used as defined, should be “very useful” is best answered through locating the locution ‘very useful’ and considering the paragraph in which it occurs and the following one. Students are very unlikely to succeed in b and c of the exercise on 1:5 unless, for b, they draw out the relevant descriptions of different uses of the article *the* from two of the paragraphs dealing with that word, and, for c, use the paragraph that explains the error of having no article or other “introductory” word before a singular noun of the kind I call an NC. I aim to train students in discriminating between satisfactory and unsatisfactory explanations, so that they do not, for example, after studying the paragraph just mentioned, use the term ‘countable noun’ or ‘uncountable noun’ in their answer to c! If these and the following exercises are approached in the manner I am here describing, doing them will greatly assist students in building up their understanding of this book and of the English language. Doing the exercises is indispensable, for most of its users, to benefiting deeply and enduringly from the book.

Students would of course benefit from having **annotation** on their work by a competent person. When annotating, I often put a dotted square (a little square with a dot inside it) next to an error which the student should be able to correct, perhaps with the aid of a question, reference or hint I provide. The student has written in blue or black, or given me a printout, or sent an email attachment, and I annotate in red, so it makes for visual clarity if the student writes the correction in green, close to the dotted square, or in some other place linked to it by a line or arrow, or specified. I put at the top right-hand corner of any page on which I have put such dotted squares another one followed by the number of them the student should find below. He or she can usefully put a little green line under any such square to check that the correction has been done or the specified set for the page completed. The teacher can later turn a red dot into a red tick if the correction is just right, add comments and/or questions, and indicate any further writing that needs to be done, or points that need special attention. All this, quite simple for the teacher and the student as soon as they become familiar with it, is a way of taking seriously

students' need to attend to and, with some guidance, **deal for themselves** with points at which they have gone wrong, and so become less likely to go wrong at such points in future. A large part of our education, and in general our ability to change for the better, consists in our willingness, indeed our determination, to identify, recognize and learn from our errors. That principle is largely taken for granted in sport and in music; it is remarkable how little it is accepted or taken seriously in the teaching and learning of English.

The proper ordering (preferably with ring-binding) of one's annotated exercises after they have been returned is very important for revision of chapters, exercises, corrections and responses to them. Put a specific heading (such as 'ex on 1:2&3') at a top-right-hand corner of each sheet you use.

The Table of Contents serves as the main guide to what is in the book as well as showing where to find particular sections. There are also, after the Appendices, "A Further Guide to Themes", an index (in unusual form) of names, and the table "Text and Tracks" for use with the CDs (see below). A list of common abbreviations, with meanings and references, follows this Preface.

If you can find a fellow-student with whom you can talk about particular parts of the book, that will be a great help. You might take turns in explaining something to each other.

There is a set of six audio **CDs** that presents the full text as it was in the second edition (2000) of the six chapters, except that, in respect of the exercises, only quoted passages and in Chapter Six their introductions are included. In the second part of CD6, Appendix A ("Abbreviations for Annotation") is read, in a shortened form helpful for understanding and remembering the abbreviations. Relatively few changes have been made in these major areas of the book. My intention is not to produce a new set of CDs but to continue to offer copies of the original set to anyone who would like to have them, inviting listeners who are using this third edition of the book to consider, wherever they wish, why some particular change has been made. The set would be useful for those who want to help themselves revise and remember the content and emphases of a chapter or section and/or to develop their powers of speaking English and of reading aloud.

#### 4

Within a multicultural Australia, I identify myself as an English-Australian person. I came from London to Melbourne at the age of thirteen, with my parents and two younger brothers, in 1949, in the heyday of postwar immigration. Already my mind had been formed through my parents' reading to me, good primary schools, excellent books of stories, history and geography that came from a friend of my parents who worked at the educational publisher Nisbet, my father's *Harmsworth's Universal Encyclopedia* (1920-22), books about cricket, newspapers, stories and features in comics, books borrowed from the Wembley Public Library, stories, readings and hymns at a "Little Church" for children and the church of which it was a junior part, and also by two other influences that deserve separate treatment.

In September 1946 I began the first of eight terms as a Foundation Scholar at Haberdashers' Aske's Hampstead School, one of London's guild schools, then at Kilburn and now at Elstree. Immediately I was studying Latin and French, and soon there was encouragement to me and others to produce a handwritten magazine. In 1947 we were given one of Ridout's books (see Part 1 above), and through it my acquaintance with grammar,

vocabulary and much else was extended and deepened. Latin especially gave me an increasing English vocabulary and an awareness of the history behind many of our longer words.

Before and after I became a pupil at that school I was a listener to the BBC Children's Hour, which, among much else, widened my general knowledge through its quizzes, and fired my interest in history through historical plays by L. du Garde Peach. I owe a great deal to the BBC for the breadth, accessibility, clarity, vividness and what might be called the gentle warmth of its programmes for children in those years, as for its journal *The Listener* which I was to discover in the library at Melbourne High School, and to which I later subscribed.

At Melbourne High from 1949 to 1952, I was fortunate in my English teachers and the works we read. Most of my study of grammar was done with reference to Latin, in which I had one teacher throughout, Mr Frank Samblebe, books from the *Latin for Today* series, and excellent books for grammar and for translation both into and from English. In the English syllabus in the last two years was a section called "Clear Thinking" which taught us, initially through the excellent little book *Thinkers at Work* (see below), to look critically at arguments and use of words. That tradition, dropped from the syllabus after 1983, was maintained in Section Four of the Learningguild examination, and underlies my booklet *Reasoning* (see Part 2 above). There was plenty of encouragement for debating, an activity then without the abuse of one's opponent which in later years sometimes degraded it.

That secondary education, in London and Melbourne, enabled me to think for myself when I went on to the University of Melbourne and later to Oxford, and to value clarity and a disciplined eloquence in writers and speakers. It has been the foundation for my subsequent work in Latin, Greek, and ancient and modern philosophy. Now, sixty-eight years after leaving school, in about sixty-four of which I have been engaged in teaching, as I still am, it is plain to me how much difference it makes if a student has had, **at any age**, a really good secondary education, especially in structures and details of his or her own language and in some basic principles of critical and constructive reasoning. In this book I have aimed to pass on, in a revised form (see Part 5), much of the explanatory framework which, learnt by me mainly when I was a secondary student of English, Latin and French, has proved so valuable.

My secondary education had much in common with the medieval *trivium* to which I referred at the end of Part 2. To use a word once employed in relation to Scottish education of the same kind, it had a **fortifying** curriculum: it developed and strengthened the mind. The book I have mentioned, *Thinkers at Work*, by Professor A. Boyce Gibson (who was still the Head when I joined the staff of the Department of Philosophy at Melbourne in 1965) and A.A. Phillips, introduced me at the age of fifteen to the basic thrust of logic, the question whether a given argument is sound or unsound, no matter how persuasive it may seem; and so I was prepared for my later study and teaching of Plato's *Gorgias*, the dialogue on which I wrote half my doctoral thesis. The *Gorgias* exposes the shallow and corrupt view, by no means unknown today, that persuasiveness through clever rhetoric is, regardless of truth or cogency, a great good. On the other hand, through the study of Cicero and an anthology, mainly from writers of English, *Prose of Purpose*, and through Latin and English poets, I also learnt the importance of saying what one had to say clearly, concisely, in good order, and sometimes eloquently and memorably. So rhetoric has its subordinate but not unimportant place, as Plato recognized near the end of the *Phaedrus*. Rather than suppose in despair that such an education is now outdated in a multimedia age, I have produced this book and hope that it will be found not only fortifying but stimulating and fascinating.

A writer born in Australia, especially if he or she were considerably younger than me, would be likely to take several illustrative passages from Australian authors. Of the nine writers from whom I quote, only one, Alan Marshall, is Australian. That does not reveal any low opinion of Australian literature; it is simply that my own contribution to the study and teaching of the use of the English language is that of an English-Australian most of whose main work has not been in the literature of either Britain or Australia, but in philosophy expressed in English or Greek or Latin or German, and much of whose wider reading has been of British authors. I need not defend my sources to any persons who might consider using the book in Britain, unless they see no continuing value in the kind of BBC culture of the 1940s and 1950s which I have described as contributing to my own formation. To Australian teachers and students I would say that an English-Australian may make a useful contribution alongside Australian-born Australians, Italian-Australians, Chinese-Australians and others. But a stronger claim may also be made: a book reflecting the study and use of English both in Britain and in Australia, especially in educational and academic contexts, will serve serious students (not least those from non-English backgrounds) particularly well, for they normally need above all not local idioms or conventions but an English, spoken and written, that will equip them **as students**, or as employees and colleagues, whether in Melbourne or London or Boston or any other place in which they need to understand a wide range of English.

My spoken English on the CDs is not very far from what it was when I was a secondary schoolboy in London more than seventy years ago, though some Australian impact is discernible. This kind of “educated southern English”, with careful differentiation of vowels and of consonants, has the advantage that it is readily understood almost anywhere in the English-speaking world, and by beginners in English, as one may not be if one pronounces *God* like *guard*, or *day* like *die*, or *matter* like *madder*, or fails to pronounce final consonants clearly.

## 5

The approach to grammar adopted here may be called **traditional but critical**. I begin with the parts of speech, but insist (from 1:3) on the clear distinguishing of talk about linguistic items from talk about the beings or things or actions etc. (1:7.5) which most of those linguistic items refer to or describe. Hence I reject at 1:5.6 the terms ‘countable noun’ and ‘uncountable noun’, since all nouns themselves can of course be counted (as in “The noun ‘gratitude’ occurs three times on that page”), and instead use the abbreviations ‘NC’ and ‘NU’, short for ‘noun for something thought of as countable/uncountable with that noun’. It is the disposition called gratitude that is thought of as uncountable in that way (we do not say ‘I felt three gratitudes’), not the noun ‘gratitude’. ‘Money’ is normally an NU, since, though money can of course be counted, one does not count it with the word ‘money’. Similarly, the common and confusing use of the word ‘subject’ both for “the doer of the action” (a description only sometimes applicable) and for the word(s) used to refer to that “doer” is avoided by my use of ‘subject’ for that which is identified by a locution (1:3.5f) used in a certain way, and ‘subject-locution’ (‘Sub-L’) for the locution so used, i.e., as one which both does the identifying and governs the person and number of a verb (1:7.1; 3:2.6). The “table-of-six” (from first person singular to third person plural), which is so important for mastering pronouns and verb-forms in English and other European languages, is introduced early (1:6.3f), and leads me to offer the technical term ‘personed’ (rather than the old and barely informative ‘finite’) for verb-forms to which one of the table-of-six labels can be applied (1:7.11-14). Rather than say that a normal sentence must have a finite and main verb, I allow for the fact that there may be more than one “main” verb by saying that every normal sentence needs at least one personed and **backbone** verb (2:4.2,6; 3:1). I introduce the words *phrase* and *clause* with substantially the traditional

explanations at 2:1.8 and 2.2 respectively, but I do not use the word *clause* in such a way that one can say of a sentence that it consists of a single clause, nor do I use the term ‘main clause’. Concerning the sentence ‘I know where he is’, it is enough to say that *know* is the sole backbone verb, as it is in ‘I know his whereabouts’, and that ‘where he is’, as a noun clause, is a subordinate one (2:4.4), and used, like ‘his whereabouts’, as an object-locution (3:3.2). In 6:2.7 I point out that no separate “main clause” can be identified in ‘What you say is very interesting’. Thus one who has mastered the grammar of past textbooks would find much that is familiar here, but quite considerable modification of terminology.

The book may be regarded as a preparation for the fruitful study of two I recommended in Part 1: Sir Ernest and Rebecca Gowers’s *Plain Words* and (generally later) R.W.Burchfield’s *The New Fowler’s Modern English Usage*. The usefulness of this book’s first four chapters for the potential reader of Gowers is suggested by the fact that their long Chapter IX describes and resolves in this order “troubles” with conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns and verbs.

## 6

That *MS* expounds a traditional kind of grammar, though with some modification, rather than offering a fundamentally different approach, is due to my conviction that the traditional categories are needed in the study of our own and other languages. But does the gaining of an understanding of grammar and the ability to avoid at least fundamental mistakes really matter? Professor Stephen Knight, formerly of Melbourne, in a paper entitled “Between You and I and the Apostrophe” (in his collection called *The Selling of the Australian Mind*, Heinemann 1990) presents a loaded contrast between “self-asserting language pundits on the one hand and the credential-bearing, apparently expert academic linguists on the other” (p.80). The former, as he presents them, fail to realize how flexible and prone to change a language is, and how many styles of speech and writing there are which are perfectly acceptable in their contexts. Moreover, he presents on p.85 a theme which has been familiar among teachers of children whose parents are not from influential groups:

Right and wrong in language construct a socio-political code for the continuance in power of a particular group whose class dialect and speech habits formed the basis of what is often called ‘BBC English’ or, in an intriguing metaphor, ‘Received English’.

A teacher who held this view (better expressed as one about **claims** that something is right, or wrong) would be likely to teach such English half-heartedly as a mere means to “getting on”. Contrast the quotations from Michael Dummett in Appendix C.

Yet Knight has an admirable passage (p.88), in which the view of “linguists” is presented, one with which of course I agree, as would Dummett:

... language is immensely flexible ... writing and speaking it well is a most important skill for self-realisation, for satisfying employment, for social interaction, and in all these processes the mastery of language is a skill not easy to accomplish.

(One may develop and perhaps perfect a skill, and ‘mastery’ is a relative term.)

I can only wonder how much time Knight has spent trying to assist the sorts of students supposed to be at a tertiary level whom I have mentioned in Parts 1 and 2: people whose ability to form clear and coherent sentences has been limited by ignorance of what can and what cannot reasonably count as such a sentence (even in a given context) and whose writing sometimes

shows the grammatical incoherence called anacoluthon (5:3.3). I know that students who have worked consistently with me on explanations of and exercises on the principles of grammar (of sentence-construction, as I often say) have come to write better English thereby, and know that they have. Nor would any of them think that they are learning the language of “the bosses”. They are learning to write unobjectionable, clear and even attractive English. They feel relieved, especially if they are writing essays or a thesis, or employed in or seeking a job which requires the writing of letters or reports, that they are becoming less liable to produce work which, because of particular mistakes or general weakness, would fail to communicate effectively what they want to say and perhaps embarrass them.

It is along those lines, as well as in agreement with Burchfield (p.iiiif above), that I should deal with the question whether grammar should be a prominent part of the secondary English syllabus. The competence produced by a lively and wide-ranging study of the main categories needed for the systematic understanding of one’s own language, and by related sentence-construction and -correction needs to be contrasted with the widespread liability to error and poor writing common among those who have made no such study. Again, as in Part 1, I would emphasize the principle that the misuse of a thing does not show that it has no proper and perhaps indispensable use. The fact that grammar has often been taught in a desiccated and remote-from-life way should lead us to explore better ways of teaching it, for example, by inviting students to study and read aloud that sentence with the seventeen adjectives which I mentioned in Part 1, or the passage in the exercise on 2:3, full of prepositions, from a famous speech of Churchill.

One interesting feature of a book in which the early teaching of grammar is largely deprecated is that there is a somewhat concealed recognition that it has a place. So Frank Whitehead, in *The Disappearing Dais* (Chatto and Windus 1966), begins “I contend that no attempt should be made to teach children knowledge about the grammar of their own language until they reach the age of at least fifteen and preferably sixteen” (p.219); but, in a footnote on p.223, we find “It may be conceded that a few of the commoner grammatical terms may occasionally be useful time-savers when the teacher wishes to draw attention to a linguistic form which is unacceptable in its context.” But how many are a few? Consider a common fault such as that in ‘Running late, patience could not be expected’. To understand what has gone wrong and ways of putting the sentence right, and to provide guidelines for future use, we need the word ‘participle’, and so ‘verb’ and ‘adjective’, and then ‘unconnected participle’ and even ‘subordinate clause’ (to describe, for example, ‘Since he was running late’). It is better to distinguish participles from gerunds (3:5.4-6) than to employ the blanket expression ‘-ing words’.

An error of a kind that seems to attract educationists is observable in a quotation by Whitehead (p.223) from the grammarian Henry Sweet:

We do not study grammar in order to get a practical mastery of our own language, because in the nature of things we must have that mastery before we begin to study grammar at all.

The truth is that, as with so many things in life, we have in our first language a remarkable degree of competence before we begin the study of its principles, but need a higher degree of it before we begin to have something worth calling mastery (cf. 1:1.3). The direct study of grammar is normally needed if we are to achieve that.

A good treatment of the teaching of grammar is in the section devoted to it in Ch.V of *The Teaching of English* (Cambridge, 3rd ed., 1966), which shows, as my own book does, how much has been lost in the abandonment of this discipline.

## 7

Particular thanks are due to numerous people. I mention first an American philosopher and educational leader whom I met in Boston in August 1998, the late Dr John Silber, formerly the President of Boston University. On the 7th of July, in an important article in the *New York Times*, he had reported how incapable of writing accurate English were many of the graduates of schools of education who, applying to teach in the Massachusetts state system of primary and secondary schools, had in April been required to take a basic examination in reading and writing. He noted, too, that in the U.S. generally “even outstanding students accepted at the best law schools are often deficient in writing skills and need remedial courses”. When we met, he expressed admiration for the Learningguild examination and arranged for a copy of the first edition of *MS* to be made for him. Preceding the five recent pairs of examination and report at B in Sets of Documents on our website is the commendation he wrote in 2010, along with two from others. Our initial meeting led to my corresponding and interchanging papers with the late Dr Edwin Delattre, then Dean of Education at the same university. I am grateful to have become acquainted with both these scholars, with whom I shared so many values in education.

I turn now to help given by fellow-Australians. The work by the two pupils mentioned on p.vi, and by others, on the book’s exercises has enabled me to improve their wording. I am also indebted to the first of the two for leading me to include a reference to indirect-object-locutions (3:3.3). One of the others picked up two slips. A friend noticed the apparent gender-exclusiveness of the example of error provided by Foster and Bryant which I quoted on p.vii. My friend the late Dr Evan Burge, author of *Grasping New Testament Greek* and a member of Learningguild, read a draft of the second edition and made both encouraging comments and ones that led me to seek greater precision. Craig McArthur, then the audio technician of the Horwood Language Centre at the University of Melbourne, made with skill, patience and care the six CDs that accompanied the second edition. My wife Margaret produced the table “Text and Tracks” and did some retyping elsewhere.

I gladly give special thanks to our second son Stephen, who not only maintains Learningguild's website but has spent many recent hours cooperating with me in making final changes to the text and formatting.

I hope that this book will enable many younger and older students, in the widest sense of that word, from different countries and with different first languages, to understand how well-formed English sentences are made up, and will encourage them to make up such sentences for themselves. I invite them to get to know the website [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au), and to consider joining the international educational and social movement Learningguild.

The book is dedicated to Margaret and to our children and grandchildren.

John Howes

## Abbreviations used frequently in this book

BV	backbone verb (replacing the traditional term ‘main verb’: 2:4.2-6; 3:1)
<i>OALD</i>	<i>The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary</i> (References are to the 9th edition, 2015, unless otherwise stated.)
Ob-L	object-locution (3:3.2)
PV	personed verb (replacing the traditional term ‘finite verb’: 1:7.9-14)
Sub-L	subject-locution (1:7.1,14; 3:2.6)

There is the range of six abbreviations, used for pronouns and for personed verbs (i.e. those traditionally called finite) which runs from ‘1S’ (first person singular) to ‘3P’ (third person plural). See, for explanation and the “tables-of-six”, 1:6.2-4 and 7.11f, and, on the importance of knowing whether or not a 3S form is needed, 7.13.

## CHAPTER ONE

# NOUNS, ARTICLES, PRONOUNS, VERBS

### 1. FROM SIMPLE SENTENCES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT GRAMMAR

1.1 Suppose that we want to say about a boy named Jim that he swims (meaning that a regular activity of his is swimming). We can say

Jim swims.

An older person who has been talking about Jim and his sister might say

The boy swims.

If we have just been talking about Jim alone, or if we point to him, we are likely to say

He swims.

1.2 Now we are in a position to ask many questions, most of them about the function of each of those words **as they are there used**, but also about the minimum needed for a normal sentence (7:1,14 and 2:4.2,6), and what we mean by classifying as a **sentence** each of the three sentences we have before us (3:1). Notice that if inside these references there is a colon preceded by a numeral, that numeral refers to a chapter.

1.3 These are all questions about **grammar**, which consists of **the principles we need to follow if we are to understand, speak and write well-formed sentences within a particular language**. Already those beginning the study of grammar, perhaps with this book, succeed in those three respects to a considerable extent, but they may not be aware of the principles they are in fact following, and most of them will need to learn further principles.

### 2. 'WHAT PART OF SPEECH IS THIS WORD, AS USED HERE?'

2.1 That is a question to which we shall soon become accustomed. We have here a special and traditional use of the phrase 'part of speech' which concerns the fundamental function of any word or similar item (such as a numeral), or, sometimes, any pair or small group of words or similar items, within the structure of a particular sentence. We are asking what **kind** of word, etc., it basically is, i.e., what its structural job is, as it is used in that particular sentence, and we often use in our answer one of the words which classify the various parts of speech. Is it a **noun**, or an **article**, or a **pronoun**, or a **verb**, or something else which we shall learn about in Chapter Two? (The five other parts of speech are identified by the words that make up its title.)

2.2 Notice the words 'as used here' in our heading, and the words 'as it is used in that particular sentence' in 2.1. The word *swims*, for example, is used as a verb (1:7) in all three example-sentences above (it attributes a particular activity to Jim) but as a noun (1:4) in 'Jim

has had three swims this week' (there it is used to classify instances of that activity). The excellent *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD)*, 9th edition, to which I shall quite often refer, has 'verb, noun' by the word *swim*, and gives examples, as I have just done, of its use as a verb and its use as a noun.

### 3. WORDS, LOCUTIONS AND WRITING ABOUT THEM

3.1 In 2.2 I said that the word *swims* is used as a verb in our example-sentences, but I had drawn attention to the groups of words 'as used here' and 'as it is used in that particular sentence', which had been employed in the heading to Sec. 2 or in 2.1.

3.2 Notice that when I am **writing about** individual words or groups of words, and not what they may be used to refer to or describe, I put them in italic script (in italics, as we also say) or within single inverted commas, or, as in 1.1, I indent them (bring them in towards the middle of a line). In these ways I am marking them off, showing the reader that here I am **not using** the word or group of words, but **writing about** it. I often use italics when writing about single words or pairs or very short unified sets of words, like *Flinders Street* (4.3) or *has been believed* (7.3f). In handwriting one can use underlining as an equivalent of italics. Notice that this is a different use of italics or underlining from that which shows **emphasis**. In this book emphasis will normally be shown, as in this paragraph, by bold type (sometimes by capitals or underlining). The use of inverted commas (usually single) to indicate that we are writing about words is different from their use (in which they are often, and preferably, double) to mark **quotations** from some particular person, real or imagined. Quoted words are often being used by the person quoting.

3.3 We need to be clear, and to make clear, whether we are talking about **persons, animals or things** or about the **words** which we use to refer to or describe them. In our imagined example, **the person Jim is a boy, a swimmer, etc., but the word *Jim* is a name used to refer to this person Jim**, as, in other contexts, it refers to other persons. We can leave out the words 'the word' when we are writing about a word, because the employment of italic script (as in the next sentence), or single inverted commas, or underlining, can show that we are writing about that word rather than using it.

3.4 We normally know what counts as a word in our language, though we may not find *word* easy to define: let us say that a word is, apart from numerals, symbols and abbreviations, the smallest unit of discourse (where *discourse* covers both speech and writing) that we regard as sufficiently separable from other units to be thought of as a significant whole, and so, in writing, it is for us conventional to separate it from any adjoining word.

3.5 In 1.2 I said that we would be asking what we mean when we use the word *sentence*. We usually describe thereby certain unified and separated **groups** of words and/or other items just mentioned, along with any punctuation. A sentence may, however, have just one word: 'Stop!'. Soon we shall be using the words *phrase* and *clause* for certain types of unified groups containable **within** sentences (2:1.8, 2.2). It is very useful to have a word of very broad application which can cover **any individual word (or similar item, such as a numeral or symbol or abbreviation) and any unified group of words and/or similar items**. So let us use the word *locution* in just that way, defining it by the long locution in bold type within the

separated locution which is the previous sentence. (It will not normally be useful in practice to call a fairly long sentence a locution, but rather its constituent words, phrases and/or clauses.)

3.6 Notice *unified* in our definition before *group*. We can count the group ‘the long locution in bold type’ as a unified group, and so as a locution, but ‘defining it by the’ is not a unified group, and so not a locution. A locution, then, may be any single word or similar item, or any unified group of words and/or similar items.

EXERCISE ON 1:2 AND 1:3 (See Preface Part 3 for advice on how to do the exercises in this book.)

- a. To make it an intelligent question put in a complete form, what needs to be added, and why, to ‘What part of speech is the word *cook*?’? Expand your answer by reference to the words *swim* and *run*. You may like to look them up in a good dictionary such as the *OALD*, or the *Oxford Essential Dictionary*.
- b. Add single inverted commas (or underlining), or introduce italics, so as to correct this sentence:

The word word has been defined in 3.4.

- c. Explain the distinction between two different uses of inverted commas. Illustrate it from the two sentences in d.
- d. How has ‘locution’ been defined for our purposes? Why is it “very useful” to have that word available with that meaning?

#### 4. NOUNS

4.1 We call the word *Jim* a name, and names are the simplest kind of noun. *Boy*, as used in our second sample-sentence at 1.1, is also a noun. *Jim* and *boy*, as they are here used, indicate who or what somebody is. **A noun is a locution (usually a word or, as in the case of some names, a pair or set of words) which indicates who or what somebody or something or some set of beings or things is.**

4.2 *Jim* and *boy*, however, give two different sorts of indication of who or what the person is. *Jim* gives his **name**; *boy* **classifies** him, says what sort of being he is. Although many people, animals, etc., can have the same name, **names are locutions which identify, but commonly give no description of, the particular persons (or animals, or places, or events, or, as with trade names, things) to which they belong.** The context (and/or explanation) determines which one, or which group, is being named in the particular case. So, in an old use of the word *proper* (compare the word *property*, for that which belongs to a particular person or group), names have been called proper nouns. *Boy*, on the other hand, is called a common noun: **common nouns are words which describe beings or things by classifying them, that is, giving the general term for such beings or things.**

4.3 So we call *street* a common noun, but *Flinders Street* a name or proper noun. (It is useful to be able to employ the word *noun* for *Flinders Street* as a whole.) *Australia* is a name or proper noun, but *continent* and *island* are common nouns. Appellations such as *Ms* and *Dr* and

*Sir* can be regarded as part of a name. *Major* is written with a capital when we use it as a title of a particular person, but we write *major* as a description: ‘He’s a major’.

4.4 Three other kinds of noun need to be distinguished: collective nouns, abstract nouns and gerunds. **Collective nouns say what kind of group some set of beings or things is:** so *crowd* and *flock* and *crew* may be used as collective nouns. (All three of those words can be used as verbs too.) Do not confuse a collective noun such as *crew* (which itself has the plural *crews*) with a common noun used in the plural, such as *sailors*. **Abstract nouns refer to qualities or states of beings or things:** so *truth* and *beauty*, *victory* and *failure* are abstract nouns when their meanings would not allow them to be used in the plural. **Gerunds** (3:5.6), if they are just one word, **are nouns ending in -ing which are derived from verbs**, e.g., *swimming* in ‘I love swimming’. Words ending in *-ing*, however, are often used not as gerunds but as participles, and so not as nouns (see the exercise on 2:1, a).

#### EXERCISE ON 1:4

- a. Write out the following pair of sentences, underlining the words used as nouns. Afterwards, on each of eight separate lines, and maintaining the order, write out and underline or italicize one of these nouns, and say what kind of noun it is. You will find in each a proper noun (a name), a common noun, a collective noun and an abstract noun.

Mary was a member of a team which had great success. Jack, however, was the secretary of a club which experienced continual frustration.

- b. Here is an extract from Alan Marshall’s *These are my people* (1946). He and his wife were travelling round Victoria, in a caravan which had in front of it a wagon built onto a T-Model Ford chassis, all this pulled by two horses! Read the passage through first (it is on p.45 in Cheshire’s edition), and then write your response to the instructions which follow.

We drove through Bendigo followed by excited children. Schoolboys, pedalling furiously, flashed past us to carry the news to less fortunate cobbers unaware of our presence. Little girls, dragging panting sisters they were “minding”, ran along beside our extended conveyance, confident that the caravan contained monkeys.

It appears that we were classified as a circus. I made a desperate attempt to look as unlike a clown as possible, but Olive’s blonde bob and serene expression were too much in keeping with spangles and plump, white horses to help my act carry conviction.

We escaped by turning up numerous side streets ....

In a list to the left of your page, write out, in the order in which they appear, all the nouns in that passage, beginning therefore with ‘Bendigo’ and ‘children’. Then, by writing ‘proper’, ‘common’, ‘collective’, ‘abstract’ or ‘gerund’ to the right of each, give its category as it is used here. (As well as two gerunds, *keeping* and *turning*, there are two names here, seventeen common nouns, one collective, and two abstract. The distinctions are not always easy to draw. Bear in mind that many common nouns refer to non-sensory things: consider ‘hour’ and ‘idea’.)

- c. Make up five sentences in **each** of which there is more than one kind of noun, and classify those nouns. See that your set of sentences includes at least two examples of each of the five kinds we have distinguished.

## 5. ARTICLES

5.1 Our second sentence in 1.1 is ‘The boy swims’. The little word *the* is extremely common, and is called the **definite article**. The word *article* comes from the Latin word ‘*articulus*’, meaning a joint, and so a small part of a finger: articles are very small words and (with the exceptions mentioned at 2:1.8 and 6:2.18) they are joined to nouns, though sometimes other words come in between, as in ‘the previously nervous boy’.

5.2 The most common reason for using *the* with a noun is to show that we are talking or writing about the particular being, thing or group **just mentioned** to whom that noun applies. If you are to understand fully what I mean by ‘The boy swims’, you must know which boy I have in mind, usually the one just mentioned, and my use of *the* shows that I mean **that** boy.

5.3 In contrast, we have the **indefinite article** *a* or *an* to use with a noun where we are referring to some being, thing or group (usually not previously mentioned) as one of the class to whom that noun applies, as when we say ‘I met a boy yesterday who ...’. In the next sentence, of course, we can say *the boy* (or *he*) to refer to that boy. Unlike *the*, which can be used with singular or plural nouns (e.g. *boy* and *boys*), the indefinite article, which is like *one*, is confined to singular nouns.

5.4 For grace and ease of transition, we use *an*, not *a*, before words we start to say with the kind of sound called a vowel. Nearly all such words begin with the letter *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, or *u* (*apple*, *egg*, etc.), but the pronunciation of some words beginning with one of those letters starts with the other kind of sound, a consonant: *union* starts like *yellow*, and *once* like *wet*. In front of words starting with consonants, we use *a*, employing, as usually in *an*, the very short sound at the head of *about*. Similarly – and this requires plenty of practice by people learning English as a further language – we say *the* (rhyming with *be*) in front of vowels, but before consonants the word (as in ‘the word’) has that same very short sound. For emphasis, we may give articles the sound of the “long name” of their letter *a* or *e*: “I said ‘**a** difference’, not ‘**the** difference’.”

5.5 We can use *the*, the definite article, even when we have not previously been talking about the being, thing or group, if there is just one of the class concerned, or just one that we have been concerned with, or, sometimes, if we are talking about a whole class, as in ‘The whale is a mammal.’ Consider the locution (3.5) once used as the title of a book, ‘the crisis in the university’. We could use it if there was just one university in our area, or one that we (including our hearer or reader) were connected with, and, similarly, if there was just one crisis or one that we knew about. When, however, Sir Walter Moberly used the locution as the title of a book (1949), he was referring to British universities generally, and had in mind what he regarded as **the** major crisis, one concerning disagreement or complacency about what British universities should aim at doing and being.

5.6 Some languages do not have articles. When a person accustomed to such a language is learning English, he or she has to attend to the fact that **if an English noun is being used to refer to something which is being thought of as countable (in the sense that, using the noun**

concerned, we could say, for example, ‘one girl’ or ‘three crews’), it cannot normally be used correctly in the singular without what we may call an introductory word: most often an article (definite or indefinite), but perhaps the numerical adjective *one*, or *this* or *that* used as a “demonstrative” adjective (2:1.7), or a possessive word such as *your* or *Shakespeare’s*. ‘I like to be in garden’ is not good English, wherever articles are commonly employed. Let us employ the abbreviation ‘NC’ for ‘noun used for something thought of as countable with that noun’, and ‘NU’ for ‘noun used for something thought of as uncountable with that noun’. The noun *mud* may be used without an introductory word because *mud*, the substance, is uncountable. Such NUs as *mud* and *water* (“mass nouns”) do not normally have the indefinite article (*a* or *an*), which is rather like *one*. *Cheese* and *ink* are usually NUs, but sometimes NCs. (Why?) *Money* is usually an NU. (Why? Look carefully at our definitions.) In many grammar books, there are the silly locutions ‘countable noun’ and ‘uncountable noun’. The *OALD* uses them (page R10), and also recognizes the ugly ‘count noun’ and ‘uncount noun’. **All nouns** are countable: we can, for example, count the number of times the word ‘gravity’ (an NU) is used on a particular page. What is rightly thought of as countable or uncountable, **with the noun concerned**, is that to which the noun refers. Hence ‘NC’ and ‘NU’, with the explanations just given.

#### EXERCISE ON 1:5

- a. Write down these nouns twice, once with the definite article and once with the appropriate indefinite one, and then read aloud what you have written.
  - woman, shop, egg, dog, ink, uncle, universe
- b. For each of these sentences, give the most probable explanation of the use of *the*, with a reference to the relevant paragraph in each case.
  - i. The woman knew exactly what she wanted to say.
  - ii. Have you been down to the river today?
  - iii. The powerful business man may be far from happy.
- c. For each of those sentences in the following group that contains an error, write its number, explain the error using the abbreviation ‘NC’ or ‘NU’, and write the sentence in one or two correct forms as appropriate.
  - i. Mary is doctor.
  - ii. Have you read the paper?
  - iii. The cat is fascinating creature.
  - iv. The students are going to tutorial.
  - v. He is the best batsman in our team.
  - vi. Crime is problem in city.
  - vii. Has she committed crime?
- d. Along with examples of your own, used in sentences, explain what an NC is and what an NU is. (Why is *an* used there, not *a*?)

## 6. PRONOUNS

6.1 In ‘He swims’, *He* is a pronoun. Like names, pronouns are normally used to refer, not to classify. They are called pronouns because they stand in the place of nouns or noun phrases (2:3.4): instead of ‘Jim swims’ or ‘The boy swims’, we can say ‘He swims.’

6.2 *He* and *she* are called **personal pronouns**, and they are said to be **third person singular**, whereas *they*, referring to two or more persons or things, is said to be **third person plural**. **It is very important, for verbs as well as for pronouns, to understand the terms ‘first person’, ‘second person’ and ‘third person’.** When someone speaks or writes about himself or herself, and uses the pronoun *I*, he or she is said to be speaking or writing “in the **first person**”, and *I* is called a first-person pronoun, and singular. (From now on in this book it may be assumed, unless otherwise stated, that what applies to speaking applies also to writing.) When someone speaks about the combination of himself or herself and one or more others, and uses *we*, he or she is still speaking in the first person, but the pronoun *we* is first-person plural. The pronoun *you* is employed to refer to the person or persons (and sometimes animals) who are being addressed, and sometimes to the group to which the person addressed belongs (“All of you have done well, Mary”). *You*, called the **second-person** pronoun, may be singular or plural. When, as is very often the case, we say something about some being or thing or group other than ourselves and whoever we are addressing, and begin from *he* or *she* or *it*, or *they*, or from a name or a description, we are said to be speaking “in the **third person**”. It is convenient here to use the word *person* in a specially extended or “technical” way, so that the pronoun *it* is included in the table that follows alongside *he* and *she*; it requires the use of the same verb-form (7.4,12).

6.3 So we have the following table, in which the numeral in each pair of brackets shows the **person**, first, second or third, and ‘S’ or ‘P’ shows what has traditionally been called the “**number**”, singular or plural:

(1S) I	(1P) we
(2S) you	(2P) you
(3S) he/she/it	(3P) they

I call that table a **table-of-six**, and it is very important to be absolutely clear about what it tells us. Notice that each of the six has its explanatory **label**.

6.4 It is not, however, the only table-of-six for personal pronouns. Here is another:

(1S) me	(1P) us
(2S) you	(2P) you
(3S) him/her/it	(3P) them

6.5 We say ‘He swims’, but ‘Jill sees him’ or ‘Jill swims with him’. We may call *he* and the other pronouns belonging to the first table **subject-locution pronouns**, and *him* and the others belonging to the second table **object-locution pronouns**. (For short, **Sub-L pronouns** and **Ob-L pronouns**.) The explanation of ‘subject-locution’ and ‘object-locution’ requires us to talk about verbs. We shall explain ‘subject-locution’ in the next section (at 7.1), and ‘object-locution’ in Chapter Three (section 3). At this stage, however, we should notice that the Sub-L pronouns usually (in modern English) come **before** a verb (*swims*, as was said at 2.2, is a verb in ‘He swims’, ‘Jim swims’ and ‘The boy swims’), whereas the Ob-L pronouns usually come **after** a verb, or a word such as *with*, called a preposition. After prepositions they are not themselves Ob-Ls, but have the same form as an Ob-L. We consider prepositions in Chapter

Two (section 3); don't confuse the word *preposition* with *proposition*, which will be introduced in 7.6.

**6.6 When can we properly use personal pronouns?** Mostly, they are used when, through locutions such as *Jim* or *the boy*, **it has already been made clear who or what is being talked about**. So long as it is clear who or what is meant, we **should** use pronouns often, because it is unnecessary and tedious to keep referring to someone or something in a way that is appropriate for the first mention. We can also use personal pronouns along with pointing: '**He**'s the one I mean' – but pointing is not always polite. Pronouns are sometimes used in such a way that the words following them make clear that a class of people or things is being described. When we say, in the English proverb, "He who hesitates is lost", it is as if we were saying "Anyone who hesitates is lost."

6.7 In recent times it has been widely realized that it is not normally good enough to use *he* alone as though it would do for male and female persons alike. So it is often best to write 'he or she', or to move into the plural: 'Those [or: They] who hesitate are lost'. Since repetition of 'he or she' is cumbersome, it is often sensible to use the plural where that is possible (4:2.10).

6.8 There are older second-person singular pronouns in English, *thou* (Sub-L) and *thee* (Ob-L). *Thou* has special verb-forms used with it, as in 'Thou hast', the counterpart of 'You have'. This form is now very rare: even in prayers, *You* is now more common, whereas until about fifty-five years ago it was widely regarded as inappropriate for the language of public worship.

6.9 In 6.6 and 6.7 I used pronouns of other types than the personal. In 6.6, the words *who* and *what*, as they are used there in the second and third lines, are called interrogative pronouns; *someone*, *something* and *Anyone* indefinite pronouns; and *which* (after *way*) and *who* (after *He* and after *Anyone*) relative pronouns. In 6.7, *Those* and *that* are demonstrative pronouns. There are nine types of pronouns in all, as Chapter Four shows.

#### EXERCISE ON 1:6

- a. (Do this orally.) After revising 6.2-5, go through the two tables-of-six in 6.3 and 6.4, and **explain** each label ('1S', etc.) in relation to its pronoun, with a short sentence as an example. (You may like to build your examples from 'I run' and 'Jim saw me', or make up your own.)
- b. Explain (in writing) what is wrong with the following sentences, and correct them by writing the word(s) wrongly used followed by an arrow and the correct word(s):
  - i. Her and me can't get on together.
  - ii. They defeated he and Mark yesterday.
  - iii. Why don't you come with Jill and I?
- c. Why is this sentence likely to be objectionable? How should it be written?  
A student should realize that, if he does not submit any essays, he has no claim to a special examination.

## 7. VERBS

7.1 Suppose that someone just stopped after saying ‘Jim’ or ‘The boy’ or ‘He’, and did not go on to ‘swims’ as in 1.1. We would know, let’s suppose, who was being talked about, but we would want to say “Well, go on: what about him?” **In every normal sentence (other than instructions or requests: 7.8) the speaker or writer needs to do two things: (1) to include a locution (3.5f) which shows what the subject is, i.e., roughly speaking (we shall be more precise in 3:2.6), who or what is being talked or written about, and often that is done first or early, AND (2) to include another locution which asserts or denies or asks something about that subject.** A noun or pronoun is needed as or within the first of these two locutions; a **verb** is needed as or within the second (which is called a predicate). Our three simple sentences at 1.1 have this basic structure and nothing else. The subject-locution (Sub-L) is *Jim* or *The boy* or *He*, and the verb is *swims*. Notice the difference, as I use the terms, between a **subject** and a **subject-locution**: the subject here is the **boy** Jim, but the subject-locution is the **locution**, e.g., the **word** *Jim* or *he*, or the **words** *the boy*, used to talk or write about that boy (cf. 3.3). This distinction is essential for clarity and understanding, yet grammarians have seldom drawn it or maintained it consistently.

7.2 Since it would be pointless for someone to refer to something whose name or description we already knew and then to stop, it is not surprising that the Latin word ‘*verbum*’, which could be used for any word, came to be used for that crucial kind of word which **shows what we are doing** in our remark about or to our subject. The verb *swims*, put after *Jim*, normally shows that we are making a positive statement about Jim. When, again after *Jim*, the combination *does* and *swim* (a two-word verb) is used with ‘not’, we are making a negative statement about him. When that combination is put around *Jim*, we are asking a question about him. When *Swim* is said by itself, we are giving an instruction or request. (See 7.5-8 below.)

7.3 It needs to be recognized at the outset that the explanation of the word ‘verb’ is not going to be simple and easy. Verbs are of many different types, and if you are told, for example, that “verbs are **doing-words**”, that defective explanation fits *swims*, but not *is* or *hears* or *believes*, or *is heard* or *has been believed*.

7.4 **Notice that we can count some locutions consisting of TWO OR MORE WORDS as ONE VERB, and that we need to get used to the idea of VERB-FORMS.** *Is* (like *am* and *are*) and *has been* are said to be **forms** of the verb *be* (*be* is taken as the representative word because we say *be* or *to be* for what is called the infinitive form: 3:5.2f). They and forms of the verb *have* and *do* can be used as verbs by themselves, or as what are called **auxiliaries** (helpers) in other verbs, as in those examples *is heard* and *has been believed*, where *heard* and *believed* can be called the **main part**.

7.5 **In the simplest kind of sentence, which we may call a positive statement, a verb is used (and this is its primary use) to indicate that some action, activity, event, process or state BELONGS to some subject**, as in, respectively, ‘Jim opens the window’, ‘Jim swims’, ‘Jim has been seen’, ‘The light is fading’, and ‘Jim believes me’ (or ‘Jim is believed’ or ‘Jim has the book’ or ‘The path is slippery’). Before going on, pick out the verbs there, and, if they consist of more than one word, pick out the auxiliary part or parts and the main part. Then check that we do need here, in this order, all five of those nouns *action*, *activity*, *event*, *process*, *state*.

7.6 Verbs are also used in sentences which, though they are still statements, are **negative**: they **deny** that some action, etc., belongs to some subject, as in ‘Jim does **not** open the window’, etc. Here the verb is ‘does open’, which is a form of the verb *open* used in negative statements, and (as we saw at 7.2) in questions, and for emphasis. We may say that we have in mind **propositions**, which are objects of thought, true or false (we often do not know which), and presentable in various ways, e.g., by ‘(the proposition) that Jim/the boy/he swims’, which could be asserted by any of our three sentences at 1.1, and denied by ‘Jim/the boy/he doesn’t swim.’ (See also ‘that he was not guilty’ at 2:4.4, called a noun clause: in an assertion about a particular person, this is one wording of a proposition, and another of **the same proposition** is ‘that he was innocent’. (Why ‘**noun** clause’? Compare the use of an abstract noun in ‘his innocence’.)

7.7 At 7.2 we noted that we can ask a **question** by putting the subject-locution in the middle of the verb, as in ‘Does Jim swim?’ The Sub-L can come after the verb, as in ‘Have you a passport?’. A verb is needed, usually in one of these positions, if, in a normal sentence, we are to ask whether some action, etc., belongs to some subject, or, as we may now say, whether some proposition is true.

7.8 Finally, we may say ‘Swim!’ or ‘Open the window’ or ‘Please tell me’, where there is no subject-locution, but there is a subject, the person(s) addressed. Here we are using what is called the **imperative** form of the verb: ‘*impero*’ is the Latin counterpart of ‘I command’. In these cases (instructions or requests) we are seeking to **bring it about** that some action, etc., belongs to some subject, i.e., that some proposition is true.

7.9 If we put together what we have said in 7.5-8, we can say this. **A verb is a locution whose primary use is in communicating the proposition that some action, activity, event, process or state BELONGS to some subject; but the sentence in which the verb is used may be one which asserts or denies that proposition, or asks whether it is true, or asks or commands that it be made true.**

7.10 I spoke then of the **primary** use of a verb, and three closely related uses. There are verb-forms which need to be explained in other ways, as we shall see in Chapter Three (section 5).

7.11 In 6.2-5 we noted that personal pronouns are in one of three categories, first person, second person and third person (as well as being either singular or plural), and we gave tables-of-six for Sub-L pronouns and for Ob-L pronouns. Let us now introduce another technical term: **we shall call a verb in its primary and three related uses a PERSONED VERB (PV), because in those four uses it too, like the locution which is its Sub-L, if any (7.1,8), is in one of those three categories** (as well as being singular or plural). In older grammar books the rather unhelpful term ‘finite verb’ was used with the meaning that I give to ‘personed verb’. I now proceed to illustrate the need to have and use such a term.

7.12 Consider the tables-of-six, set out on the next page, for the verbs *swim*, *carry*, *be* and *have*, and notice that, if we have a Sub-L pronoun in the first person singular, the verb-form accompanying it **must** also be first person singular, and so on. As you read through these tables-of-six for PVs, put in front of them the respective pronouns (and also, for the third person singular, the noun *Jim* and the article and noun *The boy*). You can see that after the first table I have not needed to put in the bracketed label ‘1S’, etc.: the position on the table tells you what person the PV is, and whether it is singular or plural. **Visualize these tables, and become accustomed to flashing them up on your mental screen.** (Many other languages show much

more variation than English does in their tables-of-six, and in learning such languages it is important to be thoroughly used to tables-of-six and “rattling them off”.)

(1S)	swim	(1P)	swim		
(2S)	swim	(2P)	swim		
(3S)	swims	(3P)	swim		
carry	carry	am	are	have	have
carry	carry	are	are	have	have
carries	carry	is	are	has	have

Notice that there are six **verb-forms** (7.4) in each case (so we say “The 3P form of that verb is *swim*”), but one form, in English, is often the same word (or words: 7.4) as others.

7.13 A student whose first language is not English may not find it easy to master the fact that we commonly use an *s* with **nouns** to show the **plural** (*boys, girls*), but add an *s* (for the “present simple” set: 3:7.2) to most **verbs**, such as *swim*, for the **third person singular**, and only for that, and that it is defective English to say, e.g., ‘he swim’ or ‘they swims’. Perhaps, as already in Afrikaans in South Africa, there will at some future time be no special form in English for the third person singular present simple, but in the twenty-first century the learner of English certainly has to master its use.

7.14 Except for imperative sentences (7.8), **normal sentences must have at least one MATCHING PAIR**, as in each of the three sentences at 1.1: **a subject-locution (7.1) and a personed verb (7.11) matching one another. This is the fundamental principle for the construction of English sentences** (and of sentences in other European languages). The word *matching* signifies that the **same** label applies to **both** the Sub-L **and** the personed verb, as ‘3S’ (‘third person singular’) applies to them both in each of those three sentences at 1.1, and to *This* and *is* in the sentence before this one. The Sub-L (or the main constituent of it: 3:2.2) is said to **govern** its verb or verbs. (The Sub-L ‘The girls’ governs two verbs, requiring both to be 3P, in ‘The girls swim and play tennis.’)

7.15 Should I have given a “much simpler” account of what a verb is? The entry for *verb* in the *OALD* is “a word or group of words that expresses an action (such as *eat*), an event (such as *happen*) or a state (such as *exist*)”. Better to say, after ‘words’, ‘used, as *eat, happen* and *exist* are used, in representing an action, event or state’. The examples are good ones, because none is normally used as any other part of speech; but the explanation could cover *jump* or *fall* when these are nouns, since jumps are actions and falls events, or the noun *health*, since health is a state. My definition at 7.9, ‘a locution whose primary use is in communicating the proposition that some action, activity, event, process or state belongs to some subject’, explains the main function of a verb and is less likely to mislead.

7.16 Two final remarks. This section, with its emphasis on personed verbs, is built upon in 2:4, which introduces the vital distinction between those personed verbs (“backbone verbs”) which are **basic** in the structure of a sentence and those which are not, and in Chapter Three. It is helpful to someone beginning to pick out verbs to remember that they are locutions whose **form** (7.4) shows whether the reference is to something past, or something present, or something future (3:7.1f).

## EXERCISE ON 1:7

- a. Write out sentences i-vi, underlining the PV (7.11) in each. Remember that **one PV**, such as *is heard*, **may consist of more than one word** (7.4). In three sentences, you will need to join up underlining with a curve.
- i. My sister gave that book to me.
  - ii. The farmers go to the sales today.
  - iii. The children have started their breakfast.
  - iv. Is Marion expecting a baby?
  - v. Had you met her before?
  - vi. No, we had not met before.
- b. Now for each of sentences ii-vi write two sentences just like the following for the first, using single inverted commas as shown (3.2f). Use the abbreviations ‘Sub-L’ and ‘3S’, etc. Such descriptions as ‘positive statement’ are in 7.5-8.
- i. This sentence is a positive statement. Both the Sub-L (‘My sister’) and the PV (‘gave’) are 3S, and so a matching pair.
- c. To classify in their order all the examples given in 7.5, write a long sentence beginning ‘Opening a window is an action, swimming is an activity’. Each part of your answer should begin with an *-ing* word here called a gerund (4.4; 3:5.6).
- d. “Sentences of four **kinds** can be used with reference to the one proposition, in order, respectively, to assert it, deny it, ask whether it is true, and request that it be made true.” Illustrate that statement with your own set of examples (7.5-9).

## EXERCISE ON CHAPTER ONE

Write out the following passage, leaving plenty of space between words and between lines. Under each locution (one word or a pair or set that should be counted for this purpose as one locution: see 4.3 and 7.4), write, e.g., ‘common noun’, ‘definite article’, ‘pronoun’, ‘personed verb’, to identify the kind of locution it is here. When you write ‘personed verb’ (or ‘PV’), or ‘pronoun’, add the number and letter in brackets, e.g. ‘(3S)’. Do not use **here** the term ‘subject-locution’ or ‘object-locution’. *American*, when used as in *an American*, is a common noun (4.2), whereas ‘America’ and ‘the USA’ are names (“proper nouns”).

We have seen the film. Will you be seeing it, Michael? It portrays C.S.Lewis. He was a tutor. He loved an American, Joy Davidman. The story moved me. Have you heard it?

## CHAPTER TWO

# ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS, PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS, INTERJECTIONS

### 1. ADJECTIVES

1.1 The English of the short passage provided for the last exercise was abnormal because it had nothing but nouns, articles, pronouns and verbs. We need the other parts of speech, those listed in the title of this chapter.

1.2 We often want to say more about some being, thing or group than to put him or her or it into a certain class indicated by some common noun such as *film*, *tutor*, *American* or *story*. So we may describe the film with the word *recent*, the tutor with *Oxford*, the American with *outspoken*, and the story with *unusual*. All four of those words are being used as **adjectives**. (*Oxford* is most often used as a proper noun for a city or a university, but in ‘an Oxford tutor’ it is an adjective. You may like to read 1:2 again, which emphasizes that words are classified into parts of speech according to their use in particular contexts.)

1.3 **Most adjectives are single words normally used in association with a noun or a pronoun in order to describe, evaluate or indicate some individual being or thing or group**, not by showing what class he, she or it belongs to (as common or collective nouns do), but **in ways which are applicable to beings or things in diverse classes**. The descriptive adjectives *recent*, *Oxford*, *outspoken* and *unusual* do that job.

1.4 Notice that we can say ‘The story is unusual’ and ‘She was outspoken’. Adjectives are not used only in front of nouns (see 1.12 below), and may even be used after *the* without a following noun (1.8). As has just been said, adjectives are normally used **in association with** nouns and pronouns; it is quite wrong to say, as the *Oxford Pocket English Grammar* does (p.18), that “we use adjectives to describe nouns and pronouns”. To say that is to show the confusion between beings or things on the one hand and words or locutions on the other which was pointed out in 1:5.6. In ‘the unusual story’, *unusual* describes the particular story, not the noun *story*! To define *adjective* with the words ‘the part of speech that qualifies a noun or pronoun’, as is done in the useful glossary to Ridout and McGregor’s *English for Australian Schools*, Book 5, is better, but not much. The *OALD* has quite a good definition, though it fits descriptive adjectives such as those given, *big*, *red*, and *clever*, rather than other types.

1.5 We may call many adjectives **descriptive**: they describe beings or things by telling us, e.g., what colour they are (we use as adjectives *black*, *pink*, *blue*, *green*), how old (*young*, *middle-aged*, *elderly*), how big (*immense*, *minute*), how common (*frequent*, *unusual*), of what character or personal style (*reliable*, *easy-going*), and so on. (Notice that adjectives which are formed from two or more words, such as *middle-aged* and *easy-going*, are better hyphenated, to show that they are adjectives, than left in separate words.) However, as Professor R.M.Hare of Oxford emphasized, many adjectives, though they may seem descriptive, are (at least partly) **evaluative**, expressing judgments, favourable or not, concerning beings or things in relation to

fortune, achievement, usefulness, appropriateness, or value in general (*lucky, outstanding, useless, ill-suited, good*).

1.6 There are other types of adjective. Consider the opening words of a nursery rhyme: ‘Three blind mice’. *Mice* is a common noun, and *blind* a descriptive adjective; but what of *three*? If we say ‘Three is the next number after two’, the number-words are nouns (we could even call them proper nouns or names, though duality is a quality or feature); but in ‘three blind mice’, *three* answers the question ‘How many?’ and it is reasonable to say that it attributes a feature to the mice considered as a group – that of threeness, we might awkwardly say. So number-words can be called **numerical** adjectives when so used. These number-words are said to be **cardinal**, i.e., basic: but we also have other numerical adjectives, called **ordinal**, such as *first, second, twenty-fourth*, answering the question ‘Where in an order?’ Such words as *many, much* (commonly after the word *not*), *few* and *some* may be called adjectives of **quantity**. *Each, every, all* and *no* (as in ‘No person under eighteen can vote’) are called **distributive** adjectives, because they extend across a whole group (see 4:1.3).

1.7 The words *some* and *certain* can be used as in ‘Some man said to him ...’ or ‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho’ (Luke 10.30, in the Authorized Version (1611) of the New Testament). It is useful to call these words adjectives in that, like more typical ones, they are often put alongside nouns (*‘adjectivus’* is Latin, conveying the idea of being put alongside); but we may call them **referential** adjectives, like *this* or *that* and their plurals, which are called **demonstrative**, and are adjectives when used with nouns or with *one* used as a pronoun. *Some* and *a certain* are both like and unlike *this* and *that*: all four referential locutions let the hearer know whether the speaker is (as with the latter pair) or is not (as with the former) referring to someone or something they can both identify.

1.8 Some words usable as adjectives, e.g. *this* and *that*, can also be used as pronouns (4:1.3). We can say ‘This is a good knife’ as readily as we say ‘This knife is a good one’ (where *one* is a pronoun; it is an adjective in ‘one knife’). When we say ‘Few would agree ...’ or ‘Much depends on ...’, we are using the words *few* and *much* as pronouns. Sometimes adjectives are put after the definite article *the* without a following noun, as in ‘She writes about the amusing as well as the serious’, which is equivalent to ‘She writes about amusing things as well as serious things’. Locutions (1:3.5) made up of two or more words, etc., and not containing or implying any personed verb (1:7.11) are called **phrases**, and we may call *the amusing* and *the serious* **noun phrases** (3.4), even though the definite article is combined not, as usual, with a noun but with an adjective.

1.9 Also classified as adjectives are those called **possessive**, for which we can do a table-of-six (1:6.3f) beginning with *my* and *your* and ending with *their*, and those called **interrogative**: *what* and (usually) *which* and *whose* **when used with nouns**, often at the beginning of a sentence. (Used without nouns, the latter are pronouns; to the former there correspond the pronouns *mine, yours* etc.) The interrogative *whose* is also possessive (“Whose coat is that?”).

1:10 In 1.2 we noted that Oxford, though often a name, i.e., a “proper noun”, is an adjective in ‘an Oxford tutor’; and that American is a common noun in ‘an American’ (see the exercise on Chapter One). In ‘American universities’, ‘American’ is an adjective. Sometimes the same word is used as an adjective and as a common noun for persons of a particular nationality: *American, Australian, Greek* and *Italian* are examples. But in some cases there are different words: we say *English* but *Englishman* or *Englishwoman*, *French* but *Frenchman* or *Frenchwoman*, *Spanish* but *Spaniard*.

1.11 Adjectives and adverbs can be used at three levels: as well as *big* we have the forms *bigger* and *biggest*, called comparative and superlative. The user of English learns which adjectives have irregular forms (*good, better, best*, etc.) and which (mostly the longer ones) are simply preceded by *more* and *most* (*beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful*).

1.12 Two other adjectives used about adjectives cut across the types we have given so far. In ‘A good lecture is helpful’, the adjective *good*, standing before a noun, is called **attributive**, but the adjective *helpful*, connected with the verb *is*, is called **predicative**. In a statement (1:7.5f), the predicate is the locution (a verb or including a verb) which says something about the subject which a subject-locution has picked out. So ‘is helpful’ says something about a good lecture. (Cf. 1:7.1f.) A predicative adjective is one used after a verb such as *is* or *became*.

1.13 Finally, there are two contrasting principles for the use of adjectives. First, use them **sparingly**: don’t scatter them around. Good English depends more on verbs than on adjectives. Gowers (see Part 1 of my Preface), early in the sixth chapter exposes superfluous adjectives and adverbs. Secondly, however, build up an abundant store, so that you can use a really apt adjective (and not just *nice* or *interesting* or *boring*!); and learn to distinguish between ones that, though similar in letters, have different meanings. For vocabulary generally, and for learning the meanings of many adjectives and the distinctions between similar ones, each of the books recommended in 5:3.16 is excellent.

#### EXERCISE ON 2:1

- a. Write out this verse from John Masefield’s *Cargoes*, underlining or italicizing the adjectives. Remember that a hyphenated word counts as one word. One adjective here is hyphenated. Whereas *smokestack* or *smoke-stack* would be a noun, ‘smoke stack’ is like ‘Oxford tutor’ (1.2). *Butting* is here an adjective: it is a participle (3:5.4), which would be part of a personed verb (3S) in ‘is butting’ (1:7.4,11). The word *participle* is used because such words participate in the nature both of an adjective and of a verb. None of the three verses of this poem is a normal sentence (1:7.14; 3:1), because each has one or two participles instead of a personed verb. Masefield contemplates in turn a quinquereme and a galleon and now a coaster.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack  
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,  
With a cargo of Tyne coal,  
Road-rail, pig-lead,  
Firewood, ironware, and cheap tin trays.

- b. Identify the adjectives in the following sentences, and comment on the kind of adjective to which they belong. (Here at b, don’t use 1.12’s distinction.)
- i. The little girl clung to her brown doll.
  - ii. Whose dog is that one?
  - iii. It is good to do three hours of writing each weekday morning whenever that is practicable.

- iv. “I have been happy in many things, but all my other good fortune has been as dust in the balance compared with the blessing of an incomparable wife.” (John Buchan, *Memory Hold-the-Door*, p.137. On the basis of 1.5, in which category will you put *happy* in this use of it? In an older English, which Buchan knew well, it was quite different from *contented*. *Compared*, which is applied to ‘all my other good fortune’, is a participle – see a above – and might be called a **relational** adjective, like *similar* or *other* or *alternative*.)
- c. Now use 1.12 to comment on the two uses of *good* in b iii and iv.
- d. In the following sentence from Ch. 21 of *Adam Bede*, by George Eliot, a famous woman novelist of the nineteenth century, *anxiously*, *painfully* and *very* belong to the class of adverbs (2:2). Identify the adjectives (seventeen of them!), and comment as in b. Four of them are *touching*, *bending*, *worn* and *making*, participles used here, like *butting* in Masefield’s verse, as adjectives.) *Out* is here an adverb, but used in association with *making*: compare its use with the verb *work*, and see 3:4.4.

It was touching to see these three big men, with the marks of their hard labour about them, anxiously bending over the worn books, and painfully making out “The grass is green”, “The sticks are dry”, “The corn is ripe” – a very hard lesson to pass to after columns of single words all alike except in the first letter.

## 2. ADVERBS

2.1. Adjectives, we said (1.3), are normally used in association with nouns or pronouns. **Adverbs are mostly used in association with verbs, adjectives and other adverbs**, but also with sets of words (2.2,6). **Questions may arise how, when or where something is done, or something occurs, or to what extent some description is applicable, and adverbs often answer those and similar questions.**

2.2 In ‘Jill often runs’, ‘Jill likes quite long walks’ and ‘Jill goes to the library very often’, *often*, *quite* and *very* are adverbs, used, respectively, with the verbs *runs* and *goes*, the adjective *long*, and the adverb *often*. Do not think of adverbs as especially associated with verbs: remember that the Latin ‘*verbum*’ had a far wider range than our *verb* (1:7.2). The *OALD*’s entry for *adverb* adds ‘just in time’ to three examples matched by the three I have given. ‘In time’ is a **phrase** (1.8) used adverbially or adjectivally, and the adverb *just* is used with it. Within a sentence, a set of words which, unlike a phrase, contains one or more personed verbs (1:7.11), **and also** (except in the case of an imperative verb or verbs: 1:7.8) a subject-locution, is usefully called a **clause**, though only if it does not have the only verb in its sentence that I call a backbone one. (The important term ‘backbone verb’ is explained in Section 4.) Clauses too can have adverbs added to them: *just* is added to the adverbial clause (4.3f) underlined in “It happened just as I left the house.”

2.3 Let us identify all the adverbs in paragraphs 1.13 and 2.1 above, first those which accompany verbs and then the others.

2.4 *Sparingly* is an adverb in 1.13, linked to the verb *use*; *around* and *more* are connected respectively to *scatter* and *depends*. *Up* is an adverb as used here with *build* (but see the comments on the adverb *out* at d in the exercise on adjectives). *There* is linked to the verb *are* (compare ‘Two principles are given there’) in a familiar English idiom which states the existence or presence of something (3:2.4). In 2.1 *normally*, *mostly* and *also* are employed with *are used*, and *often* with *answer*.

2.5 *How*, *when* and *where*, as used in 2.1, are called interrogative adverbs, because we use them in questions; here they are being used in referring to ranges of questions which could be asked (e.g., ‘When did he come?’). They are linked to the verbs *is done* and *occurs* and the adjective *applicable*. In 2.1, after ‘Questions may arise’, they are also conjunctions, introducing noun clauses (4.4) saying what those questions are. Both *not* and *just* in 1.13 are adverbs, with the verb *use*. *Just* here is like *only* (often an adverb) or *merely*. To call *not* an adverb may seem odd, but compare ‘It is not the case ...’ to ‘It is never the case ...’. *Really* is an adverb linked to the adjective *apt*. (Most English adjectives are like *real* in forming adverbs by adding *ly*.) *For vocabulary* is an adverbial phrase used with the adjective *excellent*, and *generally* amplifies that phrase; the long phrase from *for* to *ones* is also adverbial with *excellent*. In 2.1, *to what extent* is an interrogative adverbial phrase, used with the adjective *applicable*, and also a conjunction.

2.6 There are also adverbs (often put at the start of a sentence) which suggest locutions that do not appear. When I used *First* and *Secondly* in 1.13, it was as though I wrote ‘I say first’ and ‘I say secondly’, not ‘First use ... and secondly build up ...’. *Finally* at the head of 1.13 is like ‘Finally I say this’. *However* is a very common adverb. (One common mistake is to use it in mid-sentence where the conjunction *but* is needed.) It does not really go directly with *build up*; it implies that we could begin with ‘However important it is to use adjectives sparingly’ (there it also serves as a conjunction: see 6:2.19). I am one of those who dislike the often idle use of *hopefully* (instead of, e.g., ‘We hope’), as in ‘Hopefully, you’ll recover soon.’ Some adverbs so used are plainly acceptable, if they are not redundant, e.g., *frankly* and *seriously*.

2.7 Adverbs are generally best placed near the word or words with which they are most closely associated. That applies especially to the very common adverb *only*. However, English does not generally permit an adverb to come between a verb and a short object-locution (3:3.2). So we say not ‘Give confidently your speech’, but ‘Give your speech confidently.’ We can say ‘Give quite a few hints’ because the object-locution there is ‘quite a few hints’: *quite* is linked to the adjectival phrase *a few*. (How does *a few* differ from *few*?)

#### EXERCISE ON 2:2

- a. Pick out the adverbs in the following sentences, and say whether they are linked to a verb, an adjective or another adverb, specifying it in each case.
  - i. You have done well.
  - ii. That work is extremely good.
  - iii. He walked very slowly.
  - iv. However confident she is, she still revises carefully.

- b. There are three adverbs in this line from Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*. Which are they, and which one would be different in ordinary English?

So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

#### EXERCISE ON 1:4 - 2:2

- a. Spacing the words out and leaving two lines after each line, write out the following passage from Ch. V of Mrs Humphry Ward's novel *Robert Elsmere* (1888). (The young Elsmere, in Oxford, has been given friendly guidance by his tutor.) Most words are used as one or other of the six parts of speech we have studied so far. Under each word (or two-word locution), put it into its category, writing, for example, 'def. art.' under *The*. *Of*, *with*, *down* (in this passage) and *into* are prepositions; *and* and *though* are conjunctions, like *as* here. *Something* is a pronoun, as is *which* in its use here (4:1.2). This exercise, like that on Chapter One (p.12), asks you to **parse**: that is to identify, usually in the same order, each part of speech occurring in a particular sentence (1:2; consider Burchfield's remark quoted early in Part 1 of the Preface). Mark the verbs, all PVs (1:7.11), with 'PV'.

The young man was deeply touched. This tone of personal comment and admonition was very rare with Mr Grey. He felt a sudden consciousness of a shared burden which was infinitely soothing, and though he made no answer, his face lost something of its harassed look as the two walked on together down Oriel Street and into Merton Meadows.

- b. Write a sentence in which *was touched* is clearly a verb. Why should we call *touched* (here a past participle: 3:5.4) an adjective in its use in this passage, like *wounded* in 'a wounded soldier', and say that the verb is just *was*?
- c. The PVs in this passage are all said to be "past simple" (3:7.2). Given their Sub-Ls (1:7.1), six have one place on a table-of-six (1:7.12), and one another. Give the two labels, for the six and for the one (which one?).
- d. What could be said first for and then against the view that instead of *He* at the beginning of the third sentence Mrs Ward should have written *Elsmere*? (Which is the relevant paragraph in 1:6?) Which view do you prefer? Why?
- e. Respond in a balanced way, but with a view that is genuinely your own, to the following. Write about fifty words, or more if you like.

Well, now you can identify six parts of speech, as they are called. But what's the use of that? Has it made you any better at writing? Has it developed your imagination? Why should students have to bother with it? It should be left to those few people who like that sort of thing. There are too many other things in life, really fascinating or worrying, to learn about.

### 3. PREPOSITIONS

3.1 I wrote that in the passage from Mrs Ward's novel *of, with, down* and *into* are prepositions. In the made-up passage at the end of that exercise the prepositions are *of, at, with, to* (before *those*), *in* and *about*. Most prepositions are short words; one exception is *concerning*. Some are sets of words, such as *in front of* or *on behalf of*.

3.2 The Latin *praepositum* consists of *prae* (corresponding to our *in front of*) and *positum* (*placed*). **A preposition is a word, or set of words, normally placed in front of a noun or pronoun, or noun phrase or noun clause (see 3.4), to express some relation.**

3.3 Going through the prepositions and the words they precede in the two passages in that last exercise, we find:

of	+	personal comment, admonition
with	+	Mr Grey
of	+	a shared burden
of	+	its harassed look
down	+	Oriel Street
into	+	Merton Meadows
of	+	speech
of	+	that
at	+	writing
with	+	it
to	+	those few people
of	+	thing
in	+	life
about		(not here preceding any words: see 3.5f)

The *to* before *bother* and before *learn* in the second passage is not a preposition: it can be called a particle or an infinitive-marker and is part of what is called a *to*-infinitive (3:5.2). Notice that, as in the first case with *of*, one preposition can be linked with **more than one** locution, each of which it “governs” (see 3.5): often, as in Mrs Ward's sentence, such locutions are joined by *and*. (See the exercise below, at b, for more complicated examples of what is called parallelism.)

3.4 Of the words at the right of our list, *that* and *it* are pronouns (2:1.8; 1:6.2-4) and there are eight common nouns and the gerund *writing* (1:4.4; 3.5.6). There are three two-word names, i.e., “proper nouns” (1:4.2f). ‘Personal comment’, ‘a shared burden’, ‘its harassed look’ and ‘those few people’ are all **noun phrases**. The word *phrase* was explained at 1.8: a phrase is a locution made up of two or more words, etc., and not containing or implying any personed verb. A noun phrase is a phrase in which a noun or pronoun (or noun-substitute: 1.8) is accompanied by one or more other words (such as an article, and/or one or more adjectives, as in the four examples here, and/or words making up an adjectival phrase) which help to make clear what is being referred to, or describe it further. The word ‘clause’ was explained at 2.2. A **noun clause** may often be regarded as an alternative to a noun phrase: just as well as the noun phrase ‘your words’, the noun clause ‘what you said’ could follow the preposition *by* in a sentence beginning ‘I was rather worried by ...’. (4.4.)

3.5 The end of the last sentence in the second passage of our previous exercise, ‘to learn about’, could be replaced by ‘which we can learn about’ or the more formal ‘about which we can learn’ (which would not fit the style of the rest of the passage); or we could begin the sentence with ‘We can learn about too many other things’. From the sentence as it stands, and its first replacement, we can see that a preposition, though normally preceding a noun, pronoun or noun phrase or clause, may sometimes come after it, at the end of a clause or sentence. To use again a technical term we introduced at 1:7.14, we say that prepositions normally **govern** nouns, pronouns, noun phrases or noun clauses: we may add that they normally precede them but sometimes come later. The point of the word *govern* can be seen when we realize that a pronoun governed by a preposition has to be an object-locution pronoun, though it is not itself used there as an Ob-L, i.e., as the Ob-L of a verb (1:6.5; 3:3.2): we must not say ‘to he’ or ‘with she’ or ‘from they’, but ‘to him’, ‘with her’ and ‘from them’. (Notice how quickly a child can pick up such features of English, but how carefully they may have to be studied, understood and practised by someone who is learning English as a further language.)

3.6 It used often to be said “Don’t end a sentence with a preposition.” That insistence leads to ‘About whom are you talking?’ instead of the more natural ‘Who are you talking about?’ (On *who* and *whom* as interrogative pronouns, see 4:1.3, 2.7.) We should rather say that we should not end a sentence with a preposition if doing so produces something cumbersome, such as ‘That’s something I must protest against’, where ‘I must protest against that’ is neater.

3.7 A prominent part of learning to speak and write good English is finding out and remembering which prepositions are used with particular nouns, verbs or adjectives. Raymond Murphy’s *English Grammar in Use* has eight units on these matters (129-136 in the fifth edition). When you learn verbs, adjectives or nouns which are often linked with one or more prepositions, make sure that you note those links. For example, we say ‘compare x **to** y’ if we have in mind the idea that they are similar, but ‘compare x **with** y’ if we are thinking of looking for differences as well as similarities.

3.8 Sometimes two verbs or other locutions may be used one after the other, each with a different preposition: ‘I played with and learnt from many good cricketers.’ On some occasions a simpler order, with a pronoun, is preferable: one could say ‘I played with many good cricketers and learnt from them.’

## EXERCISE ON 2:3

- a. Pick out the prepositions in the following sentences, and say whether they precede a noun, a pronoun, a noun phrase or a noun clause. (Look again at 1.8, 2.2, and 3.4 for *phrase*, *clause*, *noun phrase* and *noun clause*.)
  - i. We talked of him yesterday.
  - ii. I went from house to house enquiring about my friend.
  - iii. I walked into the schoolroom and sat at my old desk.
  - iv. With scorn he replied to what they had said against him.
- b. First silently and then aloud, read the following famous passage from a speech of Winston Churchill in 1940, early in the Second World War. Notice the frequency in it of prepositions of place.

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail, we shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, and we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender. Even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the Old.

(Quoted by Lewis Broad, *Winston Churchill*, 1952 edition, p. 289)

In that passage a preposition often governs **just one** noun, pronoun or noun phrase, as in 'of Europe' or 'of the Gestapo'. First make a list of all those combinations, beginning with those two and underlining the preposition. Then list the examples of the use of one preposition governing **two** locutions of those kinds joined by the conjunction *and*, setting out the examples as is done here for the first of them:

- into (i) the grip of the Gestapo  
and  
(ii) all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule

One feature of good English is often this **parallelism**, whereby two or more locutions of the same sort or pattern, often linked by *and* or *or*, are governed or introduced, and/or followed, by the one word or group of words. The noun phrases 'the rescue' and 'the liberation', near the end of the passage, are not only preceded by *to* but also followed by 'of the Old'.

- c. *Though* (in its use by Churchill here), *or*, *if* and *until* are conjunctions (2:4). *Even* is here an adverb, and so in two cases is *on*, used, like *forth*, in close association with a verb (3:4.4). Whereas *have fallen*, *shall flag* and *shall fail* are each one verb (1:7.4) – *shall* is an auxiliary and *flag* and *fail* main parts – *may* is a personed and "modal" verb here indicating possibility (3:6.2,5), followed by the verbs *fall* and *be*, here infinitives (3:5.2f). *Whatever* is here an indefinite pronoun. With that help, you should by now be able to say of every one of these words of Churchill what part of speech it is here. You might think about whether the greater appreciation of the passage to which that achievement leads is part of the kind of answer best given to our objector at e in the previous exercise. Copy out the above passage and **parse** it, with the layout given at a on p.18. Use abbreviations if you wish. Add extra information of the kinds mentioned in the exercise at the end of Chapter 1. You may wish to work through the passage first orally and then in writing.
- d. "Churchill's two sentences here are far too long." Explain why you do or do not agree.

- e. A good speaker, or someone who is good at reading aloud, emphasizes some words, but not too many. Which words would you emphasize in this passage? Read it aloud again until you are reasonably satisfied. Remember that emphasis can be communicated by intensity, not just by increasing the volume.

#### 4. CONJUNCTIONS

4.1 Conjunctions are joining-words. We use the word *junction* for a place where railway lines or roads meet. For the Latin ‘*iunctio*’ we say *joining* (here a gerund), and for the prefix *con* we say *together*. **A conjunction joins locutions together.**

4.2 **There are two types of conjunction, coordinating and subordinating.** The most common **coordinating** conjunction is *and*. Others are *or* and *nor*, and *both* used before *and*, *either* before *or*, and *neither* before *nor*. Other words that can be coordinating conjunctions are *but* and *yet*. Consider these two sentences:

- (a) We have a dog **and** a cat.  
 (b) We have a dog **and** (we) shall get a cat too.

(The bracketed *we* may be either included or omitted.) **In both these sentences the two locutions linked are “on the same level”, and so we say that the conjunction is coordinating.** In (a), the noun phrases ‘a dog’ and ‘a cat’ are linked. In (b), if the second *we* is included, the linked locutions are ‘We have a dog’ and ‘we shall get a cat too’, and, if that *we* is omitted, ‘have a dog’ and ‘shall get a cat too’. The two verbs *have* and *shall get* are here on the same level of basic importance in the structure of the sentence. **We shall call just those personed verbs which are basic in the structure of the sentence BACKBONE VERBS** (see also 4.6 and 3:1), **and a sentence may, like (b), have more than one; if the parts of a sentence which each contain one or more such verbs are linked by a conjunction, that conjunction is a coordinating one.** (The phrase ‘main verb’ has been customary, but ‘backbone verb’ is more vivid, and does not suggest that there is just one such verb in any normal sentence.) By the definition of *clause* proposed at 2.2, ‘We have a dog’ and ‘we shall get a cat too’ are clauses. Because they each contain a backbone verb, they are called **coordinate clauses**. If the second *we* is omitted, we have **one** subject-locution governing two backbone verbs, and so, given that definition, it is better not to use the word *clause*, though the conjunction is still a coordinating one.

4.3 But now examine this sentence, in which the conjunction *although* is a **subordinating** one:

- (c) **Although** we have a dog, we shall get a cat too.

Here the backbone verb is *shall get*. ‘Although we have a dog’ is called a **subordinate clause: its personed verb is not a backbone verb**, given the account of ‘backbone verb’ given in the last paragraph. Subordinate clauses are so called because they are less important in the **structure** of their sentence than that crucial part of the sentence which has or is the backbone verb or verbs. **These subordinate clauses are either adverbial clauses, noun clauses or adjectival clauses.** It is convenient to discuss them together here, even though adjectival clauses do not begin with a conjunction.

4.4 Our conjunction in (c), *although*, begins an **adverbial** clause, with a grammatical role similar to that of the adverb *nevertheless*. *Though, if, because, when* and *where* are among other words used as subordinating conjunctions introducing adverbial clauses. *That*, used as a conjunction, introduces a **noun** clause: in ‘He asserted that he was not guilty’, ‘that he was not guilty’ is a noun clause with a similar function to that of the noun phrase ‘his innocence’ (compare 3.4). Often the *that* in a noun clause is omitted: ‘he said he was not guilty’. Noun clauses can also be introduced by interrogative (questioning) words, such as *who, what* (4:1.3), and *how, when, where* (2.5) and the conjunctions *whether* and *if*. Finally there are **adjectival** (often called **relative**) clauses. Most begin with what is called a relative pronoun (4:1.2), which may be *who, whom, whose, which* or *that*. (*Which* occurred as a relative pronoun in that sentence before *may*.) In ‘The person who is most suitable is Angela’, the clause ‘who is most suitable’ plays a role like that of the adjectival phrase ‘most suitable’. A relative pronoun used as an object-locution of its clause may be omitted: ‘The boy (whom) we have selected is Arthur’.

4.5 One common fault in student writing is to use what ought to be only a subordinate clause as though it were a normal sentence. (On normal and abnormal sentences, see 3:1.) Someone might make a “sentence” out of ‘Although people recognized his ability’ after ‘Bill was becoming unpopular for his speeches on this matter’; but a set of words such as the former cannot be a normal sentence. It needs to be **attached** as an adverbial clause to the part of a sentence which has one or more backbone verbs. Adverbial and noun clauses sometimes precede that part and sometimes follow it, and a good writer shows variety in his or her positioning of them.

4.6 Let us then emphasize the role of the backbone verb(s) in the normal sentence:

**Every normal sentence has at least one personed and backbone verb.**

Every backbone verb is personed, but not every personed verb is backbone. Any personed verb in a subordinate clause is not backbone but subordinate. Let us also sum up the roles of conjunctions:

**Conjunctions join locutions: coordinating conjunctions join ones that are on the same level (examples are words, phrases and clauses), and subordinating ones introduce two of the three kinds of subordinate clause, the adverbial clause and the noun clause.**

4.8 Many readers would find Appendix D helpful for revision at this stage. Consult it before proceeding to Chapter 3.

#### EXERCISE ON 2:4

- a. Write out the following sentences, underlining the conjunctions. Put above them ‘coordinating’ or ‘subordinating’. Notice that inside a subordinate clause there may be one or more coordinating conjunctions, and that there may be a subordinate clause within a subordinate clause.
  - i. Shirley is my sister and Bill is my cousin.
  - ii. Try the bell, if you like, but I don’t think that it will work.

- iii. Whenever you practise, you have such energy.
  - iv. Because it has rained so much, the match has been cancelled.
  - v. We were delighted when Jill both won the race and broke the record.
  - vi. He said that neither tomatoes nor beans do well unless they are in good soil.
- b. Continue a report of the following kind on the backbone verbs and the clauses in the above sentences, which will supplement the one you have just made on their conjunctions. (Notice that, as *clause* is defined at 2.2, ‘Try the bell’ counts here as a coordinate clause, even though, because its verb is imperative, there is no subject-locution. In any other kind of case, a clause must have a subject-locution.)
- i. Backbone verbs *is* and *is*; coordinate clauses ‘Shirley is my sister’ and ‘Bill is my cousin’.
  - ii. Backbone verbs *Try* and *do think* (made negative by *n’t*); subordinate verbs *like* and *will work*; coordinate clauses ‘Try the bell’ and ‘I don’t think’; subordinate clauses ‘if you like’ (adverbial) and ‘that it will work’ (noun).

## 5. INTERJECTIONS

5.1 We finish our survey of the parts of speech with one very easy to understand. Typical interjections, which are much commoner in speech than in writing, are *Oh*, *Hurray*, *Yes*, *No* and *Well*. I have used capitals because these words, when they are interjections, mostly occur as sentences or at the beginning of sentences. They may count as sentences just by themselves, but, having no verb, they are not normal ones (4.6; 3:1.7-12). Some interjections, such as the first two just mentioned, are commonly followed by exclamation marks when they are written: ‘Oh!’, ‘Hurray!’.

5.2 They are called interjections because they are often “thrown amid” a set of remarks (Latin again: *inter*, corresponding to our *amid*, and *iectum*, our *thrown*). They do not take up a grammatical role in relation to other words as the other parts of speech do, but they enable us to express our feelings or make simple (or delaying) responses.

## EXERCISE ON ALL THE PARTS OF SPEECH

- a. Copy out sentences i and ii, each of which has all nine of the parts of speech. Here and in b-d, leave two lines after each line of your copies or your own sentences. Parse the two sentences with the layout described on p.18 at a.
- i. Yes, when you have opened the large envelope, look immediately at the letter.
  - ii. Well, it is mainly a matter for her, but I am hopeful.
- b. Make up nine normal (4.6) and readily usable sentences, none of them longer than six words, to illustrate uses, respectively, of the nine parts of speech. Indicate, by underlining and describing, which part of speech you are primarily illustrating in each sentence.
- c. In not more than fifteen words, make up a sentence like the two in a in that it contains all nine parts of speech, and parse it, with the layout you have used in a.
- d. Fifty years after he had been a pupil (in the 1840s) at King Edward's School, Birmingham, England, Bishop Westcott recalled his teacher and headmaster, James Prince Lee. His tribute included these sentences. Write them out and parse them, using the advice given below.

He claimed us from the first as his fellow workers. He made us feel that in all learning we must be active and not receptive only. ... He encouraged us to collect, to examine, to arrange facts which lay within the range of our own reading for his use in dealing with some larger problem.

(Quoted in *Godliness and Good Learning*,  
by David Newsome, p.105f)

The *OALD* calls *as*, used as in the first sentence, a preposition. I call it an adverb whose use is similar to that of the *as* I have just employed, and to *as ... as ...*, which is called an adverb in that dictionary. For *first*, *his* and *our*, *all* and *some*, as here used, which paragraphs of this chapter could be consulted? The infinitives *feel*, *be*, *to collect*, *to examine* and *to arrange*, and the gerunds *learning*, *reading* and *dealing*, are all **non-personed verb-forms**: see, now or later, 3.3 and 3:5.2f for the infinitive, and 3:5.6 (with 1:4.4) for the verbal noun called the gerund, and write 'V (Inf)' and 'VN (Gerund)' respectively. For the personed and "modal" verb *must*, see 3:6.4f. For *which* and the adjectival clause it begins, see 4.4.

- e. List the personed verbs (PVs) in those three sentences. Give their number and person in brackets. Which of those personed verbs are backbone verbs (BVs)? Of the subordinate clauses one is a noun clause and the other an adjectival one (also called relative). Identify them.
- f. Explain the meaning and importance of the words *active*, *receptive*, and *encouraged*, as used above.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MORE ABOUT VERBS

#### 1. SENTENCES WITH AND WITHOUT BACKBONE VERBS

1.1 We have already seen how important verbs are in our sentences. Often it is the placing of the verb which shows whether a sentence is expressing an assertion, a question, or an instruction or request (1:7.1-9); and no normal sentence is complete without one or more verbs which are not only **personed** but also **backbone**. (Look again at the introduction and use of those two words, at 1:7.11 for the first and 2:4.2f,6 for the second.) Nevertheless abnormal sentences, without backbone or even without personed verbs are sometimes acceptable (1.7f).

1.2 Let us first illustrate the role of the backbone verb. As we saw in 1:7.1, in many simple sentences we first refer to some being, thing or group, our subject, by using a subject-locution (Sub-L), e.g., *Jim, the boy, he*. Then we use a verb to say something about that subject:

Jim swims.

We may also ask a question, often by introducing an auxiliary (1:7.4) and putting the Sub-L after it, or, where there is more than one auxiliary, after the first.

Does Jim swim?  
Has Jim been swimming?

If we want Jim to swim on a particular occasion, we can say

Swim!

or, more probably, with the interjection *Please*,

Please swim, Jim.

A personed verb may be part of a Sub-L, as *hesitates* (3S) is in 'He who hesitates is lost', and therefore within a subordinate clause ('who hesitates'): the Sub-L is 'He who hesitates' and not just 'He'. Unless it is imperative (1:7.8), we may say that **a backbone verb (BV) is a personed verb (PV) which is governed (1:7.14) by the only subject-locution of the sentence, or the main one, or one of the main ones, 'main' meaning here that it is not part of any subordinate clause, whether adjectival, adverbial or noun (2:4.2-6)**. In Section 2 we shall look further at subject-locutions. If a BV is imperative, it addresses the only subject of the sentence, or the main one, or one of the main ones.

#### 1.3 More than one PV in a sentence may be a BV:

In a triathlon the competitors swim, ride and run.

All three of those verbs are on the same level of importance: none is part of a subordinate clause. By contrast, in

Those who compete in a triathlon swim, ride and run,

*compete* is a personed verb but not a backbone one. Be absolutely clear about the point made in 2:4.6, that **every BV is a PV but not vice versa**.

1.4 Very often PVs, whether backbone or not, are used in company with words other than their Sub-L. Sometimes there is an object-locution (Ob-L), as in

Those who have entered **this event** will swim, ride and run;

sometimes there is no Ob-L but a phrase beginning with a preposition, such as ‘in a triathlon’ after *compete* in the previous paragraph. We shall explain what an Ob-L is in Section 3 below, and consider verbs used with prepositional phrases in Section 4.

1.5 Sometimes the Ob-L (or the Sub-L) may be or include a non-personed verb-form, as in ‘I like **to swim**’ or ‘I like **swimming** in this river’ (compare, for Sub-Ls, ‘**To swim/Swimming** is good exercise’), where the non-personed verb-forms are called respectively an infinitive and a gerund. We have met these verb-forms already (see 2:3.3f and the exercise that follows Ch. 2), and there is more about them in Section 5 of this chapter.

1.6 In this section so far we have mentioned or used verb-forms which have expressed ideas related to the present (*swim, ride, run*), the future (*will swim/ride/run*), and the past considered simply as past (*saw* in 1.2) or as leading up to the present (*have seen* in 1.1, *have entered* in 1.4). These verb-forms are said to belong to different **tenses**, and tenses will be our concern in the seventh and last section, along with the “**aspects**”, called respectively simple and continuous, which we may illustrate by ‘Jim swims’ and ‘Jim is swimming’.

1.7 In spite of the central importance attaching to verbs, people often write sentences without backbone verbs, perhaps consisting of or containing what would normally be regarded only as subordinate clauses (2:4.3-5), or with no personed verb, or even with no complete verb or no verb at all. In conversation it would be tedious if we always had to answer such a question as ‘Do you swim?’ with ‘I swim’ instead of ‘I do’, which uses only part of the full verb *do swim*, or just ‘Yes’, which can count as a sentence though that sentence consists only of an interjection. However, **in writing we should make all our sentences normal, ensuring that they contain at least one verb which is both personed and backbone, unless we have a good reason to do otherwise in a particular case.**

1.8 What can constitute a good reason? When I wrote that question, I did not need to say ‘a good reason to do otherwise in a particular case’, because I could assume that the reader could, as we say, “supply” those words from what I had said already, i.e., from the context I had provided. So, if in an article someone asks “Which ball game has the longest events?” and answers “Cricket.”, we do not say “You should have written ‘Cricket is the ball game that has the longest events.’” So we may now say that, **if** the further words needed to complete a normal sentence could readily be supplied from the context, it may be acceptable to write a sentence which has no backbone verb, or no personed verb, or no complete verb, or no verb at all. But such a sentence should be rather rare when one is writing. A sentence without a backbone verb is sometimes called **elliptical**, because something has been left out of it. (*Leipō*, ‘I leave’, is the Greek verb from which *ellipse* and *elliptical* come.)

1.9 The fact that there can be elliptical sentences, even though they are abnormal especially in writing (*abnormal* does not mean the same as *uncommon* or even imply error), raises the question “What then is a sentence, if, say, ‘Cricket.’ or ‘Yes.’ can count as a sentence?”. We might add “Can **anything** be a sentence if you begin it with a capital letter and put a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark after it, or make a corresponding pause in conversation?”

1.10 Such capitalizing and punctuation is certainly important, because one mark of a sentence is such a clear separation. But you could not normally say that ‘Of the.’ was a sentence just because you had begun it with a capital O and finished it with a full stop (though if you were asked “What are the last words on your page?” you might be right to reply “‘Of the.’”, where the single inverted commas (1:3.2) would be part of your sentence if we wrote it down).

1.11 Let us then define a sentence thus: a **sentence is a locution which, being SUFFICIENT (at least in a given context) for the performing of some linguistic act (e.g., of asserting, questioning, instructing or requesting, exclaiming), is also SEPARATED from other such locutions by a full stop or its equivalent.** My use of the valuable word *locution* was explained at 1:3.5.

1.12 Thus the key ideas are those of a certain sort of sufficiency and a certain sort of separation. For sufficiency, in a normal sentence, there must be at least one backbone verb.

## 2. SUBJECT-LOCUTIONS AND THEIR PERSONED VERBS

2.1 We said at 1:7.9 that that the primary use of a verb is to convey the proposition that some action, activity, event, process or state **belongs** to some subject. By using the word *their* in our section-heading, I am seeking to convey the very important idea that, correspondingly, a personed verb usually **belongs** to (is borne by) some subject-locution, and therefore must have the same label, so providing **a matching pair** (1:7.14). I say ‘usually’, because a request or instruction with a second-person imperative verb (1:7.8) has a subject (1:7.1) but normally not a Sub-L (‘Please give me a drink!’ ‘March!’).

2.2 To comply with this basic rule of English, we have to be able to recognize and understand the **structure** of Sub-Ls in a variety of cases. There is no problem in ‘Jim swims’ or ‘He swims’; nor in ‘The boy swims’, where the Sub-L is the simple noun phrase (2:3.4) ‘The boy’. Sometimes, however, we have to pick out **the main constituent of the Sub-L** and make sure that our PV has the same “number” (singular or plural) as that main constituent (usually a noun or pronoun). The noun phrase which is the Sub-L may have the common form ‘The X (singular) of the Ys (plural)’, as in ‘The testimony of the tenants is clear’, or a similar form. It is obvious as soon as we think about it that it is the testimony and not the tenants that we are declaring to be clear, so that *testimony* is the main constituent we must focus on, and yet in such cases it is very common to make the mistake of allowing the verb to be attracted into the plural, because the noun next or close to the verb is plural.

2.3 Sometimes we need to see what is **not** part of the Sub-L, so that, e.g., we clearly distinguish ‘Mary and Shirley are here’ from ‘Mary, as well as Shirley, is here’, and do not make the error of saying ‘Mary, as well as Shirley, are here’.

2.4 Few people would write ‘There is cows in that field’, yet sentences with *There* used in that way do sometimes occasion such mistakes. *There* is not the Sub-L, as its position might suggest. The Sub-L is *cows*, just as in ‘Cows are in that field’. *There* is an adverb (compare ‘Who is there?’), and we often put it in front of a PV from the verb-family whose infinitive is *be* (‘there is/are/was/were/has been/have been’, etc.) when we want to affirm or deny some proposition about the existence of something, or about its existence at some place or time.

2.5 *It* is often a Sub-L, as in ‘It is raining’ or ‘It is not always easy to learn grammar’. The verbs are personed verbs in our technical sense: they are 3S. *It* may be regarded in the first case as a vague and impersonal Sub-L, which is often convenient to use, and in the second as an **anticipatory** Sub-L: the words ‘to learn grammar’ explain the reference of *It*.

2.6 We may now give a more precise definition of ‘subject’ and ‘subject-locution’ (compare 1:7.1). **A subject is that which, if the verb is not imperative, is identified by a locution (called the subject-locution) which is used in association with a personed verb in such a way that the number (singular or plural) and person of that subject-locution or of its main constituent determine the number and person of that personed verb.** The subject-locution (or its main constituent) is the locution which **governs** the PV. (The technical term *govern* was introduced at 1:7.14, and has been used in this chapter at 1.2.) I use the word ‘subject’ thus because it is an apt word to describe the status in relation to our discourse of **that about which**, by or with the help of a PV governed by the subject-locution, we are making a statement or asking a question. In the case of an instruction or request expressed by an imperative PV, where there is no subject-locution, the word ‘subject’ is applied to the one or ones we are addressing.

2.7 To be able to say of a verb that it is personed (because it has a subject and so, if the verb is not imperative, a subject-locution whose person and number, or those of its main constituent, it shares) does not depend on whether or not each form in a table-of-six for it is different from the others (as in Latin). The fact that in English, as in French (but not in Latin), the PV, or its auxiliary or first auxiliary (1:7.4), usually (but, as we have seen at 2.4, not invariably) comes **immediately or soon after the subject-locution** assists us to think of the subject-locution as what we may call the **bearer** of the verb, governing its person and number. As we saw at 1:7.12f and have seen in 2.2-4 above, it is by no means marginal in the practical learning of English, but essential, to be able to ask whether or not a subject-locution (or its main constituent) is third person singular (3S), and then to use the appropriate verb-form.

### EXERCISE ON 3:2

- a. Write out the following eight sentences, **in four of which a PV has the wrong number** (1:6.3), and underline or italicize the Sub-L, or in one case the Sub-Ls. Where the verb-form is incorrect, put a line through it and write the correct form above. Where the Sub-L consists of more than two words and there is a main constituent, put an extra line under that main constituent. For each sentence, give a paragraph-reference, e.g., ‘(2.1)’ for the first and ‘(2.4)’ for the second.
- i. Bill is here.
  - ii. There’s Jill.
  - iii. Bill and Jill is here.
  - iv. The keenness of these students is astonishing.
  - v. The taste, as well as the size, of these tomatoes make them distinctive.

- vi. It's hailing; it's best not to go out just yet.
- vii. The barking of those dogs keep us awake.
- viii. The number of your books are higher than that of mine.

- b. Write down ten pairs of Sub-L and PV which have occurred in this section, underlining as above. You need not write the whole of a long sentence: use three dots to indicate omissions. Give the number of the paragraph from which you have taken the sentence.

### 3. VERBS USED TRANSITIVELY AND INTRANSITIVELY; OBJECT-LOCUTIONS; ACTIVE AND PASSIVE; COMPLEMENTS AND WORDS IN APPOSITION

3.1 Consider the difference between 'Jill saw him' and 'Jill looked at him'. We simply cannot say 'Jill looked him' or 'Jill saw at him'. *Saw* is used here as a **transitive** verb and *looked* as an **intransitive** one. (Some verbs can be used in both ways. I can say 'run a mile' as well as 'run for a mile'.) The Latin verb *transire* is translated by 'to go across'; compare the English words *transit* and *transition*. **A verb which can be used transitively is one which can, without any need for a preposition, "go across" to and govern a locution for that which the subject acts upon or has an attitude or relation to (usually, but not always, something other than the subject)**. So all the verbs are transitive in 'Jill calls Jim', 'Jill saw him', 'Jill loves him', and also 'Jill asserted herself', where *herself* is used because the asserting "bends back" upon the subject herself, and so *herself* in this use is called a **reflexive** pronoun (4:1.2). By contrast, **a verb used intransitively is one which needs the addition of a preposition to express the idea of acting upon something, etc., and may also stand alone (not "crossing" to any locution) to express some action, activity, event, process or state**. So 'Jill runs towards him', but also just 'Jill runs'.

3.2 A verb used transitively normally requires an **object-locution (Ob-L)**, to which it "goes across", unless it is being employed in the way explained in 3.5. Just as the subject-locution (Sub-L) refers to the subject of an action, activity, event, process or state (1:7.1,5; 3:2.6), so the Ob-L refers to the object, i.e., that which is presented as directly focused upon by the action, etc., described by the verb used transitively. In 'Jill calls Jim', Jill is the subject and Jim the object; so the word *Jill* is the Sub-L and the word *Jim* the Ob-L. Word-order is decisive in English and French for determining which of two nouns or pronouns is Sub-L and which is Ob-L; in Latin, and to some extent in German, what counts is the form given to the words concerned (often there are different endings for Sub-L and Ob-L). When a verb is used intransitively with a preposition and a pronoun, that pronoun, though not itself an Ob-L (because it is not governed by a verb), has the same form as one, as we noted at 1:6.5 and 2:3.5. We do not normally say just 'She saw' but, e.g., 'She saw him', where *him* is the Ob-L; we do say 'She looked', but we often add a preposition, as in 'She looked at him', where *him* has the form of an Ob-L.

3.3 Some transitive verbs, like *teach*, can have two Ob-Ls: 'She taught Tom grammar'. In 'She gave Tom a book', however, *Tom* is an **indirect-object-locution (Ind-Ob-L)**, whereas *a book* is the "direct" one: we can say 'She taught Tom', but not 'She gave Tom' with the meaning of 'She gave Tom a present'.

3.4 **The distinction between transitive and intransitive uses of verbs is vital to our understanding of how particular verbs are used in English and other languages.** Pages R4 and R5 in the Reference section at the end of the 9th edition of the *OALD* valuably explain both kinds of use, and related patterns or “verb frames”, except that the word ‘subject’ is used to mean what I call a subject-locution. The failure to distinguish clearly the being or thing about which a personed verb is used from the word(s) used to refer to that being or thing (i.e., to distinguish the subject and the subject-locution, as those terms are used in *MS*) gives rise to inconsistency. On R5, where ‘His voice sounds hoarse’ and ‘Elena became a doctor’ are offered as examples, the word ‘hoarse’ “tells you more” about **his voice**, not about the pair of words ‘his voice’, and the word ‘doctor’ about Elena, not about the name ‘Elena’. I leave to the reader the discovery of similar inconsistency on R5 in the use of ‘object’ (compare, on R1, the sentence about *salty*).

3.5 Verbs which can be used transitively can be used in what is called the **passive** voice (*voice* here means a way of speaking or writing) as well as in what is called the **active** voice. The words *passive* and *passion* are connected, coming from a Latin verb whose form *passus* can be translated by ‘having suffered’ or ‘having undergone’. The basic idea, however, in the grammatical use of ‘passive’ is not of pain or passion, or of letting things happen, but of a subject’s being “on the receiving end”, so that the focus or product of an action, activity, event, process or state (1:7.5) is presented as a subject rather than an object, and so referred to by a Sub-L instead of an Ob-L. Contrast two ways of “saying the same thing”: “I wrote those letters (Ob-L)”, where the verb ‘wrote’ is called active, and “Those letters (Sub-L) were written by me”, where the verb ‘were written’ is called passive. It should be noted that **passive verb-forms always have one or more auxiliary parts drawn from the *be*-family** (they may also have other auxiliaries, such as *has*) **and their main part is always the past participle** (see 5.4 and 7.3).

3.6 It is worth emphasizing here how misleading it is to say, as many teachers have said, that “the subject is the doer of the action”. Not only are many verbs not “doing-words” (consider *love* and *believe*), but a transitive verb can be used passively so that the focus or product becomes the subject, as in ‘That cake was baked by my brother.’

3.7 Intransitive verbs cannot be used in the passive by themselves (we cannot say ‘I was looked’), but they can sometimes be put into the passive with an adverb and/or preposition with which they are closely associated (see 4.4). However, the construction (i.e., the pattern) used in ‘I was looked at in a strange way’ may give an awkward result in such cases, and the active construction, as in ‘People looked at me in a strange way’, may be preferable.

3.8 In general one should ask if one has a good reason for using the passive, which can be cumbersome, rather than the active. One such reason is that one cannot identify the subject, and ‘He was wounded’ is better than ‘Someone wounded him’. Some administrators use the passive too often, and without good reason, and produce sentences which may be ponderous and unclear, sometimes, it may be, because they do not indicate (are intended not to indicate?) who took or is to take a particular action.

3.9 The function of ‘a policeman’ as the Ob-L in ‘He sees a policeman’ is obviously very different from that of the same words in ‘He is a policeman’. Nouns or noun phrases which are not Sub-Ls or Ob-Ls or locutions governed by a preposition or parts of any of these may, in relation to such locutions, be either **complements** (“filling out” the utterance), as in ‘He is a policeman’ or ‘They made him captain’, or **in apposition** (i.e., placed next) to locutions which have any of the above roles from Sub-L to complement. Two examples are ‘Bill, a policeman, was there’ and ‘Go to Shirley Harrison, the new doctor’.

## EXERCISE ON 3:3

- a. Write out the following sentences, underlining or italicizing the PVs, and putting above them a T or an I to indicate whether they are used transitively or intransitively. Where they are used transitively, put 'Ob-L' over the object-locution. Remember to include in your PVs any auxiliary words which are part of them (1:7.4).
- i. I understand your problem.
  - ii. She talked with him for an hour.
  - iii. Do you play chess?
  - iv. Don't disturb him: he's thinking. (See b ii in the exercise on p.24.)
  - v. He said that he would borrow this book. (See 2:4.4.)
- b. Turn these sentences from the active voice to the passive, or *vice versa*, without changing their meaning.
- i. John phoned Bill.
  - ii. Ann will win that race.
  - iii. Were you taught by Mr Jamieson?
  - iv. Have all the students read this article?
  - v. Will the prize be presented to her today by the headmistress?

## 4. VERBS AND THEIR ACCOMPANYING PREPOSITIONS

4.1 Consider the two sentences 'She discussed the problem with him' and 'She talked about the problem with him'. Substantially the same meaning is conveyed. As we noted at 2:3.7, the study of prepositions used with particular verbs (and adjectives and nouns) has to be prominent in our study of English.

4.2 One way to increase our ability to use the right preposition, and our range of verbs, is to see if we can move from a transitive verb and an Ob-L to an intransitive one, a preposition and a locution governed by it, and *vice versa*. So we might move from 'I explained this matter to him' to 'I went through this matter with him', and from 'Did she play for Australia?' to 'Did she represent Australia?'

4.3 I referred at 2:3.7 to Murphy's treatment of accompanying prepositions: verbs and their prepositions are presented in Units 132-6. It would be useful to widen your own effective vocabulary by making, extending and revising two separate lists, one of transitive verbs with prepositions ('to accuse A of .../confront A with .../ask A about ...') and the other of intransitive verbs with prepositions ('to speak to/with/for A about X').

4.4 When a verb is used with an adverb and/or a preposition so closely linked to it that it is as though one one-word verb were being used, and (usually) the meaning of the main word is thus modified, as in *look up* (compare *consult*) and *look down on* (compare *despise*), Murphy (Units 137-145) and the *OALD* (R9 and R10) use for that pair or trio the description 'phrasal verb'. However, mainly because 'phrase', the noun, has traditionally been so explained as to exclude any personed verb (2:1.8: it is similarly defined by the *OALD*, which uses the traditional

term 'finite' instead of 'personed'), we avoid confusion if we use the expression '**supplemented verb**'. Some supplemented verbs begin with a verb which is already usually transitive, such as *pick* or *give*, some with one that is already usually intransitive, such as *come* or *go*.

#### EXERCISE ON 3:4

a. Without substantially changing the meaning of any sentence, replace the underlined verbs (or main parts of verbs) and prepositions or *up*, here an adverb, by one transitive verb in each case.

- i. We went into the room.
- ii. They won against Victoria.
- iii. Don't give up your view because some people are laughing at it.
- iv. As I look through this book, I pick up many errors.
- v. Then he arrived at the deserted mine, still looking for gold.

b. Without substantially changing the meaning of any sentence, replace the verbs (or main parts of verbs) underlined by a verb used with a preposition or adverb.

- i. What are you going to calculate?
- ii. I traversed the beach many times.
- iii. We attended that performance.
- iv. Would you investigate this matter?
- v. If you had children, how would you rear them?

c. Here are some verbs which are or may be used intransitively. Write a sentence using each one in that way, following it by a different preposition in each case. (You may need a substantial dictionary.)

protest, strive, wonder, militate, differ, delight.

d. Use *come*, *call* and another common verb of your own choice in at least three sentences of your own composition for each, so as to illustrate both their ordinary and their supplemented employment. (There is abundant illustration in the *OALD*, but see if you can do this part of the exercise without a dictionary's aid.)

## 5. INFINITIVES, PARTICIPLES, GERUNDS

5.1 We have mentioned all these verb-forms before (respectively at 2:3.3, the exercise on 2:1, and 1:4.4 and 2:3.4), but we need now to consider them more fully. None of them is personed, so none can be a backbone verb in a normal sentence. **One** job done by infinitives and by participles, however, is to be, after one or more auxiliaries, **part** of a personed verb, as *swim* is in *does swim* and *believed* in *has been believed* (1:7.4-7).

5.2 The **infinitive** is so called because it is not limited or tied to a particular “person”: it does not have any of the six labels we began to use in 1:6 and 7. Often it is prefaced by *to*, which is then counted not as a preposition but as a “particle” belonging to the infinitive (or an “infinitive marker”), as in ‘I like to read biographies’; but often it occurs without *to*. The word *walk*, for example, is an infinitive in ‘Can he walk yet?’ just as *to walk* is in ‘Is he able to walk yet?’ (We can use the terms ‘bare infinitive’ and ‘*to*-infinitive’.) The infinitive in ‘I like to read biographies’ is part of an Ob-L ‘to read biographies’, and that locution can also be a Sub-L, as in ‘To read biographies fires my ambition’. (In ‘to read biographies’, *biographies* is itself an Ob-L.)

5.3 To locate some bare infinitives, look for those auxiliaries, such as *do/does/did*, *shall* and *will*, which are followed by such an infinitive, and for those verbs, also followed by one, which are called modal, such as *can*, as in the last paragraph, and *may*. (Section 6 is about these and other modal verbs.)

5.4 We noted in the exercise for 2:1 that a **participle** is so called because it participates in the nature of a verb and also in that of an adjective. There is a participle in ‘Running along the cliff, he suddenly noticed a small boat’: *running* is called the present participle of the verb *run*. It is here used adjectivally, in this case (as often) describing the subject of the sentence. There are three participles in ‘Imprisoned for fifteen years, he had become accustomed to solitude’. Both *imprisoned* and *accustomed* are called past participles, and in this case are passive (3.5), and are here used adjectivally, like *running* in the first sentence. *Become*, however, which is here also a past participle, is used not adjectivally but as the main part of the personed verb *had become*, where *had* is the auxiliary (1:7.4). Distinguish carefully between these two uses of the participle, one adjectival and the other as part of a personed verb.

5.5 When using a participle, you need to ensure that it is not a grammatically unconnected one, as in ‘Running for the bus, her purse fell’, which suggests that her purse was doing the running. In such cases one can either introduce a Sub-L for that to which the participle is properly applied (‘Running for the bus, she dropped her purse’) or move to an adverbial clause (2:4.3f) with its personed verb (‘As she ran for the bus, her purse fell’).

5.6 The **gerund** is part verb, part noun. Like the present participle, the present gerund ends in *-ing*, and like the infinitive it can be used as, or as part of, a Sub-L or Ob-L. Here it is a Sub-L: ‘Swimming keeps her fit’; and here part of an Ob-L: ‘She likes swimming on really hot days’. Unlike infinitives, gerunds can follow prepositions: ‘Are you fond of cooking?’ and ‘He is opposed to gambling’. The gerund too can wrongly be left unconnected, as in ‘After swimming for half an hour, his clothes had disappeared.’

5.7 Section 7 discusses tenses and aspects, and 7.5 deals with the application of these to infinitives, participles and gerunds.

## EXERCISE ON 3:5

- a. Here are two short passages from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), a children's classic, in which two of the main characters are a serious badger and a quite undisciplined toad. Which words are infinitives, which participles and which gerunds? If a word is a participle, is it adjectival or part of a personed verb? Is it active or passive? Which word contains an adjectival participle?
- i. In the side of what had seemed to be a snow-bank stood a solid-looking little door, painted a dark green. An iron bell-pull hung by the side, and below it, on a small brass plate, neatly engraved in square capital letters, they could read by the aid of moonlight:  
MR BADGER
  - ii. "... Let me see: he has been found guilty ..., first, of stealing a valuable motor-car; secondly, of driving to the public danger; and thirdly, of gross impertinence to the rural police. Mr Clerk, will you tell us, please, what is the very stiffest penalty we can impose for each of these offences? Without, of course, giving the prisoner the benefit of any doubt, because there isn't any."
- b. Make up four sentences, giving one an infinitive, one a participle used adjectivally, one a participle used as part of a personed verb, and one a gerund.

## 6. MODAL VERBS

6.1 At 5.3, I wrote of the verbs called modal, which are followed by an infinitive without *to* except in the case of *ought*. In this section we shall look more closely at the examples I gave, which were *can* and *may*, and at other modal verbs.

6.2 It used to be maintained that *can* indicated ability and *may* permission. So children were told to say 'May I leave the room?' and not 'Can I ...?'. This distinction is worth preserving when requests are being made: if you are asking someone to lend you one of his or her books 'May I borrow ...?' is appropriate, not 'Can I borrow ...?' On the other hand, if certain books are, as a matter of library rules, not permitted to be borrowed, it makes sense to say that you cannot borrow them, so that here the distinction between being able to borrow and being permitted to borrow disappears. *May* is also used to express possibility, as in 'I may be there', and in what are called adverbial clauses of purpose, as in 'Live simply so that others may simply live.'

6.3 Modal verbs do not have infinitives, participles, gerunds or an imperative. Since *can* and *may* have no infinitive of their own, we have to use *(to) be able* and *(to) be permitted*. For each modal verb, there is just the one form throughout a table-of-six. For the negation of *can*, we have the one word *cannot*.

6.4 Similarly, *must* (which is used to express necessity) and *should* (which can be used to express the idea that something is right or that it can reasonably be expected) have the one form and no infinitive, and are followed by a bare infinitive.

6.5 These verbs have traditionally been called **modal** verbs (or modals) because they express a **way** (Latin *modus*) in which someone or something is related to some proposed action, etc. (1:7.5), as in ‘He can swim’. The *OALD* gives the phrase ‘modal auxiliary’ as also used. We met the word *auxiliary* first at 1:7.4 for *is* in *is heard* and *has* and *been* in *has been believed*: *is*, *has* and *been* are auxiliaries there, “helping-parts” of verbs whose main parts are the participles *heard* and *believed*. It is better to confine *auxiliary* to words which do not indicate ability, permission, necessity, possibility or rightness, but count as part of **the one verb** whose main part follows them. In some cases *should* needs to be regarded as such an auxiliary, i.e., when it does not indicate rightness or reasonable expectation. It is twice an auxiliary in ‘If I should go to Sydney, I should visit your friend’. That might be said when my visiting Sydney was not very likely. *Should* in this use, and *would*, are counterparts, for relatively unlikely situations, of *shall* and *will* (7.4), which are auxiliaries for talking about a future case regarded as “quite possible”. Another way of talking about such situations is to use the auxiliary *were*, which, so used, is said to be in the **subjunctive mood** of the verb, one which deals in “remote” hypothetical cases rather than what is actual or expected: ‘If I were going (or: were to go) to Sydney ...’. See also 7.11.

6.6 The verbs *need* and *dare* are often followed by a *to*-infinitive in positive statements (‘I need to find out ...’), and, thus used, have infinitives, participles and gerunds, and in the case of *dare* an imperative, and take an *s* for the 3S form (1:7.12f) in what we are about to call their “present simple” use. However, *need not* (or *needn’t*) and *dare not* (or *daren’t*) are followed by the bare infinitive, so that in those cases the verb is modal.

#### EXERCISE ON 3:6

- a. List the verbs, in order of their occurrence, in each of these sentences. Label the infinitives with ‘Inf’. Label the personed verbs with ‘PV’, and then, after a colon, add, where appropriate, either ‘modal’ or ‘aux + main part’. One infinitive is a supplemented verb (4.4): label it ‘Inf: Supp. V’.
  - i. You can obviously bat; do you bowl as well?
  - ii. I have finished the job you gave me; may I go?
  - iii. You must not give up now, when you have done so much.
  - iv. If you should lose confidence, remember to telephone me.
  - v. Were you thinking that she should not marry him?
- b. Make up two sentences which each have a modal verb and so a bare infinitive, and two others which each have a personed verb consisting of one or more auxiliaries and a main part. Label the words concerned in each case.

## 7. TENSES AND ASPECTS

7.1 We think of times as past, present and future, but English gives us an especially wide range of verb-forms not only to show which of these three times we have in mind, but also to convey the relation of one action, etc. (1:7.5) to a later one (see 7.7f below), and to show whether we are or are not thinking of it as something going on occurring or still affecting us and not merely as past (7.6). Below is a table to demonstrate the extraordinary richness of English in this matter. Each of the forms I give here is 1S, and has its own table-of-six (1:7.12). The word *tense* (from the Latin ‘*tempus*’, meaning time) is often used to include what is referred to by the word *aspect*, but I shall differentiate tense and aspect. **A verb’s tense may show not only whether we are concerned with past, present or future time, but also how we are considering the action, etc., in relation to a subsequent time. A verb’s aspect is called either simple or continuous: if we are thinking of an action, activity, event or process as going on occurring at the time concerned, we give the verb the continuous aspect, but if not we give the simple aspect.** Verbs expressing permanent states, e.g., *know* and *love*, are not normally used in the continuous form.

7.2	<u>Tense</u>	<u>Aspect</u>	
		<u>Simple</u>	<u>Continuous</u>
	Present	swim	am swimming
	Past	swam	was swimming
	Present perfect	have swum	have been swimming
	Past perfect	had swum	had been swimming
	Future	shall swim	shall be swimming
	Future perfect	shall have swum	shall have been swimming

Notice that the verb *swim* is called **irregular** because, instead of simply adding (in its case) an *m* and then *ed* for its past simple and also for its past participle, or making a similar change (think of *watch*, *watched*, *watched*, and *carry*, *carried*, *carried*), it has *swam* and *swum*. **Irregular trios**, as I call them, often give trouble: many English-speakers are not clear that it is *lie*, *lay*, *lain* and *lay*, *laid*, *laid*. Someone learning English as a further language will meet and need to master a long list of irregular trios, as on the *OALD*’s R1-3, which can valuably be consulted and revised by native speakers.

7.3 A verb used transitively, such as *ask*, has not only all these forms but also passive counterparts (3.5) for most of them: *am asked*, *am being asked*, etc. (The continuous forms, however, are hardly used in the passive: we prefer ‘People will be asking me’ to ‘I shall be being asked’.)

7.4 *Will* replaces *shall* in the second and third persons, and is often used for the first, where traditionally it was employed to express the idea of a resolve rather than of mere futurity. The present continuous form can be used to express the idea of an already intended activity, etc. (‘I am swimming on Friday’), for which we also use *going to* (‘I’m going to swim/to be swimming later this afternoon’).

7.5 Tense and aspect are not confined to personed verbs. Taking our previous examples *swim* and *ask*, we may say that infinitives include *(to) have swum* and *(to) have been swimming* as well as *(to) swim*, and *(to) have been asked* as well as *(to) be asked*. Participles and gerunds

include not only *swimming* but also forms called perfect (see the next paragraph), such as *having swum* and *having been swimming*, not only *asking* but also *having asked*. *Asked* can be a passive participle, of which the longer form is *having been asked*, which can also serve as a gerund ('Without having been asked ...'). Remember that participles are verb-forms used as adjectives or as parts of personed verbs, whereas gerunds, which are built up with *-ing* like present participles, are verbal nouns (5.4,6). We can form future infinitives, and participles by giving a special use to *about*, used as an adjective: 'I expect, this time next week, to be about to meet my daughter's fiancé'.

7.6 The difference between the past tense in either of its aspects and the present perfect tense needs to be clearly understood. Let us deal here with positive statements, while remembering that of course we use verbs also in negative statements and in questions. If I use either form of the past tense (in the table above, 'I swam' or 'I was swimming'), I am merely locating the event, etc., in the past (often with a date and/or time), without reference to the present. If, on the other hand, I use the present perfect tense, I show either that I am talking about something which has **just** happened or has been happening **right up to the present**, or that some past event, etc., puts someone **in a certain situation** in the present. So someone who says 'I have swum a kilometre' means either that he or she has just done so or that he or she **has** that achievement, however long ago it occurred. The word 'perfect' comes from the Latin '*perfectum*', here with the meaning of 'completed', and conveys the idea of something's being not simply past but, like a just completed letter, having a place in the present. Contrast 'She won a scholarship [in 2015]' with 'She has [just] won a scholarship.'

7.7 The past perfect tense is used when we are talking of what **had** been the case before a point of reference in the past ('By 10 a.m. I had swum a kilometre') or of a hypothetical, often "counterfactual" past situation ('If I had been in Boston instead of in Rome ...').

7.8 The future perfect tense tells us what **will have** happened or **will have** been the case: 'By next week she will have left London' and 'By 3 p.m. I shall have been swimming for an hour'.

7.9 The past tense of *can* is *could*, and if we want other tenses we have to turn to the verb *be* and the adjective *able*: 'By then he will be able to swim'. The past tense of *may* is *might*, but in the absence of other tenses we have to turn to a verb such as *permit*: 'Have you already been permitted to borrow from this library?' *Must* is used only in the present tense, and in the absence of other tenses we use 'had to', etc.: 'To catch that train I had to leave home at 4 a.m.'

7.10 What is called **sequence of tenses** needs to be understood. If a backbone verb is present or present perfect or future or future perfect, or if on the other hand it is past or past perfect, that will often determine the tense to be employed in subordinate clauses: 'I **shall ask** if I **may** borrow from that library' but 'I **asked** if I **might** borrow from that library'.

7.11 The past simple form is used not only for the past but also, in the subordinate (adverbial) clause (2:4.3f), in talk about **possible but unlikely future events**, etc. (6.5). We say, e.g., not only 'If I should go to Sydney, I should visit your friend', but also 'If I went to Sydney, I should visit your friend.'

7.12 We saw at 1:7.4 that often the one verb consists of one or more auxiliaries and a main part, as in *is heard* and *has been believed*. Sometimes, and neatly, more than one verb can share the same main part or the same auxiliary or set of auxiliaries, as in 'I was, as you were, astonished by the news' and 'He has been praised and promoted'. We must, however, be

careful, when we change tense, to ensure that no auxiliary or set of them is used with a main part which does not fit it, as has happened in ‘I have never and shall never go to a casino’. There we need ‘I have never gone ...’, and it is often clearer if the words after the second main part are brought forward: ‘I have never gone to a casino and shall never go.’ (Cf. 2:3.8.) It may be necessary to use more than one auxiliary when there is a change in position on the table-of-six (1:7.12): ‘was’ needs to be added to ‘They were selected but he left out’.

#### EXERCISE ON 3:7

- a. Identify the tenses and aspects of the following verbs, writing, e.g., ‘past perfect continuous’ in that order. If the verb is in the passive voice, put the word ‘passive’ afterwards in brackets.
 

played, had been playing, is being shown, will have defeated, has been lost, was telling, knew, had been known, is describing, is described.
- b. Give, in the active voice (3.5), the present perfect simple (1S) of the verb *love*; the future perfect continuous (1P) of *write*; the present continuous (2P) of *send*; the past perfect simple (3P) of *apply*; and the future simple (3S) of *give*. Then make up sentences using each of these verb-forms suitably.
- c. Give and explain the changes likely to be necessary or desirable in ‘Let’s ask him if we might come in’ and ‘I did this so that we can find the cuttings we want’.

#### EXERCISE ON CHAPTER THREE

- a. Answer (with complete sentences) the questions which follow each of the numbered sentences below. Make clear where you are writing about locutions rather than using them (1:3). References to this chapter are not provided; where you are unsure, look for relevant sections and paragraphs.
  - i. Many of our clientele like to play golf.
 

Which word is the PV and BV?  
 What is its label (1:7.12), tense and aspect?  
 What is its Sub-L, and which constituent of that Sub-L governs the PV?  
 Which is the infinitive?  
 Is it transitive or intransitive here?
  - ii. We have been waiting for a long time now.
 

What is the PV?  
 What is its label, tense and aspect?  
 Why should someone use in this case this tense and this aspect?  
 Is the verb transitive or intransitive? How do you tell?

- iii. I was looking forward to watching you skating along the ice.

We identify three words here as making up the PV and BV. Which three, and why all three? (What name do we give to a verb which ends as this one does?) What is the label, tense and aspect of this PV?

Both *watching* and *skating* end in *-ing*: which is the gerund and which the participle, and how does one tell?

Which of them is intransitive and which transitive, and how does one tell?

- iv. Don't worry; it will soon have been forgotten.

How many PVs are here?

How many BVs?

What are they, and what are their labels, tenses and aspects?

Which words are auxiliary parts of verbs?

(Concerning *Don't*, see b ii on p.24.)

Which verb-form is passive?

How might the second part of the sentence be rewritten with an active verb?

- vi. If I lay under that tree, I should be cooler.

Which are the verbs?

When *should* is followed by *be*, how can one decide whether to count *be* as part of a personed verb or as a separate infinitive?

Is *lay* used here to talk about the past? How can one tell?

What is the difference in meaning between the past simple verb-forms *lay* and *laid*?

- b. Take a passage of about 100 words from a book you admire, write it out leaving three lines between each pair of lines of your copy, and underline and annotate (add notes on) its **verbs**, using as many as you can of the categories set out in Chapters 1-3 to explain the forms employed and the reasons for employing them.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### NINE TYPES OF PRONOUN

#### 1. CLASSIFICATION

1.1 Our introduction to pronouns was Section 6 of Chapter One, where we were concerned mainly with personal pronouns such as *she* and *her*. At the end of that section was a mention of four other types of pronoun, and an indication that there are four more.

1.2 Five of the nine types have tables-of-six. First there are the **personal** pronouns listed in 1:6.3f. Second are the **possessive** pronouns (*mine, yours, his* when it is not an adjective, *hers, ours, theirs*), as in ‘This book is mine’, whereas in ‘This is my book’ *my* is a possessive adjective (2:1.9). Third and fourth are the *-self* words, from *myself* through to *themselves*: the same set of words can be used as **reflexive** pronouns, where the action, etc, described by the verb “bends back” on the subject, as in ‘He introduced himself’ (cf. 3:3.1), and as **emphatic** pronouns, which are normally best used not alone but after nouns or personal pronouns with the same reference, as in ‘She herself will be there’. Fifth come **relative** pronouns (usually employed in the third person, but see 2.4). They refer to something just mentioned in the sentence, as *which* did two sentences ago, where it refers to emphatic pronouns, and the locution ‘emphatic pronouns’ is called its antecedent (2.2). A relative pronoun introduces a relative clause, which we may also call an adjectival clause (2:4.4). The relative pronouns are *who, whom, which*, and *whose* when not followed by a noun, and *that* when it is like *which* so used. The word *what* is wrong when a relative pronoun is right, but has a common correct use as a special pronoun with a relative component, as in ‘What you say is true.’

1.3 Pronouns of the other four types are always third person. The sixth type consists of **demonstrative** pronouns, such as *This* in ‘This is my book’, whereas the same word is a demonstrative adjective in ‘This book is mine’ (2:1.7-9). Other words usable as demonstrative pronouns are *that, these* and *those*: *this* and its plural *these* are used in talking about what is near at hand or close, physically or in thought (‘This is a difficult problem’), and *that* and its plural *those* for what is more remote. The seventh type comprises **interrogative** pronouns, which we use in asking or “embedding” questions (‘Who is he?’ and ‘I asked who he was.’: notice the difference in word-order and punctuation), and the words are the same as for the relative pronouns except that *what* replaces *that*. Eighth are the **distributive** pronouns, which show that we are saying or asking something about each member of a pair or set. If we say ‘Everyone was there’, or ‘At that meeting nobody supported him’, or ‘Do you like either/neither of them very much?’, we are using a distributive pronoun (*everyone, nobody, either, neither*). The last two words can also be adjectives (‘Neither boy was there’) and conjunctions (‘Have you either a dog or a cat?’). *All* is a pronoun in ‘All were present’, but an adjective in ‘All members are asked to attend’, and an adverb in ‘all along’. *Nothing* and *none* are distributive pronouns too: they cover a whole class negatively. Ninth and last are the **indefinite** pronouns, which do not themselves indicate particular persons or things or cover a whole class. They include *one*, as in ‘One might say that ...’, *someone, something, anyone, anything*, and *plenty*. *Much, more, little, less, some, many* and *few* are often used as indefinite pronouns, as in ‘Tell us more’.

## 2. POINTS TO WATCH

2.1 In this section I am indebted to the sentence-correction part of *The New Graded Word-Book for Australian Schools*, by W.Foster and H.Bryant, a part which I recommend and say more about at 5:2.7, and to which I offer amendments in Appendix B. FB, as I gratefully call it, provides fourteen rules for the use of pronouns, and, though those rules need some rewording, they cover almost all that we need to be concerned with here.

2.2 Personal pronouns should be used **only** when it is clear who or what is being referred to, and, when it is already clear, such pronouns **should** be used (1:6.6). FB offers as an ambiguous sentence to be corrected ‘The judge told the prisoner that he was the biggest liar in the court’ (p.132). In this case one should avoid the use of a pronoun and say ‘The prisoner was, said the judge, ...’, or maintain the original words: “‘You are the biggest liar in the court”, said the judge to the prisoner.’ There must usually be a **clear antecedent** for any personal, possessive, reflexive or relative pronoun, and for a possessive adjective (2:1.9): the antecedent is the earlier locution (noun, noun phrase, noun clause, or another pronoun) to which the pronoun is linked so that they have the same reference. Rarely, a following relative clause (1.2) makes clear what that reference is, as in ‘He who hesitates is lost’ (2.5).

2.3 A relative pronoun should follow its antecedent as closely as possible in order to achieve that clarity. In ‘I asked the teacher of that girl, who owned the book, whether I might borrow it’, we might be unsure whether the antecedent is ‘the teacher’ or ‘that girl’, whereas in ‘I asked that girl’s teacher, who owned the book, ...’ the antecedent can only be ‘that girl’s teacher’.

2.4 FB provides for relative pronouns a well-known rule (12 on p.111) which is important for English and some other languages: “A relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in **person** and **number**, but takes its **case** from its own clause” (emphasis mine). A relative pronoun is usually third person, but if it occurs directly after a first or second person personal pronoun, it takes that person, and governs its verb accordingly. So we have ‘I who write this letter was a member of that group’. The verb in that relative clause must be *write*, not *writes*. It might be thought that number (singular/plural) would present no problem, but many people become confused in relative clauses which follow words that have the pattern ‘one of the Xs’. FB’s example of error is ‘It was one of those balls that tempts a batsman to take a risk’ (p.112). That particular ball is being said to be one of that set of many balls all of which tempt batsmen to take risks: so the verb of the relative clause must be the plural *tempt*, not the singular *tempts*.

2.5 In the study of English the word *case* is used in classifying the form which a pronoun needs to have because of its role in a particular sentence. We have already noted that, except for *you*, we use different forms for the personal pronoun according to whether it is subject-locution (*I*, etc.) or object-locution or following a preposition (*me*, etc.:1:6.3-5; 2:3.5). The Sub-L pronouns are sometimes said to be in the subjective case and the ones which are Ob-L or which follow prepositions in the objective case. Sometimes the traditional words used for Latin or classical Greek grammar, *nominative* and *accusative*, are employed instead, but they are unilluminating. It is enough to say that a word has the form for a Sub-L or for an Ob-L, or for the main word in a Sub-L or Ob-L: in ‘He who hesitates is lost’ (1:6.6), the Sub-L of *is* is ‘He who hesitates’, *He* is the main constituent of it (3:2.2), and *who* is the Sub-L of *hesitates*. There is also the possessive case, as in the relative or interrogative pronoun (or adjective) *whose*, and in *its*, which is used only as an adjective (notice that it has no apostrophe: *it’s* is

short for *it is* or *it has*). For persons, we have as relative or interrogative pronouns *who* (traditionally only a Sub-L, but see 2.7), the Ob-L form *whom*, and *whose*. If we are using a relative clause to **identify** people or things we are referring to, and not merely to add a comment, we may use *that* instead of *who* or *whom* or *which*, as in ‘The man that I saw was Bill’, and we may also omit the relative pronoun (‘The man I saw ...’).

2.6 When a preposition precedes a relative pronoun referring to one or more persons, that pronoun must be *whom*. We say, for example, ‘Jim, to whom we spoke, was very helpful’; and that illustrates the rule quoted in the first sentence at the head of 2.4, for the word *whom* takes its case from its own clause. Notice the difference between these two sentences, which also illustrate that rule: ‘Mr Watson, whom the officials declared elected, has contravened the electoral laws’ and ‘Mr Watson, who we thought was sure to be elected, has contravened ...’. In the first case the relative pronoun is the Ob-L of *declared*; in the second it is the Sub-L of *was*, and ‘we thought’ is called parenthetical: it is an insertion which should not be allowed to affect the structure of the other words.

2.7 With interrogative pronouns English has become less strict, unless they are preceded by prepositions. ‘Who did you see?’ cannot now be declared bad English.

2.8 The conjunctions *and* and *but* should not be used in front of a relative pronoun unless a corresponding relative pronoun has already occurred in the sentence, as in ‘Tom, whom we met last night and who studies physics, could tell you about that.’

2.9 A fine treatment of “troubles with pronouns” is given in the section with that title on pp. 201-21 in Ch. IX of Gowers’s *Plain Words* (see my Preface, Part 1). It includes the points I have mentioned, and also (at sub-section 7) what is sometimes called false grammaticism, where someone thinks that grammar prohibits something, whereas in fact he or she has been badly taught or has misunderstood. ‘Don’t say *me*; say *I*’ is the right advice when we want a Sub-L; but it does not justify sentences like ‘How will he treat you and I?’ Let us apply Gowers’s advice to that error: we should ask ourselves if we would say ‘... treat I’, and realize that we would not. Professor Stephen Knight, in the paper I mention in the Preface (Part 6), discusses ‘I congratulate he and his party’, said in 1988 by Mr Kennett, then the Leader of the Opposition in Victoria, when it became clear that Mr Cain and Labor had been returned to office (*The Selling of the Australian Mind*, pp.79-95). Knight defends it, holding that usage may well be heading in that direction, without seriously considering whether it might better be explained as the same sort of “hypercorrection” (false grammaticism) which, as he mentions, Barry Humphries satirized with ‘Excuse I’.

2.10 Singular pronouns should govern their verbs and possessive adjectives so that these are singular too. We can say ‘Both are suitable candidates’, but, if we use ‘Either of them’ or ‘Neither of them’ we add ‘is a suitable candidate’. We say ‘Nobody is coming’ and ‘Not one is coming’. It is logical to say ‘None is coming’, but on *none* and *more than one* and *many a*, Gowers has a valuable discussion (p.192f), though one might say that the example of correct use of the singular ‘More than one question was asked’ can be compared to ‘More was asked than just one question’. I agree for the most part with Gowers (pp. 210-13) in recommending that the practice of using *they* or the possessive adjective *their* with a singular antecedent (2.2) should be avoided. It is often advisable to begin in the plural and stay there. It should be allowed that *every* and words beginning with it, and *nobody* and similar words, are anomalous: we must put *is* rather than *are* after these words, but may then write *their*: ‘Everyone is asked to bring their copy of this book.’ *His* or *her* would be acceptable, though

perhaps somewhat over-formal, where the group is of the one gender; where it is not, *his or her*, though avoiding sexism, sounds pedantic.

2.11 The indefinite pronouns and adjectives *any* and *some*, and pronouns and adverbs which begin with *any-* and *some-*, are used in accordance with the following principle: we use *some* and *some-* words in positive assertions ('I have something to read, thank you'), and *any* and *any-* words in negative ones ('I don't have anything to read'), and can often use either in questions ('Would you like something/anything to read?'). *Anybody* is distributive in 'Anybody could tell you that'.

2.12 The indefinite pronoun *one* (1.3) deserves some attention. It is employed as in 'One can find in Plato much that is astonishingly relevant to the present time', where *you* may be too informal, especially in writing. The possessive form *one's* is available. To avoid any pomposity, this pronoun should not be much repeated in a single sentence or paragraph; and one should certainly avoid what Fowler called "The false first-person ONE", and not be reluctant to say *I* or, for more than one person, *we*.

#### EXERCISE ON CHAPTER FOUR

a. Identify the pronouns in these sentences and say to which of the nine categories set out in Section 1 they belong. Two categories occur twice.

- i. Who brought you this?
- ii. One may wonder whether this view is really his.
- iii. Ask yourself whether either of them could do the work that has now become necessary.
- iv. Mary told Bob that herself.

b. Write nine sentences of your own to illustrate the use of each of the nine types of pronoun. Underline or italicize the pronoun concerned and add the type.

c. Explain and correct the errors in the following sentences, giving references to paragraphs in Section 2.

- i. Jill told Ann that she would be the captain.
- ii. One might hesitate to take one's problems of this kind to a counsellor at one's university.
- iii. Philip, who you met yesterday, has two brothers, neither of whom live in Australia.
- iv. This lecturer, whom we think is called Pat Parr, amuses Rose and I very much.
- v. Where is the lead for the dog which used to be next to the basket?
- vi. The cook asked for an assistant with good English and who worked tidily.
- vii. I do not think somebody will come.

d. Which of these sentences is correct? Explain and correct the error in the other.

- i. Which of these books is most relevant to my question?
- ii. Consult one of the books that deals with that question.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# CONSTRUCTING AND CORRECTING SENTENCES

### 1. CONSTRUCTING SENTENCES

1.1 Sections 2 and 3 of this chapter will help readers to be able to **correct** faulty sentences, their own or others', and therefore also to know of many kinds of fault to guard against in their own writing. The sixth and last chapter shows how valuable it is to **explore** others' sentences, especially those which are well written or likely to be. However, the fundamental activity for the writer is of course to make up sentences, that is, to **construct** them. There are four reasons for using the word *constructing* in this chapter's title. As a single word, it fits better than *making up* with *correcting*, giving us a neater parallelism (exercise on 2:3, b; 3.5 below). We also have alliteration, the state of two or more words in close proximity which commence with the same letter and sound. The use here of the verb *construct* expresses the fact that good writing is quite an intricate activity, requiring not only an understanding of the "parts of speech" and types of clauses and phrases which, in another sense of *make up*, can make up (i.e. together constitute) sentences, but also experience and skill in choosing words or groups of words in such categories and fitting them together. Finally, the verb *construct* is an engineer's or a technician's word, and practice in the writing of good English should be made more attractive and accessible than it often has been to people whose studies are more in maths and sciences than in the humanities.

1.2 **Be clear, and don't be dull.** Let's begin with the first half of that advice. The point of writing is normally to communicate something to your reader: so let the communication be unimpeded by anything that would leave the reader uncertain what you want to "get across". The word 'clear' is like the words 'fair' and 'free' in that, though it has a splendidly positive ring, it implies the **absence** (to our relief) of certain things which we regard as bad. Clear writing or speech is free from obscurity: readers or listeners don't find themselves thinking "What does this person mean? What is he (or she) trying to say?" What is meant has been said or written in such a way that communication normally occurs promptly and precisely. That is appreciated.

1.3 In order to be clear, you need not only to use **words** which you understand and your hearer or reader will understand, but also to write **sentences** each of which has a discernible and acceptable structure, so that, for normal sentences, and where the verbs are not imperative (1:7.8; 3:2.6), one can readily identify both the subject-locution(s) and the backbone verb(s), and see how the rest of the sentence fits around them. Of course, when we write in a language we know well, we are unlikely to ask ourselves "What words shall I use in this sentence, and what structure(s) shall I employ?" But it by no means follows that one can do without specific practice in employing words appropriately and writing sentences with various structures. To have **plenty** of such practice enables one to become familiar with uses of words and structures one may later need to employ or wish to try out. To have had little of it, and little or none of sentence-correction, remains a major cause of widespread unclarity, faultiness and dullness in English expression, among secondary, tertiary and post-tertiary students, and employees who need to write letters or reports.

1.4 In helping students at an intermediate or advanced level, I have found a particular method very effective, as when it was used by a Chinese doctor, especially in mastering the language employed by English-speakers in his own field. Such students already know many English words, and understand how to formulate simple English sentences. The method is called **WS**, or **Words and Sentences**. It is a more difficult counterpart of the SSC method: see my booklet *Sentences to Study and Change*, whose text is at A in the Sets of Documents on the website [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au). That booklet asks the student to begin by choosing a word whose use he or she wants to master, and then to copy and study an illustrative sentence given in the kind of elementary dictionary (e.g. the *Oxford Essential* ...) that so valuably provides very many such sentences, and eventually to write a similar sentence with the same structure. For WS, as in SSC, give a wide left-hand margin and a narrower right-hand margin to an A4 page, and divide that page by horizontal lines into four areas. You can photocopy such sheets, and use both sides. When in your reading you come across a particular word (perhaps in the *OALD*, but anywhere) that **you would like to learn to use correctly**, write at the top of the middle of one of those areas the whole sentence in which the word occurs, or (with dots to indicate that you are excerpting from a sentence) a unified part of it, normally one that could itself be used as a sentence. Add a reference to show where the original sentence occurred. Then (move 2) put the word itself in a box at the top left of your area. Underneath (move 3) note, perhaps with an abbreviation such as ‘adj.’, the part of speech that it is **in that sentence**. (If it is an NC [1:5.6], then, unless it is used only in the plural, write it in the box in the singular; if it is primarily a verb-form, write it in the present simple infinitive active form [3:5.2f, 7.2,5], e.g., *erode* [the present simple form you would use after *to*] rather than, say, *erodes* or *eroding*. See also 1.8 below.) Next, and still at the left (move 4), write in a definition which fits this word **as it is used in the sentence**. You will usually need the help of a good dictionary for advanced students, such as the *OALD*. Sometimes you may have to extend the dictionary’s entry so as to define, e.g., an adverb rather than an adjective. Finally (move 5), and back in the middle of your area, **construct a sentence of your own, using the word in the way it is used in the original but in a different context**. In WS, however, you need not keep the same overall structure, as is fundamental in the SSC method. If your first language is not English, you may like to write, under the definition, a counterpart in that first language. At the right, notes may be added, perhaps derived from the *OALD*. It is helpful to have written comments on your sentences from someone familiar with a wide range of English. Bind sets of WS together, and revise them and any comments. Such pages would prove helpful to others as well as to yourself.

1.5 If you wish, concentrate mainly on the vocabulary of a particular field (such as medicine), but build up your general vocabulary as well. Your own sentences should often make statements or requests, or ask questions, that you can imagine **yourself** wanting to make or ask, whether in speech or in writing.

1.6 Whenever you are constructing a sentence to illustrate the use of a word, apply the test “Would this sentence help someone to grasp the meaning of this word?” Try also to make it an interesting sentence, and look for the opportunity now and then to make a statement which you consider to be not only true but in some way revealing.

1.7 The WS method can be extended so that you aim to illustrate a use not of a word, but of a grammatical structure. Thus you might aim to illustrate the use of the combination preposition + gerund, and write as your original the opening words of a sentence at 1.4, “That booklet asks the student to begin by choosing a word ...”). At move 2, you could put in the box ‘PREP<sup>N</sup>+GERUND’, and at 5 you’d write a sentence that included that structure, e.g. ‘I asked if she was fond of reading.’

1.8 It is often valuable to distinguish at move 3 between NCs and NUs (1:5.6) and between verbs used transitively and verbs used intransitively (VTs and VIs: 3:3 and its exercise), and write one of those abbreviations.

1.9 Think of your speech and writing as closely related. Many people wanting to join in English conversation do not realize the importance of writing down what they might want to say; and it is often helpful to speak slowly and think of the grammatical structures one is using. (In that way one is less likely to leave out the little words, especially members of the verb-family *be*, and pronouns and prepositions, which are so common and important in good English.) Speech is normally less formal than writing, but we speak better if we think of the two as closely linked. It can be enjoyable to formulate something to say which illustrates well the meaning or use of a word, or some grammatical structure, and look for, and find, an opportunity to bring in that word or use that structure.

1.10 It is worth repeating the point made at 1.3: we need many occasions of practising particular structures. Even when we are primarily concerned to communicate, we may be wise to **pause** to think about the form of what we are going to say. We shall be likely to say it better if we have studied and practised many patterns. Sometimes it is worth listening to ourselves, and asking “Could I have said that more clearly, or more concisely?” or “Did I make any error there?” The readiness to correct or improve is indispensable if we are consistently to produce good sentences in writing or speech.

1.11 “Be clear, and don’t be dull” (1.2). **How are we to avoid dullness?** Through richness of vocabulary, so that we find the word that is just right (*le mot juste*, the French say); through achieving both parallelism (b in the exercise on 2:3; 3.5) and variety of structure; through a balance of shorter and longer sentences, none so long as to be ponderous; through conciseness, so that we avoid superfluous words; through straightforwardness, so that there is no unnecessary complication; and through making sure that we have something worthwhile to say! There is an excellent series of chapters (V-VIII) in Gowers (see my Preface, Part 1), all with titles beginning ‘The Choice of Words’. (For other references, see 3.16.)

1.12 The careful and apt use of the full range of **punctuation** will help to make your sentences clear and attractive. **Appropriate punctuation is a very important aspect of good sentence-construction.** Its study may suggest patterns for use by yourself. Examine the punctuation in many passages you read; but also study closely 3.8-10 below and the punctuation section of Appendix A, and then Ch. X of Gowers. Together they show when question marks and commas should be used and when not, and how to employ semi-colons, colons and dashes. Within this paragraph, look for the use of a semi-colon to provide an emphatic pause before *but* (and compare the five semi-colons, stronger than the commas and separative, in the previous paragraph); and a use of a **pair** of commas to mark off an inserted phrase or clause. In the next paragraph, find four parallel pairs of words separated by a comma and *or*.

1.13 Remember that a piece of writing is often improved by making two sentences where there had been one that was cumbersome. **Vary the length, and the structure, of your sentences.** Sometimes, when you have written a sentence, look at its beginning, or its middle, or its end, or all these, and see if you can improve it by using more precise or more vivid words, or fewer.

EXERCISE FOLLOWING 5:1

a. In the first set of these four is a complete model for WS. Fill out each of the three following sets in accordance with that model and the advice given at 1.4-8.

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communicate	“Even when we are primarily concerned to <u>com-</u> <u>municate ...</u> ” ( <i>MS</i> , 5:1.10)	Also used transitively: see <i>OALD</i> for examples.
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VI

convey a message, etc., so that it is understood	It is far from easy to communicate with intolerant people.
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intricate	“... good writing is quite an intricate activity ... ” ( <i>MS</i> 5:1.1)	“intricate patterns” ( <i>OALD</i> )
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adj.

complex and requiring attention to detail	. . . . . . . . . .
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humanities	“... whose studies are more in maths and sciences than in the <u>humanities</u> .” ( <i>MS</i> 5:1.1)
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N (used in this sense in the plural)

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formulate	“Such students already ... understand how to formulate simple English sentences ...” ( <i>MS</i> 5:1.4)
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- b. Now construct four more examples of WS, using any book, journal or newspaper as your source and giving a reference to it and the page.
- c. Look back to 1.7, in which the use of WS to illustrate a particular grammatical structure was explained. Construct three more examples of WS, so that
- (i) the first has in the box ‘IMPERATIVE’ and your model at move 1 is ‘Write in a definition ...’ (from the second half of 1.4);
  - (ii) the second has ‘INFINITIVE’ and the model is ‘Would this sentence help someone to grasp the meaning of this word?’ (1.6);
  - (iii) the third is marked ‘SUB<sup>ING</sup> CONJ.’ (2:4.4) and the model ‘though it has a splendidly positive ring’ (1.2).

## 2. CORRECTING SENTENCES (A)

2.1 At 3:2.2-4 I mentioned three kinds of errors that occur because people have not clearly discerned what their subject-location requires, so that, to repeat the first example, someone may write ‘The testimony of these people are clear’, where the verb needs to be *is*. Someone who is forewarned about such errors is more likely to avoid them, provided he or she **understands why** one version is incorrect and another correct. That will usually require some abstraction (as in ‘The X of the Ys’) and the mastering of principles which incorporate categories explained in this book. The likelihood of error is made much smaller if, as well as becoming accustomed to abstraction and familiar with principles well understood, the student of English (or of any other language) has gone through many groups of sentences all or most of which contain errors, **locating and correcting those errors**. It is of course essential to be clear on what the writer’s intended meaning was or may be presumed to be, and sometimes that takes some working out.

2.2 At the age of twelve I had a French teacher who required us to have a special exercise book in which we wrote down what he called “Danger Ditches”, certain errors into which he knew from experience that students often fell. In this way he sensitized us to particular dangers, so that at various points where we would otherwise have been likely to go wrong we would think to ourselves “Be careful! What should I **not** say here, and what should I say?” and remember the relevant principle. Similarly, I invite students to work through my booklet *QPS (Questions and Principles for Sentence-Construction)*, revised 2020: see Appendix C), if and when they have completed this chapter’s exercises with success, at least for the most part. It’s in Set A in the Sets of Documents at [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au). It will be helpful in itself and as a lead-in to Gowers’s *Plain Words*.

2.3 The value of knowing what not to do is, of course, not confined to the learning of one’s own or some other language. Think, for example, of cricket. The batsman has to learn that what at first seems natural, the swinging of the bat across the line of the ball’s flight, is often likely to be unsuccessful, and that one must get into the habit of meeting many balls with a straight bat, i.e., one not angled across the pitch. The player who realizes that trying to hit a straight ball with a cross bat got him or her out, and resolves to avoid that error, is likely to be more successful in future.

2.4 In the inculcation of both sporting and musical skills, it is taken for granted that the coach or teacher will and must correct the learner. (Certainly, that should be done in an encouraging and constructive way.) Moreover, it is not just the beginner who needs correction: even an experienced player may forget certain basics and need to be firmly reminded of them. Yet, in the past fifty years, an English teacher's engaging in detailed correction ("red ink") has often been thought to be liable to discourage the student and stifle his or her creativity, and students have seldom been informed systematically of the "danger ditches" and equipped to correct their own English. Few students have been given and expected regularly to use textbooks setting out principles and pitfalls. As a result, unsurprisingly, many tertiary students, and many people in business or the professions, fall into errors of expression of whose nature they are unaware. There are many examples in *QPS*. As well as unfolding the basic principles whereby we construct English sentences, and inviting exploration, this book is intended to equip those who study it, doing the exercises with care, to recognize, correct and avoid many kinds of errors.

2.5 The extensive correction-exercises which follow this section will require and assist in revision of particular sections of Chs 1-4. Not every sentence in these exercises is incorrect: one needs to be able to recognize correctness as well as error. It is important not to make unnecessary changes, even within a sentence which needs to be corrected at one or more places. (It is normally discourteous to propose unnecessary changes if a colleague has asked you to look over his or her work.) In the third and last section, "Correcting Sentences (B)", I provide some principles most of which have not been covered earlier in the book, and there is an exercise related to those.

2.6 In the examination for the Learningguild Certificate in Reasoning and Expression the following sentence appeared at the head of Section 1, "Correction", where candidates were required to correct defective sentences.

**Most but not all** of the following sentences contain one or more errors in one or more of the following eight categories: grammar, punctuation and spelling; use or non-use of apostrophes, capitals and inverted commas; word-order and choice of word(s).

The examination was first held in September 1987, and from then to April 2017 was conducted twice-yearly, with one exception. On the website named in 2.2, at B in the Sets of Documents, there are five recent papers and a constructive report with each, containing many explanations and references. Students who work through many of the sentences set in Section 1, and later consult corresponding subsections of the reports, will become acquainted with many "danger ditches" and accustomed to making corrections while avoiding unnecessary changes. Candidates who got a high mark in this section did good work in others, and in their writing generally, because they had developed the ability not only to recognize defective English but also to replace it with what expressed the intended meaning clearly and correctly. Such people are able to avoid or correct most errors in their own writing and to help others to locate what needs correction. Primary, secondary and tertiary students, and all engaged in work which requires writing, need to acquire such ability at rising levels of difficulty.

2.7 A thorough training in sentence-correction was provided by Foster and Bryant (4:2.1) in the last third of their book (pp. 100-147), which I strongly recommend. The initial exercises are related to particular parts of speech, and I have found that students who are not well acquainted with the identification of nouns, verbs etc. are likely to make little progress with such exercises. That reveals the necessity of an understanding of basic grammar, and indeed the difficulty experienced by such students was one stimulus to the writing of *Making up Sentences*. There are also points at which I prefer a different terminology or have some other

objection to the wording of a rule, and so I have included in this book Appendix B, entitled “Some Amendments to Foster and Bryant’s Rules”. Their sentence-correction section ends with extracts from examination papers set in Australia and in Britain, which show what was expected even of Year 10 (“Intermediate”) students in Victoria in about the late 1940s, and of their seniors. The British material (which takes up p.136f and p.146f) should be tackled after the Australian: it is in general more difficult. Students who have worked through all the exercises in *Making up Sentences* could look through FB’s rules, with my amendments, and the related early exercises. Some would need to do only a little written work there before undertaking in writing the work required on the pages just specified.

2.8 At the end of his series *English Today*, in Book V (1948), Ridout has useful sets of sentences for correction along with an Appendix headed “Common Errors in Grammar and Style”. Ridout and McGregor’s *English for Australian Schools*, at Chapter 9 of Book 5 (1961), is a valuable source of principles and exercises. So is Part II of *Expressive English*, by Henry Schoenheimer (Longman Cheshire, 2nd ed., 1976).

2.9 Sometimes the student is asked to **explain** the errors in defective sentences. I ask my students, when they are doing the early exercises in FB, related to rules pertaining to different parts of speech, to give the number of the relevant rule. The first sentence for correction is ‘The boy and his father is walking down the street’, and, since Rule 2 is the one concerned (see my revision of it in Appendix B), I ask students to write ‘1. is → are (R2)’. In Section 1 of the Learningguild exam papers, there was no requirement to explain errors, but sometimes in Section 3 such explanation was required. In the group of exercises below, you are given the relevant section-number from this book, and asked to give the relevant paragraph-numbers, partly as a training in identifying and applying the relevant principles and partly to promote revision. Where there is an asterisk, explanation is required as well.

2.10 When I am annotating the written work of my students and have indicated an error, I often put by it a square with a dot inside. That dotted square indicates that the student should work out, write in and normally show me the correct answer. (I suggest that this answer be written in green, as the original work is usually in blue or black and I have annotated in red.) If you can find a competent person who will provide you with such assistance, you will discover that it helps you to learn to make the necessary mental moves for yourself. He or she may wish to use the abbreviations for annotation which appear under that title in Appendix A, where they are set out in groups and explained, often with references to sections and paragraphs of this book. You will find it valuable to become very well acquainted with that Appendix, so that you come not only to know the meaning of most of the abbreviations without having to look them up but also to be familiar with many of the criteria which a good writer applies to his or her work.

## EXERCISES FOLLOWING 5:2

Most but not all of the following sentences are defective. Each of them involves some grammatical point already explained in this book. Where a sentence is correct, write ‘Correct’ or use a tick. Put right sentences which are incorrect, without making more changes than are necessary. Initially, do not consult the section whose number is given, but later (perhaps after each lettered exercise) refer to it, check your answers where necessary, and add in brackets, then or later, the number of the paragraph in which the relevant point is made; e.g., for all the sentences in A below, write ‘(1:3.2)’. (Occasionally, you may wish to refer to more than one paragraph.) There is sometimes

an asterisk after an initial number: there, as well as giving the paragraph-number, explain the point involved, in relation to that sentence. Remember, if you are giving an explanation (which should here be in one or more complete sentences), that when you are writing about a locution rather than using it, you need to put it in single inverted commas or underline or italicize it (1:3.2).

#### A. Locutions: written about, quoted, emphasized (1:3)

1. In Ann runs, runs is a verb.
- 2.\* What is the meaning here of objective?
3. The word 'disinterested' is often misused.
4. Those heroes, to use your word, seem to me very unwise.
5. Come to us for "hot" pies.
6. I'm puzzled by your use of morally wrong.

#### B. Nouns and articles (1:4 & 5)

1. Have you met Captain Robinson?
- 2.\* Is Mary the Captain of the team?
3. A apple a day keeps the doctor away.
4. Is there a university in your capital city?
5. Koala is an Australian animal that is famous in Japan.
- 6.\* Would you like game of cards?
7. Do you have house or flat?
8. I often go to party on Saturday evenings, but after party I sometimes wonder why I went.
- 9.\* Don't you have a milk with your cereal?

#### C. Pronouns (1:6)

1. My sister goes to your school: have you met him?
2. Her and Paul are learning French.
- 3.\* Would you permit Jane and I to borrow the magazines that were requested by she?
4. Were you with me that day?
5. Were you with your brother and I?
6. Ann is the sister of Shirley: she leads our team.
7. Everyone who wishes to be considered should put in his application by Friday.

#### D. Verbs (1:7)

- 1.\* She walk each morning to the club where she and her friends meets.
2. Is you coming to the party?
3. Is that your opinion?
4. Has they come home?

#### E. Adjectives (2:1)

1. That is an over rated film.
2. The people we met at dinner last night were very nice, and so was the food.
- 3.\* Your party was splendor than his.

F. Adverbs (2:2)

1. Why don't you tell first the students about the climate?
2. First, it is very oppressive in summer.
- 3.\* You are a good hitter of the ball, however you should improve your defence.
4. Hopefully she will be well by Thursday.

G. Prepositions (2:3)

1. Did you forget the presents for they?
2. He's a man many jokes are told about.
3. Sandra should compare herself to May if she is serious over accepting how far she still has to go.
4. My map not only differs from but is inconsistent with yours.
- 5.\* This ground is liable and often entirely submerged by flooding.

H. Conjunctions (2:4)

- 1.\* You ever visit Rome, you'll see what I mean.
2. I requested my ticket should be changed.

I. Written sentences and backbone verbs (3:1)

1. Russell Street before Exhibition Street.
- 2.\* When I spoke to the Chairman about this, no satisfactory explanation.
3. Jack has only just begun to teach, but you are an experienced teacher.
4. Although I must admit I forgot that she had the book.

J. Subject-locutions and their personed verbs (3:2)

1. The response of my colleagues were cautious.
2. Jill, accompanied by Jack and Ron, have arrived already.
3. Is there cutlery in that cupboard as well as plates?
- 4.\* Is there many people who think that?
5. The report of yesterday's matches are uninteresting.

K. Transitive and intransitive verbs (3:3)

1. Do you love?
2. Do you cook?
- 3.\* He replied her immediately.
4. I could not answer to that question.
5. Were you spoken by anyone?
6. It will be looked for by our secretary.

L. Verbs and accompanying prepositions (3:4)

(No paragraph references here.)

1. Don't accuse him with that crime.
2. He was convinced on your argument.
3. I'm not yet convinced of the truth of your statement.
4. I shall try to approximate near that.

M. Infinitives (and modal verbs used with them), participles, gerunds (3:5&6)

- 1.\* Out in the bush and riding a bike, the pressures of the past week are soon forgotten.
2. Riding a bike in the bush is a favourite relaxation of mine.
3. Are you fond of to dance?
4. Having been kept inside for a week, the thaw was a great relief.
5. Scheduling sufficient hours of desk-work, and then keeping to the schedule as far as possible, her essays get written in time.
6. Can I come to your postgraduate class, please?
7. He dares not to tell her what he really feels.

N. Tenses and aspects (3:7)

1. Yesterday, while I ran, I saw a kangaroo.
2. I know he come to the meeting last week.
3. 3. She teared it in half and lay the pieces on the table.
4. Shall you accept that offer?
5. I am meeting him next Friday.
6. She knows: I already wrote to her.
- 7.\* I was worried because your father not yet telephoned me.
8. Last year I must withdraw from one course.
9. Let us ask if we might attend this meeting.
10. They have not and will not invite us.

O. Pronouns (4:2)

1. The student said to the teacher that it would help if he read more books.
2. The mood of the crowd, which seemed to intensify toward evening, was reported to the Prime Minister.
3. The woman who you see on the platform is one of those survivors.
4. You, who plays cricket, know what I mean.
- 5.\* It was one of those requests which surprises a conventional teacher.
6. Miss Thompson, who we are all grateful to for her work in the library, is leaving.
- 7.\* The boy whom I thought was French is in fact Swiss.
8. The boy whom I took to be French is in fact Swiss.
9. This will hardly satisfy you or he.
10. The person first applying for the job and who looks to be a good candidate had better be offered it.
11. Neither of the children was anxious.
12. I didn't do some homework last night; I was not well.
13. One has heard of your adventures.

### 3. CORRECTING SENTENCES (B)

3.1 In 2.6 I quoted from the heading to Section 1 of the Learningguild examination the list of categories of errors which are to be encountered there. Let us now consider those categories in turn.

3.2 Much of the **GRAMMAR** you need in such correction has already been covered in this book. We have dealt primarily with the parts of speech, subject-locutions (1:7.1,14; 3:2), phrases (2:1.8, 2.2) and clauses (2:2.2, 3.4, 4.2-6). The above group of exercises A-O illustrates kinds of basic errors often found in relation to these. When setting out to correct your own or others' sentences, it is important to be clear on the parts of speech used or needed in the employment of words in a given sentence (1:2), the locutions which are subject-locutions, and the extent and nature of phrases and clauses. (There will be more about phrases and clauses, especially adverbial ones, when we turn to what I call clause/phrase analysis, which will be prominent in 6:2.)

3.3 It has been emphasized at 2:4.6 and 3:1.7 that every normal written sentence has one or more verbs which are not only personed but also **backbone**: such verbs, by contrast with those (also personed) which occur in subordinate clauses (2:4.3f), play a leading role, not a subordinate one, in the formation of the sentence. Having understood that, we are ready to appreciate the general principle that **every part of the sentence must fit into a coherent whole**. Much of what is called grammar in English can also be called **syntax**: that word comes to us from Greek, and means the same as 'arrangement'. **When we make up sentences, we are arranging words, or locutions (1:3.5f), so that they fit or suit one another**. The failure to provide or maintain a coherent arrangement is called **anacoluthon**, 'not following': the word is originally a Greek adjective. A sentence in which anacoluthon occurs (or, as we can also say, one which is an anacoluthon) has an earlier part which does not fit a later. We saw at 3:2 that a personed verb must fit its subject-locution, and at 3:5.5 that a participle must have a locution (often it is a Sub-L) to which it is properly connected. The word *anacoluthon* is, however, commonly applied to more complicated examples of failure to fit, often ones where a personed verb has no proper Sub-L, as in 'Just because you're young doesn't mean that you can't do the job' instead of 'The fact that you're young doesn't mean ...'. 'That you're young' is a noun clause (2:4.4): we can even dispense with the words 'The fact'.

3.4 All grammatical principles or rules can be related to this fundamental principle that one part must fit another. So, for example, when you are drawing a **comparison**, you must "compare comparables": if, intending to compare the icing on cakes made by two people, you say 'Ann's icing is thicker than John', you appear to be comparing Ann's icing with John himself. Instead you could write either 'Ann's icing is thicker than John's' or 'Ann has put on thicker icing than John has'. Sometimes it is a matter of asking which part of speech you need: you can say 'I want to run like Betty', using *like* as a preposition, but if you introduce a clause of comparison you need a conjunction to begin it, and, in writing at least, that is *as* rather than *like*: 'I want to run as Betty does'. (See the *OALD*'s answer to "WHICH WORD?" after its entry for *as*.)

3.5 Often, as we have seen, a sentence includes two or more parts which call for **parallelism**: those parts need to be of similar form (2:3, Exercise b; 1.1 in this chapter). If, for example, you begin with 'The following faults have been noted', and then, after a colon, list the faults (perhaps in point form), you will need either a series of statements or a series which is fundamentally nominal (nouns, noun phrases, noun clauses), but not a mixture of the two. Often

too, though parallelism is not essential, it is desirable: a good writer will frequently link each of two or more parts of his or her sentence with an element at the beginning or middle or end of a sentence which is applied to each of those parts. For a simple example, see the sentence beginning ‘We saw’ in the second half of 3.3. You will find more complicated and more impressive examples in some of the passages quoted in Chapter Six.

3.6 Quite a large part of grammar is related, however, not to the general principles just presented, but rather to **the ways we use particular words**. Thus the study of grammar cannot be kept entirely separate from that of the area mentioned at the end of our list of categories: choice of word(s). I can say ‘I’m late because I missed the bus’ or ‘The reason why I’m late is that I missed the bus’. If, however, as is common, someone says ‘The reason I’m late is because I missed the bus’, he or she has mixed up those two ways of giving a reason, one with an adverbial clause beginning ‘because’ and the other with a noun clause beginning ‘that’. When we use the word ‘reason’ we normally have in mind as our reason what we take to be a fact, and when we mention facts we commonly express them with noun clauses beginning with ‘that’ (e.g., ‘that I missed the bus’), so ‘The reason is because I missed the bus’ is an anacoluthon. (Few people would use just that set of words: it is often the insertion of other words, e.g., ‘why I’m late’, which gives rise to the error.)

3.7 Two words may be similar in meaning and yet take different “constructions”: the sets of words which are used immediately after them are of different patterns. Thus when a journalist writes of a broadcaster that he “concedes to having made videos for general practitioners”, he is using with the verb *concede* a construction that is used not with it but with *admit*. If you look up *concede* and *admit* in the *OALD*, you will find that the construction shown by ‘to doing sth’ is found with *admit* but not with *concede*. One main reason why the *OALD* is so valuable is that it shows the student with what constructions particular English words are used.

3.8 **PUNCTUATION**. In this paragraph and the next two I shall attend successively to full stops, question marks, exclamation marks and commas. Appendix A deals with mistakes in relation to these, and also covers semi-colons, colons and dashes. (There are good short guides to punctuation in the *OALD* (R17-19), and in Appendix 1, pp. 237-242, of the second edition of *The Oxford Guide to English Usage*, and an excellent longer one is Chapter X of Gowers.) A good piece of written English consists of **sentences** clearly marked as such, by a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop (or, when appropriate, a question mark or exclamation mark) at the end. When you read through what you have written, it is essential to check not only that each of your sentences does begin and end in these ways, but that each forms a coherent whole (3.3) and is not ungainly or cumbersome. Sentences can be short or, if there is good reason and clear structure, quite long. (Consider again George Eliot’s sentence about the workmen who were adult learners, quoted in the exercise on 2:1.) I maintained at Section 2 of the Learningguild Certificate examination (see 2.6) a valuable type of exercise, calling for critical intelligence, in which punctuation, capital letters, etc., had to be inserted into a passage printed without them. The primary need in such work is to determine where the sentences begin and end, and so where the full stops (or question marks or exclamation marks) should go, and that work makes one more sensitive to what can and what cannot be an acceptable sentence.

3.9 Questions, and only questions, should have **question marks**. Notice the differences between ‘Is he in Australia now?’ and ‘I want to know if he is in Australia now.’ The first is a question, the second is a statement with a question indicated or “embedded” or “reported” in it. Only the first, therefore, ends with a question mark. The first has the inverted order (‘Is he’) which is normal for actual questions (1:7.7), but the second reverts to the order used in

statements ('he is'). **Exclamation marks** should be used sparingly except in reports of conversation and in informal writing such as letters to friends.

3.10 A remark in Appendix 3 of the fifth edition of the *OALD*, "Commas indicate a slight pause", does not imply that wherever you think a pause might be justified you can insert a comma. Too often students have picked up little more about commas than that bad advice. Commas mostly need **grammatical** justification. Though we pause briefly at commas, we may pause briefly at other points too, for emphasis or clarity, where a comma would interrupt the grammatical flow. Two common faults need especially to be noted, those of the interrupting comma and of the inadequate one. (1) A single comma should not interrupt the flow from a subject-locution (even a lengthy one) to its personed verb, as it does in 'Those who think that I'm wrong, can vote against me', nor from a verb to its object-locution. (2) Two sets of words, each of which could be a sentence, should not be separated by a mere comma, unless they are short and in parallel form: the comma is inadequate in 'The match was abandoned because of rain, we were very disappointed', where a colon would be right. As the paragraph at P/CN in Appendix A implies, sometimes it is a matter of judgment whether a comma is desirable or not. There is confusion between things and locutions (see 1:3), and/or an awkward use of 'define', in part of the wording of the section on commas in the *OALD*: taking the example 'The hills that separate Lancashire from Yorkshire are called the Pennines', the compilers say that the clause 'that separate Lancashire from Yorkshire' is one that "defines the noun it follows" ('hills'), but they should rather say that such relative clauses (2:4.4; 4:1.2) **identify** which hills are referred to, as against **commenting** on something already identified (4:2.5). Commenting clauses and phrases, but not identifying ones, are preceded by a comma, and, in mid-sentence, also followed by one. (Identifying clauses and phrases are often, as here after 'The hills', parts of Sub-Ls or Ob-Ls.)

3.11 **SPELLING.** There are two main requirements here: awareness of a number of helpful rules (and of exceptions to them) and the regular extending and revising of an "SL", a spelling list for words which you have misspelt or think that you may in future misspell. Underline anything you need especially to remember, as in *embarrass*, and keep such pages together, revising them frequently. Henry Schoenheimer wrote helpfully on improving one's spelling. He provided sixteen rules and much else in his *Senior Speller* (Cheshire 1964), and gave a summary treatment, with a list of commonly misspelt words, in his *Expressive English* (new edition, 1976). Foster and Bryant (4:2.1; 2.7) has valuable lists. The spellcheck on a word-processor is a useful device for the picking up of many (not all) slips, but a person who is attentive to and appreciative of words will want to **know** how they are spelt.

3.12 **APOSTROPHES.** The apostrophe has the same shape as a comma, but is above the line ('). It is primarily used to indicate omission or possession. Thus we may write *he's* instead of *he is* and *I've* instead of *I have*; and we write *the boy's cap* and *the lions' dens*. An apostrophe should never be used to accompany an *s* at the end of a word which is merely plural and not intended to show possession. Singular words, including those ending with *s*, add an apostrophe and then *s* to mark possession. (There are a few exceptions, mainly Greek names, where an apostrophe alone is added, as in *Socrates'*.) A good reason for writing, e.g., *Gowers's book* is that if you write *Gowers' book* and pronounce accordingly you may lead people to think the name is *Gower*. Plural words show possession by an apostrophe after the *s* if they end with that letter, but otherwise an apostrophe and then an *s* are added (thus we write *lions'* but *children's*). The possessive pronouns (4:1.2) *yours*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs* and the possessive adjective *its* have no apostrophe: contrast *it's* as an abbreviation of *it is* or *it has*.

3.13 **CAPITALS.** The main principle here is a simple one: capital letters are used for the first person pronoun *I*, and to begin sentences and names and titles (like ‘Captain’ and ‘Professor’); but when words which **can** be used as parts of names or as titles are used merely descriptively (‘he was a university professor’), they do not have capitals (cf. 1:4.3). Capitals are also used for the first word and often for the main words in the name of a book or film, but not for lesser words (*Cry, the Beloved Country*).

3.14 **INVERTED COMMAS.** Two different uses of inverted commas, for writing about a locution and for quoting, are preferably shown by the use of single and double respectively, though practice differs. (See 1:3.2.) Inverted commas are also used for the titles of articles and chapters, whereas italic script or underlining is commonly employed for titles of books, plays, films and works of art.

3.15 **WORD-ORDER.** Most English sentences containing both subject- and object-locutions have the order Sub-L, verb, Ob-L. We noted at 2:2.7 that adverbs (with exceptions such as *only*) do not normally come between a verb and a short Ob-L. A good general rule is to place adverbs and adjectival clauses as close as possible to the locution whose meaning they complement. ‘I spoke to him for a few minutes only’ is clearer than ‘I only spoke to him for a few minutes’. If I say ‘The daughters of Bill Green, whom I used to teach, have done very well’, I leave it unclear whether it was Bill Green or his daughters that I taught (cf. 4:2.2f); so I had better begin ‘Bill Green’s daughters, whom ...’, or, if it was Bill that I taught, use a parenthesis (‘– I used to teach him –’). Mistakes in word-order are well discussed, with many examples, early in Gowers’s Ch.IX (“Troubles in arrangement”). It is usually, but not invariably, better not to split an infinitive begun by *to*: the *to* belongs so intimately to what is normally the next word that the separation often looks or sounds awkward. (See Gowers, pp. 232-6.)

3.16 **CHOICE OF WORDS.** We have already noted (3.6f) that one has to learn in what constructions a particular word is used, so that if one wants to employ that word one gives it an appropriate kind of accompaniment. Sometimes, however, the meaning of a word is not properly grasped, perhaps because it is confused with that of some other word. This may be a matter of confusing active and passive forms, as with *interesting* and *interested*, but often it relates to lack of precision in vocabulary: thus *reticent* is now commonly used where *reluctant* is correct, and *mitigate* instead of *militate*. It is a good practice to look out for pairs or groups of words whose meanings one might confuse. Many of these may be found in Gowers’s set on pp. 52-72, or in Chapter III of *The Oxford Guide to English Usage*. *The Penguin Working Words* (1993) is a helpful compendium. Ridout and McGregor’s *English for Australian Schools*, Book 5, has a valuable list, with exercises, in Ch.1, and that chapter and the next (on the derivation of our longer words from Latin, Greek and elsewhere) would not only help students to avoid confusing one word with another but also enrich and illuminate their vocabulary. Foster and Bryant also have such a list (pp. 35-42), and there is much between pages 33 and 83 to test and extend our working vocabularies. How valuable it often is to ask oneself the question “What is the **word-family** here?” and so think of (or use a dictionary to complete) a set of words such as *excite/excitement/exciting(ly)/excited(ly)*: cf. FB’s p.52f. Even though it has in the Preface ‘A verb is an action word’ (contrast 1:7.1-10,15), I would commend the book *Practical Words* by R.K.Sadler and T.A.S.Hayllar (1982), which helps one develop quite a wide vocabulary and, though consisting mainly of exercises, is also informative about punctuation and about derivation. Using it, students of mine at late primary or early secondary stages have made very good progress. A more advanced book, with a splendid range and liveliness, is *A Wealth of Words*, by H.G.Fowler and N.Russell (1960). After studying such

works, and Gowers in particular, students might go on to the classic book by H.W.Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, using the second edition (1965), where Gowers was the reviser, and to the new work (1996) edited and largely written by R.W.Burchfield but, as a tribute to H.W.Fowler, called *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*. There is a valuable checklist in the 1965 edition of Fowler, under 'pairs and snares' (p.433), of pairs of words, and in one case a trio, that are liable to be confused. I gladly give all these references, but add that the best students attend to, and seek to emulate critically, the choice of words in the best speakers and writers they can find.

3.17 If one has built up a treasure-house of words to draw upon, and developed sensitivity to their nuances of meaning by observing and studying their uses, one is likely to choose one's words well. Often people repeat rather dull or over-familiar words in long-winded sentences: it's good to be on the lookout for any sign of that in your own writing, and to replace some of the words and sometimes reduce the length of a sentence. Through plenty of construction and correction, you will become a better writer, and enjoy writing more. The next chapter invites you to explore the skill and delicacy shown by some makers of excellent sentences.

#### EXERCISE FOLLOWING 5:3

This exercise is of the same form as the first section of the Learningguild Certificate examination (2.6), except that I add here the requirement "Explain why you have made corrections at particular points", to make more valuable an exercise done without time-constraint. The phrases, clauses or sentences in your explanations should be complete, but you may use abbreviations. Aim to make those explanations clear, precise and economical. You may find it convenient to refer to particular sections or paragraphs of this book. Again, remember that locutions you write about should be underlined or italicized or put in single inverted commas (1:3.2), as in 3.15f above.

**Most but not all** of the following sentences contain one or more errors in one or more of the following eight categories: grammar, punctuation and spelling; use or non-use of apostrophes, capitals and inverted commas; word-order and choice of word(s). Where you consider a sentence correct, just put 'Correct' after writing the sentence's letter; where you consider one to be incorrect, **write out in full** a correct version of it, making no more changes than are necessary. (Read again the first sentence of this paragraph, noting carefully the range of types of errors.)

Explain why you have made corrections at particular points.

- a) Ask them if they are'nt tired to watch repetitions of nasty British comedies and loud mouthed Australian ones?
- b) Dr Smiths' way of treating that patient was more considering than the new Doctor.
- c) The train which travels between Melbourne and Adelaide, now goes through not Ballarat but Geelong.

- d) All the dogs are not dangerous, you have to know the breed that each one belongs to to know how to behave towards each one.
- e) If you would read carefully these books, you would see soon what was the situation in prewar Germany.
- f) Each member of the team has contributed her share, and together they have brought about our victory.
- g) His good article A Policy for Forests, in our last issue has insured that he will be asked to contribute in the next.
- h) It is unnecessary to ask questions about the man which this Museum commemorates, because so many informations are accompanying each exhibit.
- i) It seemed to Colin and she that they should prefer to take a drop in salary than continuous exhaustion.
- j) The womens' attitude was so hard that it was obvious to our managing director to modify his offer.
- k) The sheer inconsistency of the reports my sons have recieved puzzle me.
- l) Based on what my informer already said, we can conclude that Jim has either resigned or that he has been dismissed.

## CHAPTER SIX

### EXPLORING SENTENCES

#### 1. LEARNING TO USE AND ENJOY A LANGUAGE

1.1 In this first section I relate the exploration of sentences to the whole process of exploration of language which begins in infancy. To appreciate the wonder, fascination and far-reaching effects of that process at its best, and desire to share it with others, is the best motivation for its continuance at the tertiary stage of education or in adulthood.

1.2 In a normal childhood, we first learn how to put words together by hearing and seeing others do it, beginning to understand them, beginning to speak ourselves, and later to read and to write, and being encouraged, corrected and helped along. To take just one example, think of what is involved in a child's coming to associate the sound and then the ordered set of letters of the word *tap* with what is turned on to get water and with the action of striking something rather gently. For the most part, such early learning is not a deliberate process; but success in and enjoyment of it (at best the two go together) are far from automatic. The better our examples and the influences that play upon us, the more we learn of what can be done with language and so of what we can do. Ideally there is repeated talking, singing and reading, to and with children; eager introduction to letters (at first their "short names", which can be sounded out to get, e.g. *cat*), and then to recurring combinations of letters such as  $a+y$ ; and plenty of opportunity for the children to read for themselves and to talk about what they have been reading. Anyone who thinks that television, videos, computers and mobile devices of communication make such close attention to what is written and spoken less important than it used to be is liable to impair the development of any children in his or her care. We need to value clear and precise language, and careful and critical reasoning, all the more because there is so much ephemeral communication.

1.3 To talk of "equality of opportunity" in education is to fail to recognize that the skilful, enthusiastic and devoted teacher – and it makes a great difference if the child's parents are among such teachers – will have a far deeper and wider educative influence than those who lack such qualities. We do better to talk of abundance of opportunity for all, as the ideal to which we should seek to approximate; and to work towards wider availability and implementation of systematic methods along with guidance and encouragement. There is need not only of a range of the best materials (they include display sheets, plasticine, stencils, cards, books and booklets, videos, CDs and DVDs) but also of frequent revision and one-with-one assistance. A child has to learn, as many children do not adequately learn, to pick up the components of written words (letters, and pairs and groups of letters, with their common sounds), to interpret words in their contexts, and to recognize and use a wide range of words in speech and writing, with encouragement and correction well blended. That must also be the basic programme for a teenager or an adult at the elementary stages of learning his or her own language. I recommend the book *Reading Success* by Brenda Thompson, published as an Arrow Book in London in 1981, not least because in her compassionate but firm chapter "Adult Illiterates" she stresses that adults attempting to become literate need daily practice

(let's say practice on at least five days a week) as much as do children. The same point applies to more advanced students who are seeking to develop their English or learning another language. At all stages of learning, eagerness, delight and a readiness to ask questions of oneself and one's teachers, and to revise, are as important as sustained application both in regular hours of "deskwork" and in revision at odd times, and productive of it.

1.4 When a child can read quite well, he or she should be invited, more often than is usually the case now, to look carefully at well-constructed sentences and think about how each forms a coherent whole, and, if it is especially attractive or memorable, why that is so. As in almost all forms of good learning, there must initially be clear explanation, **much of it in printed and systematic form, readily markable and revisable**, with plenty of examples; and then the child, or the student at any stage, should be enabled and encouraged to **explore**, and so to discover many things that he or she will find not only instructive but often fascinating, moving or delightful.

1.5 I now invite my readers to explore wide ranges of sentences in their own reading; and initially, but not of course only, to look for examples of employment of the nine parts of speech set out in Chapters One and Two, and of the many forms, categories and constructions with which this book has been concerned. In this process of exploration, they will learn aspects of good expression which will furnish them with a wider and surer framework and richer resources for constructing and correcting their own sentences. Sometimes they will think of some aspect of that framework or those resources and employ it deliberately; often the effect of its appropriation, though real, will be unnoticed.

1.6 We should distinguish, as in the first sentence of 1.4, between two kinds of exploration, though for the experienced student they can often go on together. There is **grammatical** study, which examines the components of a sentence regarded as parts of a coherent structure, and **rhetorical** study, aimed at a wider appreciation in which, while remaining mindful of the grammar, one considers also the choice and ordering of words, and much else (3.2-4), and, in speech, their manner of utterance (3.5), in order to understand why particular sentences or sets of them are liable to attract or move us (or to fail to do so). I have written in Part 2 of the Preface about the combination of these studies with logic, i.e., the science and art of reasoning, in the medieval *trivium*. The next two sections of this chapter are concerned respectively with grammatical and rhetorical study; they are combined in the exercises which follow each of six extracts in which we return to most of the writers we encountered in the first three chapters.

## 2. GRAMMATICAL EXPLORATION

2.1 Two tasks may be distinguished in the grammatical study of sentence-construction, though they often need to be combined, as may be seen in 2:4, where our subject was coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and thus coordinate and subordinate clauses. The first, as we noted in the exercise on 1:4-2:2, has traditionally been called **parsing**: the classification of words, used in particular contexts (1:2), as belonging to one or other of the nine parts of speech, to which it is often necessary to add the explanation of particular forms and their use (e.g., Sub-L and Ob-L pronouns as at 1:6, verb-forms as at 1:7.12 and in 3:7, or participles as at 3:5.4). The second task is the explication of clauses and phrases. As we are

soon to say with more specificity (2.6), it is often best to begin the study of particular sentences (unless they are very simple, such as the three examples with which this book begins) by discovering their structure – the backbone verb(s) and its or their Sub-L(s), and the clauses and phrases – and then turn to particular words. In relation to both parts of grammatical study, one needs to become aware of errors into which it is easy to fall: hence our Chapter Five, Sections 2 and 3.

2.2 Traditionally, the student was said to be engaged in parsing when he or she was determining what parts of speech particular words were and adding further explanation, and in analysis when separating clauses and phrases. I am happy to go on using ‘parsing’ to indicate the first task, but I think it helpful to use ‘analysis’ to cover all members of a trio of which ‘parsing’ is another word for the first: what we might call **word-analysis**, **clause/phrase analysis** and **rhetorical analysis**. The first two of these constitute **grammatical analysis**. Rhetorical analysis seeks to describe those features of a piece of speech or writing that make it attractive or unattractive, stirring or tedious (5:1.11 and Section 3 below). There are two further kinds of analysis: the consecutive content-analysis (to bring out their structure) of passages, articles, chapters, books, etc., and the logical and critical analysis of arguments. **To the student who wishes to understand and appreciate more deeply what he or she is reading or hearing, and to write and speak coherently, clearly, critically, cogently and attractively, a training in all these forms of analysis is of immense value.** The fact that many secondary and tertiary students have engaged in none of them demonstrates widespread intellectual undernourishment.

2.3 Concerning clauses and phrases, let us first remind ourselves of some of what we have learned so far (there are sets of references at 5:3.2). **Clauses**, with the exception of coordinate ones, belong to one of the three types indicated by the prefixes *adjectival*, *adverbial* and *noun*, and are called subordinate; in each of coordinate clauses there is a personed verb (there may be more than one) that belongs to the backbone of the sentence. **Phrases** also can be classified as belonging to one of the three types. One qualification may now be added about clauses: like sentences, they are sometimes elliptical (3:1.8). For example, in the first sentence of 2.2, there are two adverbial clauses beginning with *when* (adverbial clauses of time, as we are about to describe them), but only the first has the words ‘he or she was’, so providing a subject-locution and then an auxiliary which, with *adding* and *separating*, produces the personed verbs. In the second clause we may “supply” in thought those words ‘he or she was’, instead of their being repeated; and such omissions make our parallelism (5:3.5) more concise. It is also possible to begin a sentence with a conjunction and a participle, as in ‘When/if/although undertaking’, though the full clause would include, e.g., ‘you are’. This combination of an opening conjunction (rather than a preposition) and the possibility of inserting in thought subject-locution and verb or auxiliary leads me to call such locutions elliptical clauses rather than phrases.

2.4 Considering together both adverbial clauses and adverbial phrases, let us now learn how they are usefully sub-classified. We might preface ‘I went to the Botanic Gardens’ by ‘On my arrival in Melbourne’ or ‘When I arrived in Melbourne’. Both relate to **time**, and so we call the first an adverbial phrase of time and the second an adverbial clause of time. Other categories are **place**, **manner**, **cause**, **reason**, **purpose**, **result**, **condition**, **comparison**, **concession** and (as one may broadly say) **circumstance**. So, respectively, and giving a clause and a phrase alternately, we can employ as adverbial clauses or phrases such locutions as ‘wherever you are’, ‘with great effort’, ‘because I was unwell’, ‘on account of that’, ‘so that

I'd get the book', 'with the loss of his deposit', 'if we go to that show', 'like a top sprinter', 'though she's not yet fit enough' and 'in the absence of our best players'. (Notice that adverbial clauses begin with a conjunction and these adverbial phrases with a preposition.) Readers may like to devise for each category a phrase where I have given a clause and *vice versa*.

2.5 Let us now take two sentences of some length for grammatical analysis, one from 2.2 above and the other from Gowers. The second-last sentence in 2.2, there put in bold type, is "To the student who wishes to understand and appreciate more deeply what he or she is reading and hearing, and to write and speak coherently, clearly, critically, cogently and attractively, a training in all these forms of analysis is of immense value."

2.6 Because, no matter what sentence we are analysing, we need to grasp quickly and clearly its overall structure, it is best to begin our analysis of it by picking out any coordinate or subordinate clause, and one or more backbone verbs and their subject-locution(s), and then look for phrases, and only then to identify particular words and their parts of speech and special features, taking together all the words in any particular clause or phrase. So we ask initially the question "What clauses are there in this sentence, and where is there a BV, and with what Sub-L?" In our sentence, there is a long adjectival clause, which begins at *who* and goes right on to *attractively*, and it contains a noun clause 'what he or she is reading or hearing'. That leaves 'To the student' and 'a training in all these forms of analysis is of immense value'. *Is* is the BV and its Sub-L is 'a training in all these forms of analysis', and in that Sub-L the main constituent (3:2.2) is *training*, here a gerund.

2.7 Some would say that 'To the student a training in all these forms of analysis is of immense value' is the "main clause" of the sentence, but I prefer to avoid that expression, and to speak of a clause only when it can be called either subordinate or coordinate (2:4.2-4). To speak of one or more BVs allows us to describe **in the same basic way** every normal sentence (3:1), including ones consisting of or containing imperatives ('Run!', 'Write simply'), whereas it is awkward to call those short sentences main clauses. Moreover, as we saw at 4:2.5 concerning 'He who hesitates is lost', the Sub-L of a BV may include a subordinate clause: there the Sub-L is 'He who hesitates', and, again, it is awkward to say that the "main clause" is 'He is lost'. A BV may even have a noun clause (and so a subordinate clause) as its Sub-L, as in 'What you say is very interesting': we cannot identify a separate "main clause" there. We will not say, then, that 'To the student a training in all these forms of analysis is of immense value' is the "main clause".

2.8 We should not only pick out any adjectival clause but say whether it is a commenting or an identifying one (4:2.5, 5:3.10). Just as 'who hesitates' is identifying in 'He who hesitates is lost', so our long clause from *who* to *attractively* is identifying: I am not characterizing every student by the wanting referred to. This clause is attached to the phrase 'To the student' and the combination, phrase plus identifying relative clause, is adverbial to our backbone verb *is*, telling us of the circumstance (2.4) in which the training is valuable.

2.9 Now we have begun on phrase-analysis, and found a case in which we have to link a phrase with a clause. In the adjectival clause, we first have another such case: the noun phrase with two infinitives, 'to understand and appreciate more deeply', is the first part of the first half of the object-locution (Ob-L) of the PV *wishes*, and those infinitives have as their own Ob-L the noun clause which we picked out in 2.6, 'what he or she is reading or hearing'. Then there is a further noun phrase, again with two infinitives, and it is the second half of the

Ob-L of *wishes*: ‘to write or speak coherently, clearly, critically, cogently and attractively’. We have already seen that the Sub-L of the BV *is* is the noun phrase ‘a training in all these forms of analysis’; within that, ‘all these forms of analysis’ is itself a noun phrase. If we wish, we can also say of ‘all these forms’, or of ‘forms of analysis’, that it is a noun phrase. ‘Of immense value’ is an adjectival phrase.

2.10 We turn now to word-analysis, in line with the advice given at the beginning of 2.6, and can decide whether we proceed through the sentence from beginning to end or take some other order (e.g., first to pick out the personed verbs). You may wish to space out the words and leave lines as indicated at a in the exercise on 1:4-2:2. Outside the subordinate clause we have ‘To the student’ (preposition, definite article, common noun) and ‘a training in all these forms of analysis is of immense value’ (indefinite article, gerund, preposition, distributive adjective, demonstrative adjective, common noun, preposition, common noun, PV, preposition, adjective of quantity, abstract noun). If you are unsure of any of these sub-categories, such as that indicated by *distributive*, go back to the section concerned and find the relevant paragraph. The PV is third person singular (3S), with the Sub-L noted at 2.6.

2.11 The adjectival clause, as we also noted at 2.6, is ‘who wishes to understand and appreciate more deeply what he or she is reading or hearing, and to write and speak more coherently, clearly, critically, cogently and attractively’. Parsing from *who* to *appreciate*, we have: relative pronoun, PV, and two infinitives, with *to* belonging to both of them (3:5.2), joined by the conjunction *and*. Then there is *more*, used as an adverb related to the adverb *deeply*, and that combination is related to the infinitives *understand* and *appreciate*. The relative pronoun is 3S (its antecedent is *the student*: 4:2.2), and its PV, also 3S, is *wishes*. In the noun clause ‘what he or she is reading or hearing’, *what* is a special pronoun with a relative component, as was remarked at 4:1.2; it is equivalent to ‘that which’. Then we have two personal pronouns separated by the conjunction *or*, and two PVs which share an auxiliary; between their main parts (1:7.5) comes the conjunction *or* again. It is desirable to keep *backbone* for the backbone verb(s) of a **sentence**; we could call *wishes* the dominant PV of its clause. *Is reading* and (*is*) *hearing*, verbs which are present continuous (3:7.1f), are 3S, with ‘he or she’ as Sub-L. The following classification may be given to the final words of our adjectival clause, from the second *and* to *attractively*: conjunction, two infinitives sharing the marker *to* (3:5.2) and separated by a conjunction, and five adverbs, of which the last is joined to the others by a conjunction.

2.12 Before we end our grammatical analysis of this sentence, we may note how prominent a feature of it is parallelism (b in the exercise on 2:3; 5:3.5). *Wishes* is used with two parallel pairs of infinitives, ‘to understand and appreciate’ and ‘to write and speak’. The *to* in each case goes with two words to form those ‘to’-infinitives. *He* and *she* are parallel, as are *reading* and *hearing*, and the five adverbs.

2.13 It took us five paragraphs (2.6 and 8-11) to perform a full grammatical analysis, and obviously we can be content in many cases, when we are not asked for that kind of analysis, to attend only to matters of particular interest or complexity. But it is evident how valuable it is to be able to explicate the grammatical structure of a sentence, both for understanding and appreciating it and for making up sentences of one’s own.

2.14 Our second sentence comes from p.168 of Gowers, the book to which my Preface refers in Part 1. It gives us a useful principle, for which amusing examples follow.

Care should be taken to avoid the ‘false scent’ that comes from grouping words in a way that suggests a different construction from the one intended, however fleeting the suggestion may be.

The example immediately following is ‘Behind each part of the story I shall tell lies an untold and often unsuspected story of hard work ...’. The insertion of a comma after *tell*, and then of *there*, perhaps gets rid of the false scent; but better to use *is* as the BV, here before its Sub-L.

2.15 Again, as at 2.6, we begin with the structure of the sentence, looking for the backbone verb(s) and one or more governing Sub-Ls – here we have *should* and *care* – and any coordinate or subordinate clauses, and then phrases. There are three subordinate clauses: two adjectival, the first including the second, each of them of the identifying type (4:2.5), and one adverbial. The longer adjectival clause runs from the first *that* to *intended*, and concludes with the one which begins with the second *that*. Each *that* is a relative pronoun (4:1.2): *that* is usable as an adjective, a demonstrative or relative pronoun, and a conjunction, and we must be careful to identify which it is in a particular case. (Notice that the word *that*, unless it is being talked or written about (1:3.2) or is demonstrative (4:1.3), is usually pronounced with the minimal vowel that ends *mother*. Now read aloud that sentence, and this one, accordingly!) The adverbial clause of manner ‘however fleeting the suggestion may be’ is related to the verb *suggests*. (On *however* there, see 2.19).

2.16 The phrase “the ‘false scent’” is a noun phrase coupled, as we have seen, with a long relative clause. (Gowers has used single inverted commas here for quotation where I should use double: 1:3.2.) Two other noun phrases are ‘grouping words’ (where *words* is the Ob-L of the gerund *grouping*) and ‘a different construction from the one intended’, and within the second of those we may pick out ‘a different construction’ and ‘the one intended’. According to our definition at 2:3.4, ‘the suggestion’ and ‘a way’ are also noun phrases, but we do not normally need to make that point, since an article followed by a noun is so common a combination. If we take ‘from grouping words’ together, we have an adverbial phrase of circumstance linked to the verb *comes*. Similarly, ‘in a way’ is an adverbial phrase of manner linked to the verbal aspect of the gerund *grouping*. Some might call the pair of words *to avoid* an adverbial phrase expressive of purpose; but we do better simply to note this use of a ‘to’-infinitive (3:5.2f) to express purpose than to call it a phrase.

2.17 For word-analysis, let us first take the initial words, which fall outside the clauses we have identified: “Care should be taken to avoid the ‘false scent’”. *Care* is an abstract noun (whereas the plural *cares* is that of a common one), and used as the Sub-L of the PV (and BV) *should* (3S), which is a modal verb (3:6) used with the passive present infinitive (3:3.5, 7.5) *be taken*. Then comes another infinitive, *to avoid*, as we have just seen, expressive of purpose, followed by the definite article, descriptive adjective and noun which make up the phrase “the ‘false scent’”. In fact the Ob-L of *to avoid* consists of twenty words, from “the ‘false scent’” to *intended*, for, as we noted at 2.15, the adjectival clauses are of the identifying type.

2.18 Within the adjectival clauses we have, in ‘that comes from grouping words in a way’, relative pronoun (with “the ‘false scent’” as its antecedent), PV (present simple and 3S, with *that* as Sub-L), preposition, gerund, the common noun which is that gerund’s Ob-L, preposition, indefinite article, common noun. In the smaller adjectival clause, ‘that suggests a different construction from the one intended’, which ends the longer adjectival one, there are a relative pronoun (with ‘a way’ as antecedent), a PV (present simple, again 3S, with the second

*that* as Sub-L) and its Ob-L consisting of the following: indefinite article, adjective (relational), common noun, preposition, definite article, pronoun and past participle used passively and as an adjective. *One*, used as here, was called a noun in *OALD*'s fifth edition, presumably because of the article before it. In the ninth it is rightly called a pronoun. Here it stands instead of the noun *construction*.

2.19 In the adverbial clause 'however fleeting the suggestion may be', we have in the word *however* as used here an interesting combination of conjunction and adverb. Though it is adverbial, linked to the adjective *fleeting*, it will not do to say that alone, as the *OALD* does of such cases, for it also serves as a conjunction, introducing a clause (cf. the conjunction *though* in 'fleeting though the suggestion may be'). Occasionally we meet a word which in its context serves as two parts of speech: a common example is *like*, as in 'She is like him in that respect', which is both an adjective and a preposition. In the clause 'However important it is to use adjectives sparingly', which occurs in the treatment of *however* at 2:2.6, that word is used in the same way as Gowers uses it here. *Fleeting* is a participle, though the verb *fleet* barely survives. It is used, like *intended*, as an adjective (3:5.4). Then we have the definite article and a common noun, and *may* as a modal verb, here indicating possibility (3:6.2), used with the infinitive *be*: *may*'s Sub-L is 'the suggestion', so it too is 3S.

2.20 The exercises related to the six passages placed at the end of this chapter include grammatical analysis. For further study, it is for the reader to choose where he or she will look for examples. Any sentence may be taken, but it is normally preferable to take one which is neatly composed, and better still if you find it vivid, moving and/or of special interest, and part of a paragraph or passage which also has such characteristics. To those wider considerations we now turn.

### 3. RHETORICAL EXPLORATION

3.1 In his inaugural lecture in 1928 as White's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford, H.A.Prichard said this about the sentences of one of his predecessors, T.H.Green:

... the more you study any particular sentence, the more you become convinced that every word of it has been weighed, and that, whether or not it be true, it expresses exactly what he meant to say.

That ideal of clear and precise expression is of the greatest importance. Without it, people's writing or speech is liable to become woolly, unspecific or exaggerated, and liable to frustrate or mislead. Skill in the ordering and choice of words (5:3.15-17), as well as in grammar and punctuation, is required if clarity and precision are to be attained.

3.2 Conciseness and straightforwardness, which were mentioned at 5:1.11 in connection with the avoidance of dullness, contribute to clarity too. Good writing is uncluttered and, normally, direct. Among other ways of avoiding dullness (or, as we may now say, of approaching or achieving rhetorical excellence) which were listed in the same paragraph are the development of a rich vocabulary, so that we have many words to choose from, and the ability and readiness to employ both similarity and variety of sentence-structure and both short and long (but not cumbersome) sentences. There are references for expansion of vocabulary at 5:3.16.

3.3 The use of similes and metaphors is an important part of vivid writing. One is using a **simile** if one compares X to Y and makes one's comparison explicit by using such words as *like* and *as*, but a **metaphor** if one speaks of X as though it were Y. Here are two simple examples: 'His collection of sporting equipment was like a jungle'; 'He had a jungle of sporting equipment'. One should look for fresh similes and metaphors rather than rely on tired ones as in 'She ran like the wind' or 'I froze with fear'.

3.4 It is certainly important to build up one's awareness of the criteria for English that is attractive as well as clear; but such awareness is unlikely to be vivid and fertile for one's own expression unless one has explored excellent writing by others and appreciated it in such a way as to be able to identify and explicate the features which make it excellent of its kind.

3.5 Similarly, one can learn of some of the special features of attractive or moving **speech** – grouping of words, pausing and emphasis in appropriate places, variation of pace and volume and tone, momentum and cumulative effect – but one gains a proper appreciation of them only by becoming a sensitive listener to good speakers or actors. (The combination of a CD or DVD and a full text is a valuable aid.) However, in 3.10-15 I examine a famous example of profound oratory, one which deserves to be recited often.

3.6 Where is one to look for excellence in writing? First, within our own studies or main pursuits we should aim to find authors who write especially well. Secondly, most newspapers that seek to promote serious discussion (to take examples, *The Guardian*, from London, *The Washington Post*, from the capital of the United States, and *The Age*, from Melbourne, Australia) frequently have especially well-written articles, and we can look out for them in more than one such paper. Thirdly, we can explore some of the work of authors of high reputation, including novelists, poets and others; we shall no doubt follow our own special interests here, but should not let ourselves be restricted to our own times or nation. Fourthly, we can turn to collections of good writing accompanied by comments and/or questions, such as G.H.Vallins's book *The Best English* (1960) and the small set that makes up the second half of this chapter.

3.7 If you have a friend or relative who shares your enthusiasm for good writing, so that you can enjoy some things together, each telling the other what he or she has found, that will be not only a valuable stimulus but also a source of delight.

3.8 Among my particular interests (apart from philosophy, English and other languages, and education) are the kinds of writing for children which are also fascinating to adults, poetry, the historical, explanatory and critical study of religious texts and traditions, autobiography and biography, and oratory. So it is unsurprising that in this book I have already included extracts from the following sources: Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*; poems by John Masefield and Alfred Tennyson; novels by George Eliot and Mrs Humphry Ward, both set in religious contexts in nineteenth-century England; Alan Marshall's *These are my people*, his record of a journey he and his wife made through country Victoria, John Buchan's autobiography, my favourite, and a biographical study by David Newsome; and Winston Churchill's wartime speeches. (See, respectively, the exercises following 3:5, 2:1, 2:2, 2:1, 2:2, 1:4, 2:1, Chapter 2, and 2:3.) At the end of this chapter are six passages taken from six of those nine sources and presented in the order in which I have just mentioned them, along with related exercises, some grammatical, some rhetorical and some related to content (2.2). There may be readers who would like to explore one or more of the nine authors for themselves; but

the field of good writing in English is vast and it is for each person to make his or her own discerning choices.

3.9 I have used the adjective ‘rhetorical’, as in the title of this section and in ‘rhetorical excellence’ (3.2), and also the noun ‘oratory’ (3.5). The ancient Greek word for an orator (that is a Latin word) is ‘*rhētōr*’, and *rhētorikē* was the art which Greek orators practised and taught. In Part 4 of the Preface I have referred to Plato’s dialogue the *Gorgias*, the great answer to that rhetorician’s superficial but tempting view that rhetoric, seen there as a set of devices for making one’s own view seem more plausible than another’s though the other may be right or more nearly right, is something of supreme importance as a means to “success”. However, provided that rhetoric is always in the service of what is known or reasonably believed to be true or right, and does not obscure but assists the recognition of that truth or rightness, it has a valuable place. It includes all that saves speech and writing from being dull, hazy, long-winded, tedious or pretentious and all that makes it clear, concise, lively and straightforward. It may arouse and sustain interest; it seeks the kind of language and presentation which fits the particular person or persons addressed; it employs a wide range of apt words well ordered and, in speech, well spoken; it may make what is written or spoken not only clear but memorable. Plato himself came to see that such rhetoric plays a valuable role. (See his *Phaedrus*, 269c–72b.)

3.10 Good speech and writing have many common features; each requires care in the making up of sentences, and, as the examples from Churchill show, the text of an excellent speech can often be studied also as a fine piece of writing. Nevertheless, if speech is to be memorable, it will usually have such special qualities as listed out in 3.5, as well as those set out in 3.1–3, and rather more parallelism than occurs in prose composed for readers rather than listeners. Let us illustrate those qualities from what is perhaps the most famous speech-ending (peroration, to use the technical term) that we know, the one with which Abraham Lincoln concluded his second Inaugural Address, given in 1865 when the Civil War had not yet ended, and of course deserving study as a whole. (Readers outside the U.S. can find the full text, as well as a short account of Lincoln and of the War, in the Pelican book by H.G.Nicholas, *The American Union*.)

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan: to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

As with every example of speech or writing that is not, as we say, “mere rhetoric”, what matters here above all is the content: Lincoln is calling for reconciliation, healing, provision and respect for those who have been, are, and will be soldiers (of both sides) and for the widows and children of soldiers, and peace. But how that content is presented to his hearers!

3.11 The three parallel ‘with’-phrases together portray the attitude required. ‘With malice toward **none**’: that begins, but without arguing against them, where most of Lincoln’s hearers need to begin; he is asking them to overcome the malice, the bitter anger and ill-will, that they are inclined to feel, and abandon it in every case. ‘With charity for all’: that is the positive attitude to adopt instead, and the ‘all’ takes up the ‘none’ with that combination of similarity and difference which can make parallelism so effective. Not ‘charity toward all’, either, but the more brotherly ‘charity for all’. ‘With firmness in the right’: the charity is not a matter of being sentimental or unconcerned about just outcomes. The subordinate clause ‘as God gives

us to see the right' takes up that word 'right' and implicitly acknowledges how liable we all are to be fallible, partial and prejudiced in our judgments about what is or is not right, and yet how able we are to recognize at least some of the things we ought to do.

3.12 Then comes the heart of the sentence, in monosyllables except for the crucial and demanding word 'finish': 'let us strive on to finish the work we are in'. Here the backbone verb is our odd little 'let', used not as a request for permission but, along with 'us', as part of an exhortation, like the '*Allons*' ('Let us go') at the beginning of the Marseillaise, and addressed to the whole group including the speaker, who invites us into a common enterprise. 'Strive' conveys the idea of great, continued and purposeful effort; 'on', like 'in', recognizes that the effort has already lasted a long time and that it must be maintained; and 'to finish the work we are in' calls for completion of a task rather than a weary or celebratory abandonment of it.

3.13 Lincoln's audience might have supposed he meant the achievement of the defeat of the forces of the Southern States, but that, which was mentioned in the first paragraph of the speech as essential, does not even appear in this majestic last sentence. The work now is "to bind up the nation's wounds". Have six words ever expressed so much? They remind their hearers of soldiers' wounds, but Lincoln is saying that the whole nation, comprising, as he has always insisted, the South as well as the North, has been grievously wounded by the war, and many kinds of wounds have to be healed.

3.14 Then comes the most immediate practical task, described, again with parallelism, so that no one will forget either the soldiers or their dependants. But that is not all, and the colon, where there would be a pause, introduces a general view of what has to be achieved, and how. Lincoln speaks of **peace**, just and lasting, within the United States and with all other nations, and the need to do every kind of thing which will achieve it and, as he says with a lovely use of this word, **cherish** it. The *Shorter Oxford* ... gives (at sense 2) 'protect or tend (a child, plant, etc.) lovingly; treat with fostering care'.

3.15 The sentence has been put together in such a way that Lincoln's meaning is evident and inescapable. Nothing in the sentence lowers the tone, nothing is redundant. I once read in the *Reader's Digest* that a French diplomat, asked why he was such a good public speaker, replied "I know what to leave out." Few people who have attended funerals, or wedding receptions, or school prizegivings, or any other occasions of public speaking, will fail to feel the force of that. Even though it is often important to develop and illustrate what one wishes to affirm, the Latin motto '*multum in parvo*', 'much in little', deserves to be remembered whenever one makes up sentences. A good style is normally a spare style; but to be spare is not to be threadbare, and, as Lincoln's sentence illustrates, the sensitive command of a wide range of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to combine similarity and contrast of thought and language are also ingredients of excellence in English.

#### 4. NOT ENGLISH ALONE

4.1 I invite my readers to learn (and go on learning) to read and speak at least one other language besides English, if they do not already. Thereby they will be in a position to find new treasures, develop an affinity with the speakers and writers of the other language, and

extend their powers of sentence-construction not only in that language but, through their study of it, in English too. This book will have furnished them with most of the grammar for the lack of which so many English-speaking students in recent years have found the learning of another language, and the clear, correct and attractive use of their own, more difficult than it ought to have been.

4.2 In studying another language, one needs to have a book like this one in that it sets out the kinds of words and structures which that language employs. I have by me now the copy of *An Outline of Latin Prose Composition*, by C.J.Vincent and J.F.Mountford, which, in our second-last years of secondary education, was used by me in 1951 and then by one of my sons in 1980 when I was helping him to learn Latin. That book not only provides a foundation for further study of Latin, but also makes one aware of many of the structures of English, some similar to their Latin counterparts and some not. The study of Latin is also valuable for the student of English because so many of our words (especially among those of two or more syllables) are derived from that language. However, **any** language systematically studied, with careful attention to its grammar as well as to its vocabulary, can assist us to a better understanding and appreciation of our own. It is very helpful to have some of that grammar and vocabulary on CD or cassette, so that we can hear it over and over again. Moreover, the appreciation of a sentence written with grammatical and rhetorical excellence in another language can prompt us to explore ways of approaching such excellence in English, whether in translating the original or in making up sentences which, though we draw from vast traditions, are entirely our own.

## SIX PASSAGES, WITH EXERCISES

### Passage One

In the last-but-one chapter of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), the Toad, the Rat, the Badger and the Mole are preparing to regain Toad Hall from the weasels who have occupied it.

The Toad, having finished his breakfast, picked up a stout stick and swung it vigorously, belabouring imaginary animals. "I'll learn 'em to steal my house!" he cried. "I'll learn 'em, I'll learn 'em!"

"Don't say 'learn 'em', Toad", said the Rat, greatly shocked. "It's not good English."

"What are you always nagging at Toad for?" inquired the Badger rather peevishly. "What's the matter with his English? It's the same what I use myself, and if it's good enough for me, it ought to be good enough for you!"

"I'm very sorry", said the Rat humbly. "Only I **think** it ought to be 'teach 'em', not 'learn 'em'."

"But we don't **want** to teach 'em", replied the Badger. "We want to **learn** 'em – learn 'em, learn 'em! And what's more, we're going to **do** it, too!"

"O, very well, have it your own way", said the Rat. He was getting rather muddled about it himself, and presently he retired into a corner, where he could be heard muttering "Learn 'em, teach 'em, teach 'em, learn 'em!" till the Badger told him rather sharply to leave off.

(I have employed bold type for emphasis instead of italic here, and used double and single inverted commas as in the Methuen paperback of 1961, whose employment of them – the opposite of that in the Methuen hardback – is as I recommend in 1:3.2. I have also followed the more logical practices of putting a comma outside rather than inside the second of a pair of quotation marks, when it does not belong to the quoted utterance, and omitting a comma after a word such as *muttering* when the locution following it in inverted commas is its object-locution.)

Exercise

- a. The *OALD*'s ninth edition omits the use the Toad and the Badger give here to the verb *learn*. The fifth included it, with the description 'slang or jocular'. Explain why you are or are not satisfied to say that both the Toad and the Badger use 'learn 'em' with exactly the same meaning as that of 'teach 'em'.
- b. This passage illustrates the preferable use of double and single inverted commas. Explain that use, with reference to examples here. (You may wish to consult 1:3.2f.)
- c. What are the two examples of supplemented verbs to be found here? (3:4.4.)
- d. All the words ending in *-ing* here are present participles (3:5.4). Which ones are used as parts of personed verbs, and which not? (For *having finished*, see 3:7.5.)
- e. In the author's own sentences (not the ones in double inverted commas which he gives to his characters), which personed verbs (PVs) are backbone verbs (BVs), and what are their Sub-Ls? Make a table with BVs on the right and their Sub-Ls on the left. Remember that a sentence may have more than one backbone verb (3:1.3). Which PVs in one of these sentences are in subordinate clauses (2:4.3-6), the first adjectival and the second adverbial, and so are not BVs? How do you explain the verb-forms *could* and *be heard*?
- f. Give two unobjectionable replacements of 'It's the same what I use myself'.
- g. Comment on the effectiveness of some adverbs used here by Grahame.
- h. Discuss the last sentence as a portrayal of the Rat and the Badger.
- i. Provide a word-analysis (2.1f) of some paragraphs.
- j. Discuss the Badger's dismissal of the Rat's objection to Toad's English. Does appropriate English depend on context? On context alone?

Passage Two

In Ch. 52 of *Adam Bede*, the first novel by George Eliot, published in 1859, which she sets in rural England about the beginning of that century, Adam, a carpenter, tells Dinah that he wants to marry her. She does not feel free to marry. She has devoted herself to preaching, teaching and caring for many people in need, working within the new Christian movement called Methodist.

“But now, dear, dear Dinah, now you know I love you better than you love me ... it’s all different now. You won’t think o’ going: you’ll stay, and be my dear wife, and I shall thank God for giving me my life as I never thanked him before.”

“Adam, it’s hard to me to turn a deaf ear ... you know it’s hard; but a great fear is upon me. It seems to me as if you were stretching out your arms to me, and beckoning me to come and take my ease, and live for my own delight, and Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, was standing looking towards me, and pointing to the sinful, and suffering, and afflicted. I have seen that again and again when I have been sitting in stillness and darkness, and a great terror has come upon me lest I should become hard, and a lover of self, and no more bear willingly the Redeemer’s cross.”

Dinah had closed her eyes, and a faint shudder went through her. “Adam,” she went on, “you wouldn’t desire that we should seek a good through any unfaithfulness to the light that is in us; you wouldn’t believe that could be a good. We are of one mind in that.”

“Yes, Dinah,” said Adam, sadly, “I’ll never be the man t’ urge you against your conscience. But I can’t give up the hope that you may come to see different. I don’t believe your loving me could shut up your heart; it’s only adding to what you’ve been before, not taking away from it; for it seems to me it’s the same with love and happiness as with sorrow – the more we know of it the better we can feel what other people’s lives are or might be, and so we shall only be more tender to ’em, and wishful to help ’em. The more knowledge a man has, the better he’ll do ’s work; and feeling’s a sort o’ knowledge.”

Dinah was silent; her eyes were fixed in contemplation of something visible only to herself. ...

(Ch. LI)

Exercise

- a. Explain the use of these *-ing* words in the passage, saying whether they are gerunds or participles used adjectivally or participles used with auxiliaries as parts of verbs (3:5.4,6): in para. 1, *going, giving*; in para. 2, *stretching, beckoning, standing, looking, pointing, suffering, sitting*; in para. 4, *loving, adding, taking, feeling*.
- b. In the last sentence of para. 2, what are the backbone verbs? What is the adverbial clause of time in the sentence? Underline the words in it which make up its verb. There is a long adverbial clause introduced by *lest*. How would you explain the verb-forms in that clause (3:6.5)? *Lest* is rare in modern English: instead of a *lest*-clause we would more commonly use a noun clause. What would its first three words be?
- c. Identify and describe the clauses, the adverbial phrase and the adjectival phrase which occur in the sentence spoken by Dinah in the third paragraph.
- d. After studying 6:2.3f, how would you describe the words ‘as with sorrow’? A clause or a phrase, and of what kind?
- e. Why would we not now use the word *wishful* as it is used near the end of the passage? In what other way might the sentence now be ended?
- f. Explain why you think that this passage is mainly characterized by complexity, or by simplicity, of language.
- g. Explain, with the help of an illustration, what is meant when Adam says “feeling’s a sort o’ knowledge”, and why you do or do not agree with him.
- h. “Apart from the excellence of its language, this passage deserves study because of its vivid portrayal of two contrasting attitudes to human life.” Discuss.
- i. Provide a word-analysis of some paragraphs.

Passage Three

Book I of the seven “books” which make up Mrs Humphry Ward’s novel *Robert Elsmere* (1888) is set in Westmoreland, a rugged county in the north of England, in about 1880. Robert Elsmere is a young clergyman of the Church of England. Exhaustion and ill-health in his years as a tutor at Oxford have led him to accept a parish in rural Surrey, south of London. To assist his recovery, he is first staying for a while with his mother’s cousins in Westmoreland. At a “festal tea” at their home, he meets the Leyburn sisters, Catherine, Agnes and Rose. What Robert has already been told about Catherine (“Miss Leyburn”) would suggest to us that her way of life is similar to Dinah’s in *Adam Bede*.

... As to Miss Leyburn, he had so far only exchanged a bow with her, but he was watching her now, as he sat opposite to her, out of his quick observant eyes.

She, too, was in white. As she turned to speak to the youth at her side, Elsmere caught the fine outline of the head, the unusually clear and perfect moulding of the brow, nose, and upper lip. The hollows in the cheeks struck him, and the way in which the breadth of the forehead somewhat overbalanced the delicacy of the mouth and chin. The face, though still quite young, and expressing a perfect physical health, had the look of having been polished and refined away to its foundations. There was not an ounce of superfluous flesh on it, and not a vestige of Rose’s peach-like bloom. Her profile, as he saw it now, had the firmness, the clear whiteness, of a profile on a Greek gem.

She was actually making that silent, awkward lad talk! Robert, who, out of his four years’ experience as an Oxford tutor, had an abundant compassion for and understanding of such beings as young Mayhew, watched her with a pleased amusement, wondering how she did it. What? Had she got him on carpentering, engineering – discovered his weak point? Water-wheels, inventors, steam-engines – and the lumpish lad all in a glow, talking away nineteen to the dozen. What tact, what kindness in her gray-blue eyes!

But he was interrupted by Mrs Seaton, who was perfectly well aware that she had beside her a stranger of some prestige, an Oxford man, and a member, besides, of a well-known Sussex county family. ...

(Ch.III)

Exercise

- a. In the sentence beginning with ‘The hollows’ early in the passage, what are the backbone and non-backbone PVs, and the Ob-Ls? We can distinguish three Sub-Ls, of which one contains another: write the three out, underlining the main constituent of each (3:2.2) and saying for each of them which PV goes with it.
- b. In the next sentence, what is the grammatical function of *having been polished*? What names do we give to *having* and *been* here, and to *polished*? (3:7.5; 1:7.4f.)
- c. In the sentence beginning with ‘Robert’, identify the BV. Which two sets of words would you identify as clauses, and of what types are they? What kind of word is *wondering*, and how is it used here? How would you classify the phrase between commas after *who*?
- d. In the same sentence, explain the instance of parallelism (5:3.5), using numerals in brackets as at b in the exercise on 2:3. Find and do the same for two other instances in the passage.
- e. Find two consecutive sentences without verbs, and explain why, though normal sentences have at least one backbone verb, these sentences do not need one. (3:1.7f.)
- f. Find and explain the three instances of *as* in this passage as a conjunction introducing an adverbial clause. Types of adverbial clauses are listed at 2.4. Are all three adverbial clauses here of the same type?
- g. Explain in their context the locutions ‘his weak point’ and ‘the lumpish lad all in a glow’.
- h. By what main devices does Mrs Ward enable us to appreciate Robert’s standpoint towards Catherine, and Mrs Seaton’s towards Robert?
- i. Consider the pair of paragraphs in the middle of the passage. What impression of Catherine, and of Robert’s attitude towards her, emerges from it?
- j. Provide a word-analysis (2.1f) of some paragraphs or paragraph-extracts.

Passage Four

Alan Marshall's account, in *These are my people*, of his travels with his wife Olive includes this passage (p.113 in Cheshire's edition).

We left next day. We decided to follow the Murray along the Victorian side as far as Mildura, then eventually make along the Darling towards Queensland.

The ground was white with frost and the horses shot twin jets of vapour from their nostrils. They clopped across the bridge and on to the Murray Valley Highway that took us past vineyards where a few autumn leaves still clung to the naked vines.

We travelled about eight miles, then seeing a patch of grass on the banks of a wayside pool we pulled up beneath a yellow box and let the horses go. The water in the pool was clouded, but fit for drinking.

We had long passed the fussy stage where we looked for drinking water as clear as that from a city tap. We drank what we could get. I have watched Olive hook a water-beetle from her cup with a bent twig, then go on drinking. Remarks such as "Can you taste gum leaves in your tea?" formed part of our polite cross-table conversation.

Exercise

- a. What kind of variety do you especially notice in this group of sentences? (5:1.11.)
- b. List the adjectives in this passage, and comment on some of them. Look out for words which are often nouns but used here as adjectives (2:1.2 and the exercise on 2:1, a). Which adjectives do you think particularly effective, and why?
- c. How might one guess from the third paragraph, if one did not previously know, that a yellow box is a kind of tree?
- d. How would you explain the use (now rare) of the word *make* in the first paragraph? How do we commonly use this word in relation to travel?
- e. The word *drinking* occurs three times in the passage. Explain the grammar of its use on each occasion.
- f. In the two relative clauses of which the second immediately follows the first, what are the relative pronoun and the relative adverb (also here a conjunction) which begin them, and what is the antecedent of each of those words? (4:1.2, 2.2.) Why could a comma and *which* replace *that*? Why is there no comma before *where*? (4:2.5; 5:3.10)
- g. Categorize (2.3f) the phrase ‘seeing a patch of grass on the banks of a wayside pool’. Categorize also the four- and six- and three-word phrases within that phrase.
- h. The word *hook* in the last paragraph is an infinitive. Make up two sentences, with different backbone verbs, which have this somewhat unusual pattern of transitive verb + Ob-L + infinitive without *to*.
- i. Provide a word-analysis (2.1f) of some paragraphs.
- j. “What’s so special about this passage? It’s just a straightforward part of a travel record.” Discuss.

Passage Five

John Buchan's autobiography *Memory Hold-the-Door* has many lengthy descriptions of persons he knew and admired. This is part of his portrait of Arthur Balfour, the English Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party, and philosopher.

A statesman should not be judged by his policy alone, since much of that may be the work of others; to get at the real man we must have cross-bearings from different angles. One key to the understanding of Arthur Balfour was his conversation. Unhesitatingly I should put him down as the best talker I have known, one whose talk was not a brilliant monologue or a string of epigrams, but a communal effort which quickened and elevated the whole discussion and brought out the best of other people. He would take the hesitating remark of a shy man and discover in it unexpected possibilities, would probe it and expand it until its author felt he had really made some contribution to human wisdom.

(p.158)

Exercise

- To which earlier paragraph in these extracts is this passage similar in content?
- Explain how each successive sentence is developed from the previous one. (For example, how is "one key to the understanding ..." related to the first sentence?)
- One could set out the parallelism (5:3.5) stemming from "one whose talk was" thus:

not	a brilliant monologue	
	or	
	a string of epigrams,	
but	a communal effort	which quickened \
		and the whole discussion
		elevated /
		and
		brought out the best of other people.

Do the same for the words running from 'He would take' to 'expand it'.

- d. Notice how much is accomplished, economically, by the personed verbs from *quicken*ed to *made*. What name do we give to the type of verb of which *brought out* is an example? (3:4.4.) Which other examples of such verbs are there in the passage? Use each of them in a sentence.
- e. Given this book's explanation of 'clause' at 2:4.4, there are just two **clauses**, subordinate ones, in the last sentence. What are they, and of what kinds? Each *would*, here (as usual in modern English) an auxiliary, is therefore used with or implied with a main part (1:7.4). So what are the four BVs in full form? Would you identify one "main clause" in the sentence, and speak of "main verbs", as teachers of grammar have commonly done? (See 2.7 in this chapter.)
- f. At 3:6.5, after the statement "It is better to confine *auxiliary* to words which do not indicate ability, permission, desire, necessity, possibility, probability or rightness, but count as part of **the one verb** whose main part follows them", it is indicated that *should* is sometimes modal and sometimes auxiliary. Identify the following verbs or verb-parts as modal or auxiliary, as they are used in our passage.
- Sentence 1: *should, may, must*.  
Sentence 3: *should, have*.  
Sentence 4: *would, had*.
- g. At 5:1.11, richness of vocabulary was mentioned as a way of avoiding dullness. Explain these words, and comment on their use in this passage:
- cross-bearings, monologue, epigram, quicken, elevate, probe, expand, wisdom*.
- h. The adjective *communal* is used in an unusual but thought-provoking way here. Explain.
- i. How do Buchan's own values come through in this passage?
- j. Provide a clause-phrase analysis (2.1-9) of the passage. Remember that to be a clause, a set of words must (i) have a subject-locution within it (unless the verb is imperative) and (ii) not have the only PV in the sentence.

### Passage Six

In his biography *Winston Churchill* (1952 edition), Lewis Broad has a chapter (the fourth in “Phase the Fifth”) called “Orator of Free Men”. In it he points on the opening page (301) to features of Churchill’s greatness as an orator, saying among other things “His language is rich, colourful, infinitely varied. Few speakers have had such a command of words, can pour out words in such flow of rhetoric. The thought is elevated, the meaning abundantly clear.”

This paragraph comes from a speech quoted in that chapter. It was delivered on the 11th of September 1940, two months after the fall of France and before the entry of the USA into the war. Britain and her Commonwealth and Empire stood alone. Churchill is speaking of Adolf Hitler, the Nazi (National Socialist) *Führer* (Leader) or dictator who then ruled Germany.

This wicked man, the repository and embodiment of many forms of soul-destroying hatred, this monstrous product of former wrongs and shame, has now resolved to break our famous island race by a process of indiscriminate slaughter and destruction. What he has done is to kindle a fire in British hearts, here and all over the world, which will grow long after all traces of the conflagration he has caused in London have been removed. He has lighted a fire which will burn with a steady and consuming flame until the last vestiges of Nazi tyranny have been burnt out of Europe, and until the Old World – and the New – can join hands to rebuild the temples of man’s freedom and man’s honour, upon foundations which will not soon or easily be overthrown.

(p.305)

### Exercise

- a. The paragraph is characterized by contrast and continuity of theme. Explain.
- b. It is also characterized by a combination of striking long words with still more effective combinations of short ones. Illustrate.
- c. In the first sentence, would *people* have been a better word than *race*?
- d. The first and third of the three opening groups of words, all noun phrases, could both be regarded as subject-locutions of *has resolved*. What would you say about the second group? (3:3.9)
- e. There is a sentence here which **includes** (in this order) a noun clause, a noun phrase built upon an infinitive and including an Ob-L and an adverbial phrase, an adverb, another adverbial phrase, an adjectival clause, and an adverbial clause which contains an

adjectival clause! Identify each of those locutions, and the use of the word *long*. What is the backbone verb of the sentence, and what is its Sub-L? Write a short sentence with a similar Sub-L and backbone verb. Does such a sentence provide a reason for considering the phrase 'main clause' unhelpful? (2.7)

- f. List the adjectives in this passage, and comment on the impact of three of them.
- g. Provide a clause-phrase analysis of the third sentence. List the examples of parallelism, classifying the locutions concerned.
- h. Consider the views that it is and that it is not a form of sexism to use the word *man's* in the final sentence. How could it best be replaced? Say why you think that your replacement would or would not be an improvement.
- i. How would you explain the words *freedom* and *honour*, as used here? Apart from the matter raised in h, would you prefer another set of words after 'join hands'?
- j. Provide a word-analysis (2.1f) of one of the sentences.
- k. Suppose that you were going to read this passage aloud as though you were the giver of the speech from which it comes. Make some initial decisions about, e.g., the words you would emphasize, the places at which you would pause and the volume, momentum or tone with which you would read particular parts, and make notes accordingly (3.5).
- l. Now read the passage aloud as though you were giving the speech. When you have finished, ask yourself what further or different decisions of the kinds mentioned in k you need to make. Then read the passage a second time – and so on until you are satisfied. (If you have someone as a sympathetic but critical listener, so much the better.) How has this process helped you to appreciate what it can involve to make up sentences and to speak them well?
- m. For what reasons is it important to be able to read aloud well? In what contexts is it especially valuable?

## Appendix A

# Abbreviations for Annotation

This Appendix gives many references to paragraphs or sections of the book. It can be used in three ways: teachers can save time by using these abbreviations in the margins of students' essays (without such devices, detailed annotation may seem or be impracticable); their students, by studying the explanations and references given in that way, can find much more guidance than they would otherwise be likely to obtain; and any students can systematically make themselves familiar with many of the criteria for good writing by studying successive sections of this Appendix and looking up many of the references. You can revise, digest and remember much of the content of this book by doing that, as well as by rereading it and by listening to the CDs. You will find it very helpful to become able to give promptly, for more and more abbreviations, the basic explanation provided in each case, before any additional remarks and/or references. That ability can be developed by frequent reading of this Appendix, listening to the shortened version of it on the sixth CD, and self-testing.

I have assembled the sets of abbreviations in the order used for the sub-headings in 5:3, which is that of the heading to the Correction section of the Learningguild examination papers (5:2.6), and then added a general set for matters important in the writing of essays etc., but mostly outside the scope of the chapters of the book. On the last page, there are some marks followed by a suggestion for page-references.

The abbreviations in each set other than the general one should be prefaced by the abbreviation given above that set, followed by a slash (e.g., 'G/Anac'). I use the symbol ‡ (the double obelus), without a slash, to preface the abbreviations in the general set.

### Grammar

### (Prefix: G)

Anac      **Anacoluthon: lack of fit** (or a particular example of it) between the structure of one part of a sentence and that of a subsequent one, preventing the sentence from being a coherent whole. (The word is originally a Greek one with the meaning of 'not following': 5:3.3.)

BVNS      A **backbone verb** is needed to make this a **normal sentence**. Provide one, or connect this locution, as appropriate, to a preceding or following sentence. (1:7, 2:4, 3:1; make sure that you thoroughly understand the locution 'personed verb', and what is meant by saying that some PVs, but not all, are BVs.)

Comp Comp      Compare comparables. (5:3.4)

Const W	A different construction is needed with this word. (5:3.6f)
Ger	A <b>gerund</b> is needed here. (3:5.6)
Ger Conn	This gerund needs to be properly connected. (See <u>Part Conn</u> below, and 3:5.6.)
Ger Pos	A gerund is needed here along with a possessive locution. (3:5.6; note <i>your</i> in front of the gerund <i>loving</i> in paragraph 4 of Passage Two in Ch. 6.)
Inf	An <b>infinitive</b> is needed here. (3:5.2f)
N Cl	A <b>noun clause</b> is needed here. (2:3.4, 4.4)
NC S A	This noun for something thought of as <b>countable</b> with that noun is used here in the singular, so an article or another introductory word is needed. (Make sure you understand how ‘countable’ and ‘uncountable’ are used at 1:5.6.)
N PF	This noun’s plural form is not the one you have given. (The <i>Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary [OALD]</i> is a good guide.)
NU	We use this noun for something thought of as <b>uncountable</b> with it. (It is therefore not normally used in the plural, nor with an indefinite article, and can be used without any article or other introductory word: 1:5.6.)
Part Conn	This is a <b>participle</b> , used adjectivally, and needs to be properly connected. (A noun, noun phrase or pronoun for that to which the participle applies should be near it, or a clause used instead: 3:5.4f.)
Pllm D	<b>Parallelism</b> is desirable here. (It would be helpful to reshape this sentence, or these sentences, so that they contained two or more parts, similarly structured, that stemmed from and/or included and/or flowed into words linked with both or all of those parts: 5:3.5.)
Pllm N	<b>Parallelism</b> is needed here. (See the previous explanation.)
Prep	A preposition is needed here. (2:3; 3:3.1f)
Prep C	This preposition is wrong: change to another. (3:4)
Prep O VT	This preposition should be omitted: the verb is used transitively. (3:3.1f)
Pro	A pronoun should be used here. (1:6.6; 4:2.2one)
Pro Case	This is a pronoun: in what case (subjective? objective?) should it be? (4:2.4-7,9; go back if necessary to 1:6.)
Pro Con	Pronouns need to be consistent. (For example, don’t move within one sentence from <i>one</i> to <i>you</i> .)
Pro MA	A pronoun must match its <b>antecedent</b> in person and number. (4:2.4)
Pro CPA	This pronoun needs a clear and proper antecedent. (4:2.2f)

- PV M Sub-L **A personed verb must match its subject-locution (or the main constituent of that subject-locution) in person and number.** (1:7.14; 3:2)
- Recon Reconstruct this sentence.
- S/P The singular form has been used here instead of the plural, or *vice versa*. (For verbs, see 1:7.12-14. Greek-derived nouns such as *criterion* and *phenomenon* are often wrongly given their plural forms [*criteria*, *phenomena*] when the singular is required.)
- Sub Cl Use a subordinate clause here. (2:4.3-5)
- V A/P Should this verb be in the active or the passive voice? (3:3.5-8).
- Vf **Verb-form.** (You need a different one here. Students of English as a further language often omit the *s*, or *es*, which, for most verbs, ends the third-person-singular [3S] present simple form: 1:7.12f. Another common mistake is to omit an auxiliary from the passive: 1:7.4; 3:3.5.)
- VI This verb is used (always or at least in this context) intransitively. (3:3.1)
- V Irr T This verb has an **irregular trio**. (3:7.2: there is a table of such trios in Appendix 1 of Murphy's *English Grammar in Use*, and at R1-3 at the end of the *OALD* (9th edition). Students whose first language is not English may like to learn such trios five at a time, or to look for those they have not yet mastered, and to use some of the forms in sets of short parallel sentences; native speakers of English do well to study such a list, looking for any verbs on which they might be liable to error.)
- VP A The verb-part you have used here needs an addition. (3:7.12: as noted there, the sentence may need further revision.)
- VT This verb is used (always or at least in this context) transitively. (3:3.1)
- V Tense This verb is (or these verbs are) in the wrong tense. (3:7)
- V Tense S This verb is (or these verbs are) in the wrong tense: it is a matter of **sequence**, from the backbone verb(s) to the subordinate verb(s). (3:7.10)
- WAL **Writing about a locution.** (1:3: a single word or verb-form should, when it is being written about rather than used, be underlined or italicized or put within single inverted commas, but when longer locutions are being written about, they should usually be put within single inverted commas.)
- WW PS This word is wrong because it is not normally the part of speech needed here.  
(2:2.6 on *however*; 5:3.4)

## Punctuation (Prefix: P)

(There are references for the study of punctuation at 5:3.8, where I mention the value of Gowers's Chapter X in *Plain Words*.)

- AS This abbreviation needs a stop or stops, as in 'etc.', 'e.g.', 'i.e.', '*op. cit.*', '*ibid.*' (Notice that, though all these abbreviations are of Latin words, the commoner ones are printed in ordinary type.)
- B Pair This is a good place for a pair of brackets. (It may be that you will thereby make clearer the structure and meaning of your sentence, or that there is a digression here. Don't overuse brackets.)
- C Inad This comma is inadequate because there are locutions on each side of it which could each be a sentence and are not short and of parallel form. Choose between a full stop, a semi-colon and a colon. (5:3.10; Co, S-co below.)
- C Int This comma is interrupting the flow of the sentence. (The flow from subject-locution to verb, or from verb to object-locution, should not be interrupted by a single comma, as distinct from a pair of commas around an inserted word or phrase or clause. This principle applies in modern English even when the Sub-L or Ob-L is a noun clause. See 5:3.10.)
- CL Comma(s) in a list. (When there are three or more items and the second last and last are joined by *and*, there is usually no comma after the second-last item unless it is needed to avoid ambiguity or bring out a difference of type, but there is a comma after each earlier item. See Gowers p.251f.)
- CN A comma is needed or desirable here. (Often at the end of an adverbial clause or an adverbial or adjectival phrase, especially when one of these three begins a sentence, and sometimes between coordinate clauses. There may be no need for a comma if the initial clause or phrase is short and, if read aloud, would require no pause after it. For examples of justified commas after two adverbial clauses and before a second coordinate clause, see the 'When'-sentence in the previous paragraph. The sentence you have just read has a comma after an adverbial phrase of purpose.)
- C Pair Use a pair of commas here around the inserted word or phrase or clause, one which does not play an identifying role. (5:3.10; Gowers pp. 243-5, employing the adjective 'defining' where I use 'identifying'.)
- C Pair N Here one needs either a pair of commas or none, but not one.
- C (Pair) W This comma (or pair of commas) is wrongly inserted, because the clause or phrase it introduces (or encloses) is not a commenting but an identifying one. (See the references for C Pair.)
- CWBB A comma is wrong before a bracket, except in some cases where the brackets contain a numeral or letter as part of a reference.

- Co Use a colon here. (A colon is used before a list, or a quotation of some length, or where there is, as here, “expository flow”: a movement into what amplifies or explains what has gone before, rather than into something different. Contrast S-co below.)
- D Use a dash here. (A dash is often twice the length of a hyphen. Use dashes sparingly. There are examples of appropriate use in Passages One, Two and Three in Chapter Six.)
- D Pair Use a pair of dashes here. (See the pair at ‡ FT.)
- EA An exclamation mark would be appropriate here. (5:3.9)
- EI This exclamation mark is inappropriate. (5:3.9)
- H Use a hyphen here. (For adjectives, 2:1.5; see also Gowers’s section on hyphens.)
- QN A question mark is needed. (5:3.9)
- QW A question mark is wrong here. (5:3.9)
- SAS Start another sentence at this point. (5:1.11, 3.8)
- SI BA The slash is better avoided here. (The slash, and even the word *or*, should not be used to evade the decision on which of two words is the more appropriate.)
- S-co Use a semi-colon here. (A semi-colon is employed where the sentence needs to continue, but a comma would be inadequate [see C Inad], and often where there is some contrast or change rather than the expository flow that justifies a colon [see Co]: consider, for example, the semi-colon at G/V Irr T. Note the colon and two semi-colons in the second sentence of this Appendix, and the uses and explanations of semi-colons in 5:1.11f.)

## Spelling (Prefix: S)

- OV Order of vowels. (5:3.11: there are few exceptions to Schoenheimer’s Rule 7: “When the sound is ‘ee’, place ‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c’.”)
- SDC Single or double consonant? (See, in the books cited at 5:3.11, Schoenheimer’s Rules 4-6 and/or Fowler and Russell’s rules at 3. Consider the difference in stress between *rivet* and *upset* as verbs: hence *riveting* and *upsetting*.)
- SL Put the correct spelling of this word on your spelling list. (5:3.11)

**Apostrophe (Prefix: A)**

N	Needed.	
WA	Wrongly added.	
WP	Wrongly positioned.	(For these, see 5:3.12.)

**Capital Letter(s) (Prefix: C)**

N	Needed.	
U	Unjustifiable.	(For these, see 5:3.13.)

**Inverted Commas (Prefix: IC)**

D	Inverted commas are needed here, preferably double.	(These words are a quotation: 1:3.2; 5:3.14.)
D TAC	Inverted commas are needed here, preferably double, for the title of an article or chapter. (5:3.14; contrast ‡ <u>UTB</u> .)	
Pair	Inverted commas must be used in pairs: one member has been omitted.	
S	Inverted commas are needed here, preferably single.	(Here you are writing about a locution, not using it: see <u>G/WAL</u> , 1:3.2 and 5:3.14.)

**Word-order (Prefix: WO)**

A	Awkward.	
LWP	This locution (one word or more) is wrongly placed.	
M	Misleading.	
SIUA	This split infinitive is unnecessary and awkward.	(For word-order, see 5:3.15.)

**Choice of Words (Prefix: CW)**

C	Confusion of one word with another.	(5:3.16)
I	Inadequate.	(You could find a better word here: 2:1.13; 5:3.16f.)
MAC	This metaphor is awkward in this context.	(6:3.3)
MM	Mixed metaphor: one metaphor is confusingly, or absurdly, combined with another.	(6:3.3)
V	Variation is needed here: you are using the one word too often.	
W	This is the wrong word to express your intended meaning.	

## General (Prefix: ‡)

This list of further abbreviations concerns matters which are mostly outside the scope of the chapters of this book. Some relate to the basic requirements of any good essay, report or thesis (see, at SETS OF DOCUMENTS A and B on the website [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au), “Seven features of a good talk or paper”, and the heading of Sec. 5 of an examination paper), some to soundness or unsoundness of argument, and some to presentation of one’s work. The study of this list should assist students to a better understanding of most of those very important criteria of good writing that do not fall under our previous headings.

- Ack**      **Acknowledge.** (This material needs specific acknowledgement. That is both a moral and an intellectual matter. We ought to recognize and to show where we have learned from another, or where our wording is or is much influenced by another’s. Moreover we need to “distance” ourselves from our sources, written or oral: it is one thing that a book or teacher makes some assertion, another whether we understand it, and quite another whether we have reason to agree. One aim in an essay should be that the reader should never find it hard to distinguish what has been derived from others and what is the writer’s own comment or view.)
- Bal**      **Balance.** (What you have said here needs to be balanced by consideration of what has been or could be said in favour of a different view.)
- BPR**      **Bracketed page-reference.** (Give one, rather than a footnote or endnote, when all that’s needed is the page-reference. Write simply ‘p.’ or ‘pp.’, not ‘pg.’ or ‘pgs’. A reference ‘p.94f’, where the letter f is short for ‘and the following page’, is to pages 94 and 95. Do not use the vague ‘ff’, as in ‘p.94ff’, but be specific as in ‘pp. 94-97’.)
- C**      **Checking** should have removed this error or slip. (It’s a good idea to write a C at the right-hand corner of the foot of a page, with a dot by it, and to turn the dot into a tick when you have checked that page. A page on a screen should be checked and corrected just as carefully as a handwritten one. Where it’s practicable, check on the screen **and** on a printed page.)
- Cf./cf.**      Compare. (This traditional abbreviation is from the Latin ‘confer’.)
- Cl A**      **Clarity of argument.** (The argument here is not set out clearly.)
- Cl C**      **Clarity of conclusion.** (You have not made clear what your conclusion is.)
- Cl Q**      **Clarity of question.** (You need to state clearly the question you are or should be asking at this point.)
- Cl S**      **Clarity of statement.** (This statement does not indicate clearly enough what proposition you are here intending to affirm or deny: 1:7.5-9.)
- Conn**      **Connect** this sentence or paragraph with the previous one(s) so as to show the nature of the transition. (Typical transition-markers are ‘We may therefore say’, ‘Moreover’, ‘However’, and ‘On the other hand’.)

Cons	<b>Consistency.</b> (Is this consistent with what you said earlier?)
Ct./ct.	Contrast. (Sometimes more appropriate than ‘compare’.)
Cumb	Cumbersome. (This sentence, or this part of the sentence, is cumbersome. Be more straightforward and/or concise: 5:1:11f, 3.8; 6:3.2.)
DC	Difference of category. (Sometimes when one thing is said to <b>be</b> another, the two nouns concerned belong to different categories, as with ‘distinction’ and ‘assertion’ in the remark ‘The distinction between man and machine is a common assertion.’ One could begin with a noun clause ‘That there is a difference ...’, or end with ‘is commonly drawn’.)
Def	<b>Definition.</b> (One is needed here, or this one needs to be improved. A definition must not be too narrow, so as to exclude what should be included, nor too wide, so as to include what should be excluded. It should also be faithful to the grammar of the locution concerned, as in ‘An event is a happening’, as against ‘An event is when something happens.’)
D-sheet	<b>Develop-sheet.</b> (I often point to the need for one master sheet in the preparation of an essay. On it, branching out from main themes put in quite a wide left-hand column, and with an eye to the ordering and reordering of these [and sometimes the deletion of one or more], make brief notes to guide your eventual writing of the essay. <b>An essay should be prepared in such a way that a clear structure, an overall argument and a balanced treatment are developed on the D-sheet, and must then be written so as to have those three features.</b> Give, in a margin on the right, a tentative allocation of words [“250?”] to each part of the proposed essay, guarding against the danger that any part, or the whole, may be too long. <b>See also <u>SA</u> and <u>S Int</u></b> , and the note on references to parts of pages at the end of this Appendix.)
Ev	<b>Evidence.</b> (What is your evidence for this statement? It needs to be supplied or indicated here.)
Ex	<b>Example(s).</b> (One or two would help here.)
Exagg	<b>Exaggeration.</b> (Exaggeration is easy but distorting; the truth is precious and to be sought by patiently seeking what there is good reason to regard as true.)
FT	<b>Full topic.</b> (It is desirable, unless you are taking an examination, to write the topic out in full, mainly to help you focus upon it, but also for future reference. You are usually asked to write on a particular <b>topic</b> or <b>question</b> , not on the broader <b>subject</b> – within which many different topics might be raised or questions asked – and it is vital to ensure that your essay is and remains thoroughly relevant to <b>that specific topic or question</b> . So often an essay which has failed or been given a disappointing mark is one that does not satisfy that criterion. See <u>Rel</u> below.)
IL	<b>Inclusive language</b> is needed here, rather than the suggestion that the class of people you have in mind belongs to one gender only. (1:6.7)
M	<b>Meaning.</b> (What meaning has this locution? It should be replaced by something clearer, or perhaps explained.)

- Mar BS Leave margins on both sides of the page. (That is helpful to both the annotator and, for subsequent revision or extension, the writer.)
- NEL A non-English locution should, in the middle of English, be underlined or italicized, and, if written about, also put in single inverted commas (G/WAL).
- Nf AL The note-figure should be above the line. (No need for brackets or circles.)
- NP Number your pages.
- O Omit.
- Para **Paragraph.** (A new paragraph could begin here: the present paragraph is too long and/or lacks unity.)
- Q A **quotation** is needed here. (Sometimes one needs to show that an author does take the view one attributes to him or her; sometimes the original is preferable to an attempted paraphrase, or perhaps to any.)
- QE A quotation must be **exact**. (Check that you have not changed the words or the internal punctuation. Put in three dots where you omit anything, and square brackets where you put in something of your own merely to explain a locution in the original or to proceed without anacoluthon, given your own introductory words. See Q O D and Q S Anac below.)
- QI This quotation should be indented, i.e., brought in from the normal margins. (See the indentation of the two passages in the exercise on 3:5. Quotations of more than twenty words, and sometimes shorter ones, and lines of poetry, should usually be indented. Indentation makes inverted commas redundant. Indented quotations may be closed up, i.e., printed with less than the normal line-spacing, and/or put into smaller type.)
- QI: N Inv This quotation is indented, so no inverted commas should enclose it.
- QNL This quotation is not a **locution**, because not a unified group (1:3.5f): to make it one you may need more words, or fewer, from the original.
- Q O D In this quotation, omit this word/these words and use three dots to show the omission.
- Q S Anac This quotation, given your introduction of it, makes your sentence an anacoluthon. (G/Anac.)
- Q Sig This quotation is one whose significance you should bring out. (“Dig into it” by explaining it and/or providing an illustration.)
- R **Reason(s).** (The reason(s) you have for saying this should be given.)
- Ra **Range.** (A wider range of factors needs to be considered here, or at least in this essay. Cf. Bal above.)

Redund	Redundant. (This word or set of words, or this sentence or set of sentences, is redundant, given what you have already said.)
Ref	Reference. (One is needed here.)
Rel	<b>Relevance.</b> (Is this <b>relevant to your topic</b> (cf. <u>FT</u> above), or to your argument at this stage? The skill of maintaining relevance to the topic and not allowing oneself to present any extraneous matter needs to be learnt by plenty of practice. To understand one's topic or question and to stick to it are fundamental requirements of essay-writing.)
S	<b>Source.</b> (What source supports this statement, or leads you to attribute this view to the person(s) concerned?)
SA	<b>Statement of approach.</b> (I strongly recommend the writing of a statement of approach to an essay, and the discussion of it before the full essay is begun. In such an SA ("an SA for an essay"), which may be of about 200 words and should normally be in full sentences, one states one's understanding of what the topic requires and what structure and word-allocation one proposes. (See <u>D-sheet</u> above: the D-sheet precedes the SA.) So many essays become occasions of frustration, disappointment and unfruitfulness because nothing like an SA has been done and discussed with a competent person. Failure to give the opportunity for such discussion is common, and a serious fault, in tertiary education. See also <u>S Int</u> .)
S Int	<b>Structural introduction.</b> (It is a good practice in most essays, one that is helpful to the reader and the writer, to set out in an early paragraph – not always the first – what the structure of your essay will be. See also <u>D-sheet</u> and <u>SA</u> above. An S Int will often be similar to an SA, but usually shorter.)
SO	Space out. (Write on alternate lines or, in typing, use double or one-and-a-half spacing. This makes it easier for the writer to check and amend, the reader to take in, and the annotator to comment on what has been written. Leave a line between each paragraph and the next, and somewhat less space before and after quotations indented within a paragraph.)
SRAN	Start a reference with the author's name, unless you have just mentioned it in your text. (In a footnote or bibliographical entry, put next the title of the article or book, followed in the case of an article by the title of the book or journal in which it appeared, and the year [be more specific for a journal]; in the case of a book, go on to the publisher, sometimes the place of publication, and the year, separating all these by commas. I prefer this mode of reference to the one which gives just a name and a bracketed year, to be looked up in a bibliography, because I think it is helpful to give prominence in footnotes or endnotes to particular articles or books and sometimes to comment on them. However, you may be asked to use the latter style.)
SS	Split according to syllables, when you have to put part of a word at the end of one line, with a hyphen, and the rest at the beginning of the next. (Write, e.g., 'resigna-' and 'tion' rather than 'resignat-' and 'ion'. I have seen 'leg-' on one line followed by 'end' on the next!)

UG	Unwarranted generalization. (No sufficient evidence or argument for it has been advanced here.)
U Rep	Unjustified repetition of a point you have already made.
UTB	Underline (or italicize) titles of books, journals, newspapers, films, etc. (Ct. <u>IC/D TAC.</u> )
WU	Writing unclear.

As well as obvious marks, such as an arrow to indicate change of order and an arrowhead to show omission, there are:

/	This should not be written as one word. (For example, not ‘alot’ but ‘a lot’, not ‘alright’ but ‘all right’, and not ‘noone’ or ‘no-one’ but ‘no one’.)
...	Three dots needed here, as well as any punctuation which may be required.

I put a curve, like the bottom of a bowl, to show that a word should be closed up, i.e., written without a space, as in a hyphenated adjective, such as ‘many-sided’. Dashes should, in my view, be written with a space before and after them, as at S Int above, but often no such space is given.)

I put a dotted square, i.e., a square with a dot inside it, to show that the writer should (normally nearby) write a correction, or an answer to a question I’ve asked. (Part 3 of the Preface; 5:2.10)

It is often useful, when a student is preparing or writing an essay, and he or she wishes to consult again and perhaps refer to particular **parts** of a page, or when an annotator is commenting on a student’s essay, to indicate **fifths** of a page by the letters a-e (as is traditional in references to the Stephanus edition of Plato). Such references, accompanying one or more key words, are very valuable on D-sheets (see D-sheet above). It may be enough, when, for example, when one is using the Oxford World’s Classics edition of Mill’s *Liberty* and others of his essays, to write “the free development of individuality” and add ‘63de’. Many students waste time by copying out or photocopying passages when such a reference would suffice at the note-making stage. (Why should one think of oneself as **making** rather than taking notes?)

## Appendix B

# Some Amendments to Foster and Bryant's Rules

In Chapter Five, I emphasize in Section 2 the value of wide-ranging sentence-correction, and at 2.7 recommend for it the last third of a book once well-known in Australia, and reprinted in 2012, W.Foster and H.Bryant's *The New Graded Word-Book for Australian Schools*. In places, however, the wording of their rules needs revision. For example, the opening section on nouns is made clearer by the use of 'subject-locution', or for short 'Sub-L'(1:7:1).

I refer to their book by saying or writing 'FB'. Below, mostly with comments and/or references to *MS*, are amended versions of some of FB's rules. Readers are invited to compare the original rules with those given here. It is valuable for students to examine different attempts to express important principles, and essential for developing discernment to learn to consider criticism, understand it and appraise it. Reference to Gowers is to *Plain Words* (see my Preface, Part I, and Appendix C).

### Nouns

Rule 1. A subject-locution that has a main constituent is accompanied by a personed verb whose number (singular or plural) is the same as that of the main constituent. (Cf. 3:2.2 and, in Appendix A, G/PV M Sub-L.)

It is useful to ask a question of the form '**What** is being said in this sentence to ...?' So with the example of error here: "A knowledge of such matters give men confidence". What is being said to give men confidence? The answer is not "Such matters" but "a knowledge of such matters". *Knowledge* is the main constituent of the Sub-L, and the verb governed by it must therefore be *gives* and not *give*. FB's version does not allow for plural main constituents, such as *shouts* in sentence 14 of the first exercise.

Rule 2. When the subject-locution consists of two or more singular nouns (or noun equivalents) joined by *and* that refer to different people or things, its personed verb is plural, unless things referred to are thought of as a unified whole, as in 'the hop, step and jump' .

Noun equivalents may be pronouns, noun phrases or noun clauses.

Rule 3. If a subject-locution consists of two descriptions, joined by *and*, of the one person or thing, its personed verb is singular.

- Rule 4. When there is already a noun, noun phrase or noun clause as or in a subject-location, a pronoun with the same reference should not be added before the personed verb.
- Rule 5. There are locutions which, unlike *and*, show that what follows them is **not** part of the subject-location, but simply accompanies it: such locutions are *as well as*, *not* and *and not*, and *with*. Only the subject-location or its main constituent governs the personed verb. (Cf 3:2.2f.)

Here FB goes wrong, beginning: ‘When the subject consists of two nouns (or noun equivalents) joined by “as well as” [etc.]’ If we accepted that, we should take as the “subject” [subject-location] all the words before the wrongly plural verb in the example of error: ‘The great musician, as well as his two sons, were present.’ The Sub-L is simply ‘The great musician’: that is why the verb must be the singular *was*. Notice that there is usually a pair of commas around a group of words which, before the personed verb, accompanies but is not part of the Sub-L.

- Rule 6. If a subject-location is the title of a book, film, etc., or refers to some locution which is itself the subject of comment, then, even if the main word in it is plural, the personed verb governed by that subject-location is singular. Similarly, when the name of one country has a plural form (e.g., ‘the United States’), a personed verb governed by it will be singular. (For the presentation of titles of books, films, etc, see ‡UTB in Appendix A; for writing about locutions, G/WAL.)
- Rule 9. When ‘or’ or ‘either ... or ...’ or ‘neither ... nor ...’ is used with words referring to subjects, we have **alternative** subject-locutions, and the number and person of the accompanying personed verb are those of the nearer or nearest of these alternative subject-locutions. (See, however, the new Rule 10 given below.)

Notice that, as worded here, this rule illustrates itself. It replaces FB’s Rules 9 and 10, and my version of Rule 10 deals with the difficulty the authors note in their explanation of their Rule 10.

- Rule 10. Sometimes, when the number or person of one alternative subject-location is different from that of another, it is awkward to use ‘either ... or ...’ or ‘neither ... nor ...’, and preferable to make two coordinate clauses.

The preferable replacement for ‘Neither Jane nor I is fond of hiking’ is ‘Jane is not fond of hiking, nor am I.’

- Rule 14. A personed verb from the *be* or *become* or *be called* group should always match the subject-location in person and number, not the complement.

The word ‘complement’ is used here for a noun or noun phrase linked to a subject-location by a verb in one of the groups mentioned in this amended rule, as in ‘They are our main problem’. It can also be used for words linked with an object-location (3:3.9). Rule 1 for nouns guards against the error of

letting a personed verb be attracted into the number of a word in the Sub-L which is not its main constituent; Rule 14 guards against attraction into the number of the complement, as in FB's example of error 'The raids on German transport centres was part of a well-laid plan.'

### Adjectives

- Rule 3. When referring to two or more people or things as, taken together, the first or last of their groups one should say, e.g., 'the first two' and not 'the two first'.

### Pronouns

- Rule 1. A singular pronoun must not be used with a plural noun as its antecedent, and *vice versa*.

The word *antecedent*, which FB uses at Rule 11, is introduced at 4:2.2.

- Rule 2. When the second-person pronoun *you* is used, the verb it governs must also be second-person.

It is false to say that *were* is a plural verb in the example given, 'Were you anxious to come, Tom?' It has the same form as the second person plural verb, but is here singular.

- Rule 4. Do not use an emphatic pronoun without a personal one to refer to a subject or a component of a subject; often the personal one alone will suffice. [See 4:2.1]

- Rule 5. When pronouns of different persons are used, a first-person pronoun should not precede one that is second- or third-person.

FB's version would lead us to say 'She and you are invited', rather than the more idiomatic 'You and she...'

- Rule 6. A pronoun that needs an antecedent should be used only where it is clear what that antecedent is.

Notice that, thus worded (see the latter half of 5:3.10 on the presence or absence of a pair of commas around a relative clause), the rule implies that not every pronoun needs an antecedent. In 1:6, 4:2.5 and 6:2.7 the grammar of 'He who hesitates is lost' is discussed. *He* has and needs no antecedent, for the Sub-L of *is* is *He who hesitates*.

- Rule 7. At the beginning of a sentence, and when not preceded by a preposition, the interrogative pronoun *whom* is now, at least in spoken English, unidiomatic, though not wrong, in places where an object-locution is required.

This is perhaps the only place where a rule given in FB is definitely out of date. Their second example of error ‘Who did you see at the pictures?’ should not now be considered wrong. Notice that ‘With who did you go?’ is quite wrong: if a preposition precedes a pronoun, that pronoun must have the form of an object-locution (1:6.5). ‘Who did you go with?’ is more suited to speech than to formal writing. FB’s first example of error, ‘Whom do you think they were?’ is covered by a revised Rule 14.

- Rule 9 The pronouns ‘anybody’, ‘nobody’, ‘everybody’ and ‘each’, when used as a subject-locution or its main constituent, must be accompanied by a singular verb. The same rule applies to the pronouns ‘either’ and ‘neither’ unless a noun or noun phrase used instead of them would be plural.

The word *their*, and *his* used in front of a noun, which appear in FB’s examples, I call possessive adjectives (2:1.9). On *their*, I do not entirely agree with FB: see 4:2.10. An example of a plural *neither*: ‘You ask if his brothers and sisters are here. Neither have arrived yet.’

- Rule 14 When a clause is **inserted**, much as if it had commas around it, between a relative pronoun and a personed verb, it is the following words which determine whether the relative pronoun is a subject-locution or an object-locution.

A rule should not say “Exercise care...”, but give a principle for doing so. Notice the need to distinguish the use of a personed verb after an insertion from the use of an infinitive after words which are not an insertion. We say ‘a man **who** they think was French’, and ‘a woman **whom** they think they have met’ (and we may there put commas around the insertion ‘they think’); but we also say, following an influential Latin construction called ‘accusative and infinitive’, ‘a man **whom** they think to be French’. (For *accusative*, see 4:2.5.) In the latter case *think* governs the relative pronoun, ‘they think’ is not an insertion, and a pair of commas cannot be used. Compare the ‘Mr Watson’ examples at 4:2.6.

Verbs

- Rule 1. Verbs used transitively govern object-locutions, and therefore pronouns governed by them have the object-locution form.

See 1:6.4f, 3:3.1f; 4:2.5-7,9. I mention at 4:2.5 the use of the expression ‘objective case’, which FB employs.

- Rule 2. In formal writing, verbs from the *be* group take the same case after them as before them.

Rebecca Gowers quotes from Sir Ernest his words in the original (1954) edition: ‘About the age-long conflict between *it is I* and *it is me*, no more need be said than that, in the present stage of the battle, most people would think “it is I” pedantic in talk and “it is me” improper in writing.’ I broadly agree; but we should certainly say as well as write, e.g., ‘It is I who am to blame’. Rebecca says “Now, however, most people would find ‘it is I’ disquietingly fey in any modern context”. The rare word *fey* is defined by the Concise Oxford as “giving an impression of vague unworldliness”. On the contrary, ‘it is I’ may reveal a deliberate and unusual precision.

- Rule 3. ‘Can’ is often concerned with ability, ‘may’ with permission. [Cf. 3:6.2.]

- Rule 5. The past simple must be distinguished from the past participle; for many irregular verbs they are different words. [See 3:7.2 on irregular trios.]

- Rule 7. A single main part of a verb may be used with two separate auxiliaries, but only if it would be correctly used with each auxiliary taken alone. [3:7.12]

- Rule 8. A single auxiliary may be used with two main parts of verbs, but only if it would be correctly used with each main part taken alone. [3:7.12]

- Rule 9. A participle must not be unconnected, but clearly linked (normally by proximity) to the appropriate noun, noun phrase or pronoun, i.e., the one referring to what the participle or the phrase including it describes. [See 3:5.5.]

Conjunctions

- Rule 4. *And* or *but* should not be used before a relative pronoun unless a corresponding relative pronoun has already occurred. [See 4:2.8.]

FB’s formulation here, as in its Rule 7, is too narrow.

- Rule 7. When something is being identified or defined, an adverbial clause should not be used after a verb in the *be* group.

Notice FB’s ways of avoiding that error. See ‡Def in Appendix A.

## Appendix C

### Gowers, *OALD*, Dummett and Burchfield

In Appendix C in the second edition I wrote in turn about some American books, some British and some by Australians and a New Zealander. I write here about just four, three by British authors and one by the New Zealander, because of their excellence and the ready reference they provide. I want them all to be widely known, used and respected. I am a critical conservationist, and so in particular fields of study I attach great importance to discovering and recommending outstanding books, booklets, articles and CDs, etc., whenever they were composed.

*Plain Words* is the first, and itself an example of critical conservation. It is the third revision, this time by Rebecca Gowers, of the famous book (published in 1954 with the title *The Complete Plain Words*) by Sir Ernest Gowers, her great-grandfather, of whom she writes at length in the Preface. He was a distinguished British civil servant who wanted members of the service to write in a less stodgy and more immediately intelligible way than was common. Rebecca's book was published in 2014, and by Penguin the following year. It now costs about \$25 in Australia. What a gain in clarity, and what a reduction in the frequency of errors, would ensue wherever cumulative familiarity with that book came to be expected of younger or older people engaged in writing (or teaching!) at senior secondary, tertiary or postgraduate levels, or of journalists or writers of letters or reports.

One aim of my own book has been to prepare the way (as is illustrated in Part 1 of the Preface) for the comprehension and full appreciation of Gowers and the other books discussed here by explaining and illustrating the nine parts of speech, types of phrases and clauses, good and defective punctuation, and common types of error, and by exploring some questions of different kinds worth asking about fine pieces of English prose.

I have offered the maxim "Be clear, and don't be dull" and enlarged upon it (5:1.2f, 11f). The best extended treatment I know of ways in which to achieve clarity and avoid dullness is that of Gowers.

Almost at the end of Chapter V ("The Choice of Words (1)") are three numbered principles, of which I give the opening pieces of advice: "Use no more words than are necessary to express your meaning .... Use familiar words rather than the far-fetched .... Use words with a precise meaning rather than those that are vague ...." Better to say, instead of the second, "Use words that will be readily understood", which has the implication that one's choice of vocabulary should vary sensitively according to one's hearers or readers. It is sometimes illuminating to introduce and explain an unfamiliar word. 'Far-fetched' is not a familiar one except with a meaning similar to those of 'implausible' or 'contrived'.

The chapter on punctuation, alphabetically arranged, is very valuable: clear, thorough, and witty. The excellent index shows how wide is the range of critical consideration given to particular locutions (often misused ones) and also themes such as padding and paragraphs. It could be explored and used for self-testing.

I make extensive use of Gowers in a booklet called *Questions and Principles for Sentence-construction (QPS)*, published by Learningguild in a revised edition (2020), which stands by itself but is also intended to introduce Gowers and recommend its use. It is available both in printed form and in Set A of Documents on the website [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au). In it I emphasize the importance of a trained readiness to ask oneself, while writing, questions such as “What mistake do I need to be careful to avoid here?” in respect of grammar, punctuation, or any other of the categories set out in Appendix A, and I recommend Gowers as a source of further principles. People whose English enables them to read this Appendix with understanding of at least most of it (a long subject-locution!) will find a good form of training in correcting *QPS*’s examples of defective sentences or other groups of words. The booklet includes some amendments to Gowers.

The ninth edition (2015) of the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD)* is a treasure-house. The entry for *day* is a fine example, with four meanings followed by many idioms. Both the explanations of meanings and the illustrative sentences so extensively provided are models of clarity. Long entries such as that for *day*, or *matter*, are often especially valuable. Illustrative sentences can be read aloud.

The introductory pages vii-xi show how wide-ranging is the help given in the body of the book, not least through such inserted sections as those headed “WHICH WORD?”. (See, for example, the one that follows *as*.) *OALD*, like its excellent junior the *Oxford Essential Dictionary*, puts collocations (sets of words commonly used together) in bold italics within its italicized sentence-examples. (So, for example, “It’s ***simply a matter of letting people know in time.***”) The reference section is very valuable. Advice on the giving of a talk has been added to that on writing essays, reports etc.

*OALD*’s retention of the common use of *subject* and *object* for locutions, where I use *subject-locution* and *object-locution*, repeats the inconsistency that is common when the word *passive* is defined: “connected with the form of a verb used when the subject is affected by the action of the verb”. (See 3:3.5f.) Nouns are still called countable or uncountable, whereas it is that for which a noun stands that is properly called by those adjectives. Hence my abbreviations ‘NC’ and ‘NU’ (1:5.6).

Not only learners of English as a further language stand to gain from *OALD*: it would be very valuable for any native speaker at any secondary, tertiary or post-tertiary stage, including those attending institutions called tertiary whose English is still at a secondary stage. Its wealth of example-sentences makes it more useful to many native speakers, as well as others, than the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. The latter fascinatingly explains the derivation of words; *OALD* does not.

Two ways of ensuring long-term benefit from *OALD* may be mentioned. One is the use of the WS method I have described at 5:1.4-9, and revision of one’s bound pages employing it; the other is the listing of words one has looked up, with a view to revision and consolidation.

Michael Dummett, the famous Oxford professor (of logic, in a broad sense of that word), published a lively book, similar in length to this one, called *Grammar and Style* (Duckworth 1993), subtitled “for examination candidates and others”. Many of the mistakes

he corrects were made, he says, by such candidates at Oxford, many others in “the quality Press” (p.7).

The opening sections on parts of speech and grammatical principles would interest those who have worked through Chapters 1-4 of this book. (I prefer to introduce all three of nouns, articles, and pronouns before treating, in 1:7, verbs and what I call subjects and subject-locutions.) The third chapter, “Some Stylistic Maxims”, begins with three principles and has numerous noteworthy warnings against words often misused and stylistic faults. I do not agree with Dummett (p.75) that it is always wrong to state one’s “scaffolding”, for example of an essay, as against leaving the reader to recognize it. (See Appendix A’s ‡SInt.) Of course any statement of it should itself be clear, concise, and where possible attractive. The remaining chapters deal well in turn with punctuation, vocabulary, spelling and “Ideological and Other Usages”.

Dummett’s four-page Conclusion deserves to be read by everyone who wants to think clearly and fruitfully about the English language and education in it. He rightly says of those to whom he refers as “many teachers at State schools” – but one might rather blame those who indoctrinated them – who ‘imbue their pupils with the idea that rules of grammar have no authority and should be scorned as “elitist”’, that ‘they thereby promote much greater differentiation and hence inequality than before’.

Eloquently, gratefully and passionately he sums up, though I invite the reader to consider where he or she might make changes. (I shall propose two.)

All languages are the co-operative creations of human beings; they are marvellous instruments for the expression and communication of thought and feeling, and vehicles for private thought. Each generation makes changes in them, but all have the responsibility for handing them on to the next generation in at least as perfect a condition as that in which they themselves inherited them. Disrespect for one’s language is ingratitude to our forebears and selfishness towards our descendants.

I propose ‘good’ rather than ‘perfect’ and ‘disregard for’ instead of ‘selfishness towards’. I greatly value the theme of inter-generational continuity and responsibility, which is not at all incompatible with thoughtful criticism.

In 1996, the New Zealander R.W.Burchfield (see Part 1 of the Preface to this book) produced a marvellous compendium, to which those who have learnt to value Gowers could well go on. It was called *The New Fowler’s Modern English Usage*, in honour of H.W.Fowler, who in 1926 had produced *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, which soon came to be regarded as an authoritative work of reference. Burchfield justly says in the preface that “[Fowler’s] book has been largely rewritten in this third edition”. Sir Ernest Gowers had done the revising for the second edition, published in 1965.

Burchfield has excellent entries at *grammar* (see the first two pages of my Preface) and at *prescriptivism*, in which he distinguishes the prescriptive grammarian, who tells us that some uses, though perhaps quite common, are incorrect, and the descriptive one, who takes the task of the grammarian to be no more than to recognize what is now common usage (and may scorn the prescriptivist). Burchfield cannot be classified as either, but the tendency of the book (in my view just right) is well indicated by his entry on *disinterested*. He recognizes

and illustrates the wide recent use of the word to mean the same as *uninterested*, but concludes:

My personal use and recommendation is to restrict *disinterested* to its sense of ‘impartial’, at any rate for the present.

A conservationist may justify this view by saying that, since we have *uninterested* with a clear meaning but also have *disinterested* in the sense in which it is similar to *impartial* but can also have the particular and valuable meaning of ‘not standing to gain from any decision to be made’, it is regrettable if that meaning does not remain attached to the word.

The immense scope of the book, which is arranged entirely alphabetically, is apparent from its size (864 pages). The variety of the objects of discussion may be illustrated by three consecutive entries: those for *only* as an adverb (controversy about placing), *onomatopoeia* (a technical term for a feature of certain words or sets of words) and *on to* and *onto* (distinction of meanings). There is plenty of very interesting history of usage.

Because I particularly value and am indebted to Burchfield’s work (substantially a new book and by no means out of date) and his whole approach, and have not yet studied a fourth edition of “Fowler”, edited by Jeremy Butterfield (2015), I am inviting my readers to consult the former. It is worth looking out for any edition.

Although I have chosen these four books for special recommendation, I have proposed the use of others, less advanced, especially at 5:3.16 on choice of words. I finally offer a general invitation to look out for, and attend critically to, books and other materials at any level that were or are intended to extend one’s understanding of grammar, vocabulary and style in English – and in any other language that one would like to get to know better.

## Appendix D

### Examining sentences — others' and your own

For many students who are beginning the serious study of English grammar (and for EFL students at the elementary or intermediate levels), it will be helpful to study this appendix repeatedly, reading it aloud now and then. Sometimes attention to the references may be deferred, sometimes not.

Consider, and often use, this series of questions to ask about any normal sentence (2:4.6; 3:1.11f). After studying Ch.1, you should be able to deal with 1-4 below, and after studying Chapter 2, especially 2:4 on conjunctions, the fifth question too.

1. To which of the four basic types does this sentence belong? (1:7.5-8)

Is it (A) a positive statement (e.g., 'She comes to the meetings.')

or

(B) a negative statement (e.g., 'She does not come to the meetings.')

or

(C) a question (e.g., 'Does she come to the meetings?')

or

(D) an imperative sentence (e.g. 'Come to the meetings.')

2. How many personed verbs (PVs) are in it, and which words are they, and which of the six labels do we give to them? (1:7.11f.)

In each of the four examples above, there is just one PV: *comes* (3S) in A, *does come* (3S: with or without a capital D) in B and C, and *Come* (2S or 2P) in D. **Remember that two or more words** (three in *has been coming*) **can constitute one verb** (1:7.4).

In 'She wants to come to the meetings', there is just one PV: *wants* (3S). *To come* is called an infinitive, or an infinitive verb, here including the particle *to* (not a preposition): for the three types of non-personed verb-forms, see 3:5.

2. If the sentence is of type A or B or C, how many **pairs** are there of subject-locution and personed verb(s) (Sub-L and PV or PVs)? (1:7.1,14)

In type D, there is a PV (2S or 2P) and for it there is a **subject** (the person(s) addressed), but within the sentence normally **no subject-locution** (it is normally impolite or awkward to say as a request 'You come to the meeting').

In each of our examples at 1 for types A, B and C, there is one pair: in A, *she* and *comes*, and in B and C, *she* and *does come* (used with the negative adverb *not* in B). In 'She wants to come ...', the pair is *She* and *wants*.

In ‘She comes to the meetings and often asks questions’, there is still only one pair, because, although there are two PVs, *comes* and *asks*, they are used with the one Sub-L, *She*. In ‘She comes to the meetings and she often asks questions’, there are two pairs, because there are two Sub-Ls: *she* has been repeated.

4. Is the pair, or is each pair, a **matching pair**? (For this valuable locution, see 1:7.14.)

It is a fundamental rule for English sentences of types A, B and C that the two parts of any pair must **match**, i.e., as we may say, **have the same label**. The six possible labels are those used in 1:7.12 (as also in 1:6.3f): they run from 1S to 3P. To say or write, for example, ‘She come to the meetings’ is to make a serious error, because (except for modal verbs: 3:6), 3S (third person singular) verb-forms in the present tense must be different from the others: for the “present simple” form (3:7.2) we often add an *s* (1:7.12f).

5. If there is more than one matching pair, are there **coordinate clauses**, and/or does one pair (or more than one) occur in a **subordinate clause**? If so, what are the sets of words here that we call a **clause**?

Here you need to engage in repeated study of the definition of *clause* at 2:2.2 and of the whole of 2:4, with its explanations and illustrations of the six locutions *conjunction*, *coordinating conjunction*, *coordinate clause*, *subordinating conjunction*, *subordinate clause*, and *backbone verb (BV)*. Notice that I do not use the word *clause* of anything that is the whole of a sentence, and do not find it necessary to use the common locution *main clause* (2:2.2 and 6:2.7).

A crucial point is that wherever there is more than one PV in a sentence, we can and often should ask the question ‘Is this a BV or not?’. There can be more than one BV in a sentence: there are two in both ‘She comes to the meetings and often asks questions’ (where there is one matching pair) and ‘She comes to the meetings and she often asks questions’ (where there are two matching pairs). If a PV is not a BV, it is in a subordinate clause.

As you proceed from Ch.2 to Ch.6, and become more experienced in recognizing different types of subordinate clause (2:4.4 and, eventually, 6:2), look out for opportunities to use clauses in your own sentences, identifying the type if they are subordinate clauses. So you might think “I’ll use a subordinate clause here, an adverbial clause of time” (6:2.4), and write ‘After I talked with my friend, I felt more confident.’

Wherever you have several PVs, you may need to check your sentence-structure and, often, your punctuation (see, for a start, 5:3:8-10). Even though you may have matching pairs in every place in which they are needed, your sentences may need to be reconstructed so that they are shortened and/or given a satisfactory clause-structure. A good maxim is “Don’t write disorderly sentences: learn and apply as much as you can about clauses.”

# A Further Guide to Themes

The systematic nature of this book and a Table of Contents including every section-heading make it redundant to provide a full index of themes, which most students do best to study in the order in which they are presented, in the book as a whole or in a particular chapter or section. The reader who wants to know about subordinating conjunctions, for example, should look for ‘Conjunctions’ in the Table of Contents, turn accordingly to 2:4, and learn about subordinating conjunctions in the context of the contrast between those and coordinating ones, and the corresponding distinction between coordinate and subordinate clauses. (See also Appendix D.)

However, though the Table of Contents is the main guide, this supplementary one will assist readers to find treatments of subjects which lack corresponding words in that table.

The list employed in the heading of Learningguild Certificate exam papers (5:2.6) – grammar, punctuation, spelling, apostrophes, capitals, inverted commas, word-order and choice of word(s) – also provides the order for paragraphs on each of those themes in 5:3 and for the first six pages of Appendix A. The General section of that Appendix covers a wide range of matters of preparation, content and presentation that may assist writers of essays, reports and theses.

I list the first group of references below in a logical order and the second alphabetically.

**Sentences.** There are references at 1:1.2 for the minimum requirement (the “matching pair”, 7.14) for most normal sentences, and the word *sentence* is defined at 3:1.11.

**Propositions.** 1:7.5-9, and d on the last page of that chapter.

**Phrases and clauses.** At 5:3.2 there are lists of references earlier in the book to phrases and to clauses: it is very important to be familiar with the accounts and examples given in those places. (See also the fifth portion of Appendix D.) The distinction between identifying clauses and phrases on the one hand and commenting ones on the other is drawn at 5:3.10. There is extensive clause/phrase analysis, as I call it, in 6:2, along with explanation and illustration of the numerous types of adverbial clause and phrase (2.4), and of why I limit the word *clause* to coordinate and subordinate clauses and do not use the term *main clause*.

**Ellipsis.** The word *elliptical* is explained, in its application to some abnormal sentences, at 3:1.8, and in its similar application to some abnormal clauses at 6:2.3.

**Grammar.** The word is defined at 1:1.3. In Part 1 of the Preface, the widespread neglect of grammar in English-speaking countries in the past five decades, the causes of that neglect, and its consequences for students and employees are discussed. In Parts 5 and 6, the traditional-but-critical approach taken in this book to grammar is explained and defended.

**Parsing or word-analysis.** See the exercise on 1:4-2:2, a, and the one on 2:3, c; and 6:2.1f, 10f, 17-19.

**Trivium.** The Latin word, which encapsulates a great tradition of three kinds of study needed at the secondary level, is explained at the end of Part 2 of the Preface. Cf. the five kinds of analysis set out at 6:2.2.

**Instructions or requests,** expressed by verb-forms called imperative. 1:7.1,8; 3:1.2, 2.1,6.

**Italics, bold type, underlining.** 1:3.2; G/WAL in Appendix A.

**Metaphors.** 6:3.3; CW/MAC & MM in Appendix A.

**Questions.** 1:7.7, 5:3.9.

**Similes.** 6:3.3.

**Statements.** Positive, 1:7.5; negative, 7.6.

# Index of Names

References to chapters, sections and paragraphs are given in the form used in '6:3.6'. (A numeral for a chapter always has a colon after it, unless preceded by 'Ch.'). 'Exercise' is abbreviated to 'ex'. Each of the six passages at the end of Chapter Six is referred to by '6:Pass' followed by one or more numerals. References to parts of the Preface are by a capital P and one or more numerals, and to the Appendices by 'App' and a capital letter. This form of index assists in the development of a quite detailed recall of particular sections and parts. Placenames are not included here.

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Davidman, Joy	ex on Ch.1
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<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i>	1:2.2; ex on 1.2&3; 2:1.4; ex at end of Ch.2; 3:3.4; 4.4; ex on 3:4; 6.5; 7.2; 5:3.4,7,8; 6:Pass1; AppC
<i>Oxford Essential Dictionary</i>	ex on 1:2&3; 5:1.4

<i>Oxford Pocket English Grammar</i>	2:1.4
<i>Oxford Guide to English Usage</i>	5:3.8,16
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<i>Questions and Principles for Sentence-construction</i>	5:2.2; AppC
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# Text and Tracks

This table concerns the CDs made to accompany the **second** edition (2000): see the Preface to this one, Part 3. There is a CD track for each paragraph of each section (in that second edition) of each chapter; so too for each extract used in or with exercises, and for a shortened version of each section of Appendix A (the marks and remarks at the end of the General section have a track to themselves). This list will enable listeners to find without delay the track or tracks they want.

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