

Why I Wrote This Book

and What the Reader Can Expect To Learn From it

First of all, let me thank you for taking the time to look at my language book. I spent quite a while writing it and, dare I say, I am quite proud of the results.

This book is mainly intended for two types of people: (1) English teachers, both of the grammar school variety, and the ESL variety; and (2) native English speakers who wish to learn the grammar of their *own* language, so they can better understand the grammar of a *foreign* language.

For the English teacher, this book will be followed by a later one, which will contain the actual English lessons you would teach your students. Whether you wait for that book to be released, or use another textbook to teach your students, my language book will deepen your general understanding of grammar, in a way that no other book does. I will explain this more in just a moment.

For the aspiring foreign language learner, there is no better way to learn the grammar of a foreign language than by fully understanding the grammar of your own language. But at this point it's important to clarify what we actually mean when we say "grammar". After all, there is no point in telling you the "grammar rules" of why saying something one way is "correct" but saying it another way is "ungrammatical". You already know what is correct and incorrect in your own native language. The more important questions are, (1) "Why do we do it that way?", and (2) "What exactly causes THIS expression to have THAT particular meaning?" If you understand the logic of why we do the things we do in English, it will be easier to understand the logic of a foreign language. Further, if you can understand how the multiple components of an expression combine to express a particular meaning in English, you will have much greater command of your expressions in your target language.

There is also a third person who might enjoy this book, and that is someone who is interested in the philosophy of language. Language and thinking are closely intertwined, and so understanding how and why we communicate is a great step toward better understanding our own minds.

The book is arranged thusly. In "Unit 1: Thoughts", I describe how our basic thought process progresses as a series of reactions toward some purpose. I also show how our

minds store information, and the most common concepts that we typically try to remember and express.

Unit 1 will also touch on the difference between definitions that are built by the speaker, using the rules of the language (“constructed items”), and definitions determined by the language itself (“vocabulary items”).

In “Unit 2: Expressions”, I describe the components of an expression, and how we use expressions as tools to signal the “thoughts” that we learned about in the previous unit. Of course, the most important components of an expression are the verbal elements: words, phrases, clauses, and morphemes; but there are other components that we must identify as well, like the structure those verbal elements are arranged into, the “part of speech” of each element (noun, verb, etc.); as well as many other things that we can collectively call “context”, including the situation the expression is made in, the tone of the speaker’s voice, who the speaker is looking at, what the speaker is responding to, what is already known about the speaker, and so on.

We will also learn more about the “vocabulary items” we were introduced to in Unit 1. We will see how “constructed items” can *become* vocabulary items over time, and how the form of these vocabulary items can change, either by evolution of the language (derivation), or by the speaker, according to regular grammar rules (inflection).

In “Unit 3: The Parts of Speech”, we will learn more about the “invisible categories” that we put our grammatical elements into, and how they add information about the meaning of an expression. (For instance, in “to fly”, the word “fly” is a verb. But in “a fly”; the word “fly” is a noun, and has a very different meaning.)

We will also learn the rules of how each of these elements may be arranged and grouped, based on their part of speech. We will see that these rules often help us determine what part of speech an element is. (For instance, in the phrase “the fly”, the word “fly” must be a noun, because it comes after “the”, and only nouns and noun phrases can do that.)

I should mention that my grammar identifies *several dozen* parts of speech; much more than the eight or ten you learned in school. Most of these extra parts of speech come from the fact that I count different kinds of phrases, clauses, and morphemes as separate parts of speech. So noun phrases, verb phrases, and adjective phrases are separate parts of speech from nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

In “Unit 4: The English Lexicon”, we will look at the most important thousand or so English words and phrases, through the lens of the grammar found in this book. This will serve to test your understanding of what you learned so far, as well as to prove the effectiveness of my system.

“Unit 5: Advanced Topics”, is a large list of articles which can be divided into three groups. The first group concerns concepts and terminology that I believe can be removed from traditional grammar, as they are either poorly defined, or irrelevant in light my new theories. The second group addresses common questions, both about English grammar and grammar in general. The third group is a bit of a catch-all, consisting of various articles on topics that I find interesting, but perhaps not important enough to include in the main body of this work. Some of these are addendums to earlier lessons, and further flesh out why I decided to teach something in a particular way. (For example, there is a “Pronunciation Addendum” that explains how I arrived at the phonetic system I use in my lexicon.)

For ease of reading, physical versions of this book will be split into three volumes. However in the pdf files, I have kept the page numbers the same as they would be if the book were combined into one volume.

Finally, you might notice that all of my lessons are around ten pages long. I have divided them in this way so the reader can always finish an entire lesson in one sitting. I recommend sticking to that “one lesson per sitting” approach for this book. If you want to read *multiple* lessons in one day, at least give yourself a break between each one, so you have some time to internalize what you’ve read before moving on.

And with that, let’s begin!